MedTech Europe's contribution to the expert group for Horizon Europe and its successor
10th June 2024

What major challenges (scientific, social, economic, technological) should still be attempted to be addressed in the second half of HE (i.e. Horizon Europe, 2025-27) and further addressed by a future FP (FP10)?

- In line with the recent report by the European Policy Analysis Group/Bocconi University, MedTech Europe believes investment should go to developing high-tech innovations, notably in the MedTech sector.
- As Enrico Letta pointed out in his recent report on the future of the EU Single Market; healthcare is a crucial sector for Europe and continued innovation is critical to foster integration, ensure sustainable access to healthcare for all its citizens and build resilient, sustainable health systems.
- Non-exhaustive list of opportunities: inclusive clinical trial design, patient empowerment, engagement, monitoring, access to data to develop better AI-powered medical technology (including decision support systems), flexible manufacturing technologies like 3D printing & continuous manufacturing, novel efficient processes and services to bring innovation in primary, secondary and tertiary care, decarbonisation of the healthcare systems while enhancing its capacity and supporting healthcare workers
- Many new technologies have the potential to add a lot of value in terms of patient access and care, whilst contributing to our healthcare systems, hence we would argue for a "health-in-all-FP10" approach with dedicated healthcare use cases across programmes.

Which are the major successes of the current HE (2021-2023) and which are the major "roadblock"/threats for success?

- **Successes**: the first cross-sectorial – pharma, medtech, biotech – public-private partnership IHI Innovative Health Initiative partnership, access to talent through Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, cross-sectoral collaborative research in pillar II on specific topics like environmental sustainability in healthcare
- **Roadblocks**:
    - administrative burden needs to be reduced, such as by allowing companies to use standard accounting practices
    - RIA, IA actions and talent schemes like Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions need to be made more attractive by increasing the success rates, as it becomes more and more difficult to convince the industry business to participate (and invest) for a <10% success rate.
    - Many healthcare initiatives were contained /driven, with small budgets per action and limited scope for the involvement of stakeholders including industry.

Which sub programmes of HE should be to be preserved and strengthened in a future FP (i.e., FP10) and which should be altered? How far a future FP (i.e., FP10) should keep/alter the current basic three-pillar architecture of HE (i.e., Pillar 1: Excellent Science; Pillar 2: Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness; Pillar 3: Innovative Europe)?

- The European Industrial Competitiveness pillar provides a solid framework for the cooperation between industry and the public stakeholders at least in healthcare. Amplify the role of public-private partnerships for innovation and implement them with all stakeholders across Europe. Further empowering partnerships like the Innovative Health Initiative as competitiveness drivers and allow focusing on specific vertical research challenges where appropriate such as the healthcare workforce crisis.
- Separating excellent science and industrial competitiveness could hinder ecosystem development involving academia and industry. Basic research is not purely the domain of academia.

What would be a catalyst to overcome current roadblocks of HE and be implemented in a future FP (i.e., FP10)? What should be the most important innovations to be considered in a future FP (i.e., FP10)?

- We need to bridge the public-private sector gap to ensure a better mutual understanding's needs and drivers and avoid misconceptions. Structured dialogue from programme design through to call topic definition would support mutual understanding.
- In-kind contributions such as the use of industry human, laboratory and manufacturing resources should not be underestimated as they are the unfunded part of the research costs and through them, an actual connection is made between industry and academia in consortia.
- Making the EU innovation ecosystem even more attractive by fostering international collaboration, including joint programmes with strategic partners such as the United States and allowing multinationals to share generated results with their international affiliates.
- Intellectual Property IP needs to be maintained in such a way that it encourages further investment from private investors without diluting the initial know-how and contribution. While protection of pre-existing IP and its associated improvements are essential for the companies that have contributed to it, at the same time the rules should enable continued research use of a project's results. Currently, no distinction is made between "commercial exploitation" and "further research" but we believe a differential treatment of the two concepts should be possible. Encouraging matching funding or support from the private sector must be addressed for FP10 to bring more innovative healthcare solutions to patients across the EU.
- Flexible funding instruments that allow for projects to fail fast when it becomes clear key objectives and assumptions won't be met, as well as a shorter time-to-grant for Innovation Actions to keep up with the speed of innovation in sectors like digital technologies and medical technology. This could free up resources for other promising ideas so that those projects that do successfully cross the finish line have a real chance of generating a sustainable impact. This is somewhat based on the approach of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) in the US, but a 1-1 copy to the EU is not possible of course.

About MedTech Europe

MedTech Europe is the European trade association for the medical technology industry including diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Our members are national, European and multinational companies as well as a network of national medical technology associations that research, develop, manufacture, distribute and supply health-related technologies, services and solutions.
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