EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

eHealth & Health Technology Assessment

Brussels, 29 April 2013

3ʳᵈ EHEALTH NETWORK 14ᵗʰ MAY 2013
COVER NOTE BY SECRETARIAT

Subject: **Topic 2 - Connecting Europe Facility**

Issue at stake / request to eHealth Network

In the Multiannual Work Programme of the eHealth Network, a recommendation on the governance of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is foreseen. Due to delays, it is not possible to provide the eHealth Network with a proposal on the governance of the CEF, and the representation of the eHealth domain, at this moment. DG CNECT will present the current state of play of the CEF, and will be available for questions.

Under the scope of the CEF instrument, the eHGI proposes to establish a permanent structure to work on interoperability. Most European efforts to tackle semantic and technical interoperability have focused on projects. The down side is that these projects are not sustainable. To overcome these limitations, the eHGI recommends establishing a standing coordination group for semantic and technical interoperability by utilising funds of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

The eHealth Network members are requested to:

− respond on the presentation on the current state of play of CEF governance;

− discuss and comment on the proposal for a standing coordination group for semantic and technical interoperability;

Summary of document

The eHGI recommends a standing coordination group for semantic and technical interoperability. This paper explains the reasons behind the proposal and what a standing coordination group could look like.

Format of procedure

Presentation by director of DG CNECT, Paul Timmers, on the current state of play of the CEF, with the possibility the ask questions afterwards. Presentation of the proposal for a permanent structure by co-chair Clemens Auer, who will also moderate the discussion.

DISCUSSION PAPER

ON A STANDING COORDINATION GROUP FOR SEMANTIC AND TECHNICAL INTEROPERABILITY

Proposed by the eHealth Governance Initiative

Date: 14th May 2013

Interoperability in eHealth represents a long-term objective of the eHealth Network and is subsequently anchored in article 14 of the Directive 2011/24/EU. Despite the long-term character of the task, most European efforts to tackle semantic and technical interoperability have focused on **short-term projects.** The creation and administration of chains of projects – often with the same participants – led to bureaucratic overhead. Moreover, **many projects were not sustainable** beyond the lifetime of the projects themselves and failed to connect with the strategies of Member States and business cases. epSOS, in particular, has highlighted such sustainability challenges for Member States and has pointed to the need for EU-level governance, the co-ordination of priorities and the development of common assets.

To overcome these limitations, the eHGI recommends establishing **a long-term standing coordination group for semantic and technical interoperability (appendix 1)**.

The standing coordination group is to consist of a **coordination team** and a **permanent group of experts**. In order to reconcile national and European strategies, the standing coordination group shall be tied to and utilise **national competence centres** wherever possible. To this end, the permanent group of experts[1] shall be drawn preferably from national eHealth competence centres. Additional **experts from academia** should be invited to contribute to specific topics if needed. Stakeholders are to be consulted via the **eHealth Stakeholder Group**.

The tasks of the standing coordination group will be decided by the eHealth Network, and may include:
- Recommendation of eHealth standards and profiles[2] for selected eHealth use cases
- Recommendation of terminologies for selected use cases
- Minimum dataset for patient summary
- Strategic relations with standardisation organisations and European standardisation working groups

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[1] Member States may choose to select distinct experts for technical and semantic interoperability.
[2] In particular IHE integration profiles.

- Assessment and operational implementation of the results of European projects[3] (e.g. epSOS, Semantic Health Net). This may include the further development and maintenance of long term assets from these projects (e.g. Master Value Catalogue created in epSOS)
- Provision of terminologies and standards for their use in all European Member States
- Facilitation of interoperability tests
- Understanding of strategies of Member States

Organisational interoperability challenges should not be the focus of this group and should rather be referred to the eHealth Network or other experts groups.

The eHealth Network will be responsible for the steering and political alignment of the standing coordination group and for the adoption of its multi-annual work plan. The standing coordination group will report to the eHealth Network annually.

Subsequently, the eHGI recommends the setting up of a standing coordination group for semantic and technical interoperability using funds from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

The eHealth Network mandates that the eHGI specify the details of the funding, scope and procedure of the standing coordination group.

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[3] This may include the assessment of selected national projects with European significance.

Appendix 1

Sustainable EU 'standing coordination group' on semantic and technical interoperability for eHealth

27 MS

EC

eHealth Network as Political Steering Group

- Definition of scope / goals / timeline

= Permanent 'Secretariat' (no project!)

funding by EC (CEF) €

Standing Coordination Group

eHealth Stakeholder Group

Pragmatic approach

Permanent Expert Group

Academic approach

SDOs

Asset maintenace (epSOS MVC)

- Technical layer
- Primarily drawn from MSs

National eHealth competence centres

Discussion eHN: May 2013
Decision   eHN: Nov 2013
Implementation : **2014**