EIP on AHA and the Region of Southern Denmark

Investment in deployment and implementation of innovative solutions for active and healthy ageing in the Region of Southern Denmark

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The Region of Southern Denmark is the largest workplace in the region, employing around 25,000 people. Measured in turnover, the Region of Southern Denmark is also a true heavyweight, with an annual budget of DKK 20.3 billion. This is larger than the budget for the Danish armed forces, and the figure is also greater than the turnover of the biggest industrial companies in Denmark. The Region is proud to take part of the European Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing and participates in as much it is in line with already planned activities of the Region.

- What is the foreseen level of investment in deployment and implementation of digital solutions in the next 3 years?

In the Region of Southern Denmark – as well as in the rest of the country - there is a general optimism about innovation in the health and care sector and both regional as well as national programmes are investing heavily in innovation in the health and social sector. Since 2008, the Region of Southern Denmark has had a Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), which is a strategic approach to economic development through targeted support for research and innovation. The strategy is well in line with the Commission's overall growth strategy, EU 2020. Health and social innovation is one of three focus areas in the region, which falls in line with the focus area of healthy living and active ageing in the European Innovation Partnership. Through European funds (such as European Social Fund and European Development Fund), the Region invests more than 24 million Euro every year to implement the Smart Specialisation Strategy. Several of the funds are dedicated to the development and deployment of innovative solutions for active and healthy ageing. This growth model is designed to catalyse innovation and growth in the Healthy Living and Active Ageing sector to meet a triple win; to provide the citizens with a high quality experience, to improve the efficiency of the health care system and strengthen the competitiveness and growth for the businesses. So far, the monitoring and evaluation of S3 has shown impressive results as there has been an increase in employments as well as a two-digit turn-over for health and social innovation enterprises. Exact number will be made public by mid-February 2016.

Because of the smart specialisation strategy, the Region of Southern Denmark is the driving force to create the best possible framework for citizens and for the business community, and to make Southern Denmark
an active and dynamic region. There is a close cooperation with the social care providers, businesses, the labour market and academic institutions, which has been established in the cluster ecosystem of the Region of Southern Denmark. Here the ecosystem comprises a different set of actors (companies, knowledge institutions, dealmakers, investors, etc.).

The Health Innovation Centre of Southern Denmark is the entry to the Region of Southern Denmark when it comes to innovation in the health and social care sector. Established in 2012, the Centre focuses on bringing quality, efficiency and growth to the health and social sector. As an accelerator for innovation, the Centre also coordinates the effort and implementation of eHealth & TeleCare services to the public health care sector and in particular the one that crosses sectors – such as from the hospital to the social care provider. In this aspect there are several initiatives that must be noted: The CoLab Denmark programme, the Shared Care programme and the Digital Pathway project. These combined illustrates the entire pathway in the coordination of services for the citizen requiring health and care services and how these can be supported by digitalization including Internet-of-Things technologies.

Part of the Region of Southern Denmark, is the teaching university hospital of Odense. Odense University Hospital (OUH) has a bed-capacity of 1000 and has a strong focus on research and innovation. A joint research centre between Odense University Hospital and University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Centre for Innovative Medical Technology (CIMT), has been established. This virtual centre consisting of staff from both the innovation and Health Technology Assessment departments at OUH as well as senior researchers from both SDU and OUH. CIMT is the leading institution with evaluation of eHealth services in Europe and has developed the MAST evaluation model on behalf of the European commission. This model is the basis of the evaluation of a large number of EU funded projects, like United4Health, SmartCare, Beyond Silos, CareWell and MasterMind. In all projects CIMT has the responsibility for the evaluation and documentation of outcomes from the projects.

In the Region, the national cluster organisation for health and technology companies, Welfare Tech is placed. With more than 200 members, Welfare Tech is named one of the best cluster organisations in Europe for their efforts in promoting innovation, development and implementation of products and services for better healthcare and homecare.

- What activities of your organisation can contribute to the objective of scaling up innovation?

In order for an innovative service to be up-scaled, research is a prerequisite. At first a preliminary study can be done, such as a feasibility study and later a larger evaluation can follow to document the effects of the service.

Over the past 30 years, the Region has invested heavily in the field of innovation and research. Health professionals cannot afford to take risks, and therefore research is needed. They need the proof that the new service/drug/process is safe and effective. Research is also the most effective way of disseminating innovation to the medical society once this is published in a research article and available in a database, such as PubMed. So far, the deliverables published in European projects have not had the desired effect as

1 http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2859314/
2 I.e. MAST evaluation as seen here http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22617736
they are difficult to find and the medical community cannot accept them as they have not been peer-reviewed.

Once the research has been conducted, the service can now be transferred to other areas and regions. A suggestion to drive innovation forward, and to transfer knowledge between European regions, is first and foremost research but also to look at what have accomplished so far. From the European project, Mastermind, A Market Place model\(^4\) this encouraged discussions, helped build relationships between colleagues and enabled detailed learning and thus knowledge transfer. This was also a successful tool in INTERREG projects such as CASA and Regional Telemedicine Forum.

Once the service has been implemented, policy as well as incentive structures are needed to bring innovation forward. A tool that is being implemented in the Region of Southern Denmark is benefits realization. In a project model that has been developed for the Region, it is a crucial element. The project must be established on a strong business case (or similar) and during the course of the project, a plan for benefits realization will be realized as a dynamic tool in securing data collection. This is applied in order to reap the benefits that can be both qualitative and quantitative. Especially for projects that include ICT systems, the data collection will be – depending on legal and ethical requirements – simple. Having this in mind, the projects will also be able to collect data over a longer period of time, which is required when dealing with citizens with a chronic condition. Once data is collected and analyzed, the results from the benefits realization can help policy makers in driving new innovative solutions forward.

In addition, events that bring the private sector together with the public sector is important. Therefore the Region hosts with many other regional, national and international actors, an international conference specifically focusing on innovation in health and social care. WHINN\(^5\) is one week of health and innovation and will be hosted again in Odense first week of October 2016.

In sum, knowledge transfer and upscaling of innovation can be accomplished through research and evidence, and through documentation of benefits that will drive decision makers to create policies for change and innovation.

- Which are the priority areas that for these investments (type of solutions, particular areas etc.)

In 2014, the average bed-day in Denmark was 4.5 and by 2022 this must be reduced to 3.5. In 2022, a new venue will be opened for the new university hospital with a 20 % reduction of beds, which means the hospital together with its strong collaboration partners in the public and private sector is looking for new ways of meeting the future demands. In order to tackle this challenge, the Region has a strong focus on innovation in partnership with health professionals, researchers and private companies. Public-Private Partnerships will have a strong focus as well as to bring research closer to the market. Validating telemedicine and home-monitoring services will be of great importance and so will co-creation and testing of new services and products.

\(^{4}\) http://mastermind-project.eu/related-topics/how-a-market-place-event-helped-transfer-knowledge-in-mmind/

\(^{5}\) http://www.whinn.dk/