



# **HoCare - Delivery of Innovative solutions for Home Care by strengthening quadruple-helix cooperation in regional innovation chains**

## **5th Call - Extended Project**

### **Bulgaria's First Regional Stakeholders' Group Meeting**

**Friday, 28 January 2022 (hybrid, Sofia/Varna)**

## **REPORT**

### **Agenda**

10:00-10:15

Welcome and short introduction - HoCare Project extended

Main goals and ambitions

Silvia Stumpf, BAA Chairwoman

10:15 -10:30

Brief overview of the current situation in home care and the digital innovations in the sector in Bulgaria

Ognian Spasov, Senior expert, BAA

10:30 -11:00

Open Discussion: New elements in the sector of home care innovation as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Bulgarian answer to the grand societal challenges related – new programme and new RIS3 focus

Moderated by:

Silvia Stumpf, BAA Chairwoman

11:00 -11:30

Open Discussion: Identification of Good Practices in the sector of home care innovation as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – presentations and comments

Moderated by:

Boris Krastev, Senior expert, BAA

11:30 - 12:00

Wrap up – Conclusions



## PARTICIPANTS

No	Full name	Organization	Position
1	Silvia Stumpf	BAA	Chairwoman
2	Boris Krastev	BAA	HoCare Project Manager
3	Ognian Spasov	BAA	HoCare Project Expert
4	Rosen Draganov	Directorate General "European Funds for Competitiveness" at the Ministry of Economy.	"Programming and contracting of grants" state expert
5	Toni Shopov	Directorate General "European Funds for Competitiveness" at the Ministry of Economy.	"Programming and contracting of grants" state expert
6	Mariana Vasileva	Directorate "International Projects and Electronic Health Care" Ministry of Health	Director at Directorate "International Projects and Electronic Healthcare"
7	Mariana Koleva	Directorate "International Projects and Electronic Health Care" Ministry of Health	Head of Department "Programs and Projects with External Funding"
8	Rozalina Dimova	Technical University - Varna	Vice-rector
9	Todor Dobrev	ICT cluster - Varna	Board member
10	Teodora Borissova	Bulgarian chamber of commerce	Senior expert

## Summary of the meeting

Since the end of project HoCare Business agency association in Bulgaria kept its focus on continuing the improvement of policies related to better access to innovations for SMEs. BAA team and the stakeholders from the ecosystem related to innovations in home care have not ceased their work with HoCare project (Delivery of Innovative solutions for Home Care by strengthening quadruple-helix cooperation in regional innovation chains). A semestrial meeting with the HoCare stakeholders' group was held in a hybrid form on January 28 in Sofia and in Varna to discuss the actual situation with home care innovations and the possible selection of GPs in times of COVID-19 that could bring value to the common project with partners in HoCare.

HoCare project already succeeded in amending the Innovation strategy for smart specialisation in Bulgaria according the planned objectives for Bulgaria. – the RIS3 that was relevant for the previous programming period. The amendment ensured a broader access to innovation for SMEs focused at providing services for better home care through telemedicine. However, the COVID-19 crisis opened additional gaps in the sector of home care in relation to the seizure of everyday access to care. For this reason, the need for additional improvements in the sector of home care arose substantially.

The members of the Regional multi-stakeholders' group – experts from the ministries of economy and health, representatives from SMEs, chambers of commerce and academia, discussed how the need for transforming home care through utilizing more innovative ICT solutions has been answered in Bulgaria. It was agreed that many applications related to COVID-19 have been designed and implemented in very short terms,



many innovative projects have been started to respond to the unexpectedly emerged needs related to COVID-19. But unfortunately, none of the identified innovative practices has been initiated or developed with the support of public funds or through support using EU funds. Even if many schemes have been designed and implemented to support SMEs during COVID-19 they have been related only to direct financial support to compensate the decrease in financial stability of companies rather to support the implementation of innovations.

In fact, no specific new measures on financially supporting any kind of innovations in the time of COVID-19 outbreak for home carers, day care centers or other HoCare-related agents have been planned.

So, all the good practices that have been identified by the stakeholders are private initiatives. The members of the group have discussed around 10 interesting practices presented by BAA team and 3 of them have been selected to be presented before the partnership.

Main points from the meeting:

1. The process related to the financing of e-health related innovations is very slow and no significant progress can be reported in the last programming period, even in relation to COVID 19 challenges, in terms of activities supported with public funds – nor from EU, neither by the state budget.
2. New relevant Policy Instrument was introduced – the new ERDF programme “Competitiveness and innovations for enterprises” 2020-2027
3. The need for preliminary improvement of Bulgarian RIS3 – Innovation strategy for smart specialisation – for the new programming period as an “enabling condition” for approval of the program was presented by the experts from Ministry of economy as a managing authority. They suggested that BAA experts should try to get involved in this process to ensure that e-health activities are put into the focus of RIS3 for next programming period.
4. In Bulgaria e-Health activities are still at the very early stages, as shown by the latest report for HOCARE project
5. Experts from Ministry of health presented the plans for an Integrated Health Information System and related initiatives that could interrelate with HOCARE activities
6. Good practices were discussed and 3 of them selected.

I-Health is a platform that offers a modern approach in offering medical services from selected health facilities and laboratories, selected according to clearly formulated criteria such as good medical practice, modern equipment, and proven specialists.

Endourology Sofia is a website of an association of doctors specializing in urology, whose mission is to ensure the access of Bulgarian patients to timely medical consultation and remote long-term monitoring of patients.

JoinedInCare is a platform for useful information for older adults and those taking care of them. There are helpful articles about technology in favor of the elderly and information about support organizations which are there to help.

The platform enlists Care options, Care homes or Care providers in your area. It provides reviews of the services offered, the conditions cared for and the rating on the platform.



Virusafe is a mobile application, created to assist society and governmental institutions in the fight against COVID-19. The app was approved by the Bulgarian Ministry of Health. Virusafe gives users the ability to track their symptoms and health status daily, which in turn gives Ministry of Health a good overview of the spread of the pandemic. Users can also voluntarily share their location to enable institutions to act accordingly, in case of an emergency.

BAA team and stakeholders agreed on continuing to work on the improvement of policies related to boosting innovations in home care in Bulgaria together with partners from HoCare project.

