

August 2024



Interconnecting Innovation Ecosystems for Common European Data Space in Health



**Funded by the
European Union**



Grant Agreement No. 101070811

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Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	101070811	Acronym	EDAH
Full title	Interconnecting innovation ecosystems for common European data space in Health		
Project URL	https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101070811		
Project Officer	Silvi Serrequi		

Deliverable number: D4.4	Title	Policy Input Report 4: Belgian Presidency of the EU		
Work Package number: WP4	Title	X		
Delivery date	Contractual	31/08/24	Actual	31/08/24
Status	Final	Version number: 1.0	Final	
Nature	Report			
Dissemination level	Public			

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Deliverable description	Providing inputs to EU presidency agenda and co-organising the presidency-related event in Belgium.
Key words	Digital Health; Smart Health; Belgium; EU Presidencies; EHDS; Data; Innovation

History of Versions

Version	Date	Status	Page (if applicable)
V0	31-8-24	Draft circulated among partners	
V1	1-9-24	Advanced version for final revision	
V2	2-9-24	Fully revised version	
V3	2-9-24	Final version	

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Executive Summary

The present Deliverable 4.4 “Policy input report 4: Belgian Presidency of the EU” has been developed within the framework of WP4 “Fostering broad-scale dialogue linked with EU presidency agendas” of **EDAH**.

EDAH (Interconnecting innovation ecosystems for common European data space in Health) is a 2-year preparatory action funded by Horizon Europe that aims to contribute to the development of the European Health Data Space. The 4-partners-consortium seeks to establish close collaborations with the EU presidencies during the project’s lifetime, to help prioritise EHDA in their successive agendas. EDAH also seeks to engage a wide range of quadruple helix stakeholders from diverse innovation ecosystems across Europe in identifying barriers and enablers to EHDS, channelling the different Member States’ inputs into EU policy processes. By bridging the current digital health divide in Europe, EDAH contributes to the New European Innovation Agenda with more inclusive, dynamic, diverse and interconnected European innovation ecosystems.

EDAH aims to unlock the power of health data for innovative medicines and future healthcare by helping develop the European Health Data Space.

The project’s key milestones are:

1. Set an open dialogue to facilitate the agreement among Member States, Associated Countries and EU Regions about key aspects related to EHDS.
2. Advancing towards common legal, governance, data quality and interoperability framework to facilitate the advancement of EHDS.
3. Scaling up good practices and addressing important gaps in the regional and national innovation ecosystems, through a better understanding of the digital health innovation landscape.

The following report is the fourth of a series of four policy input reports in this project (including Policy Input Report 1: Czech Presidency of the EU, Policy Input Report 2: Swedish Presidency of the EU, Policy Input Report 3: Spanish Presidency of the EU and Policy input 4: Belgian Presidency of the EU). The reports are connected to the EU presidencies happening during the timespan of this preparatory action, from September 2022 to August 2024, corresponding to the end of the Czech Republic’s, Swedish, Spanish and Belgian EU council presidencies.

Introduction to this report

Specific objectives of EDAH

The partnership implementing EDAH has five specific objectives:

- O1 – Ensuring a coherent overview of the (ongoing) strategic developments related to the European Health Data Space (EU-level policy processes, important initiatives, and projects) and developing a deeper understanding of seven important EU ecosystems (innovation agendas and ecosystem stakeholders) represented by clusters/networks from Portugal, Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, Hungary and Bulgaria.
- O2 – Setting up a coordination mechanism to connect important stakeholders from innovation ecosystems all around Europe and engage them in focused dialogue around key challenges and opportunities related to advancing the EHDS.



- O3 – Scaling up the dialogue at the EU level via developing further collaboration pathways with EU presidencies.
- O4 – All of the above will be used for, step-by-step, developing, validating, and finalising the Joint Action Plan (JAP) for synergetic work in the interconnected ecosystems of EU health-related clusters/ networks (facilitated by the dialogue mechanisms and collaboration frameworks developed in this project) to jointly advance the development of the EHDS.

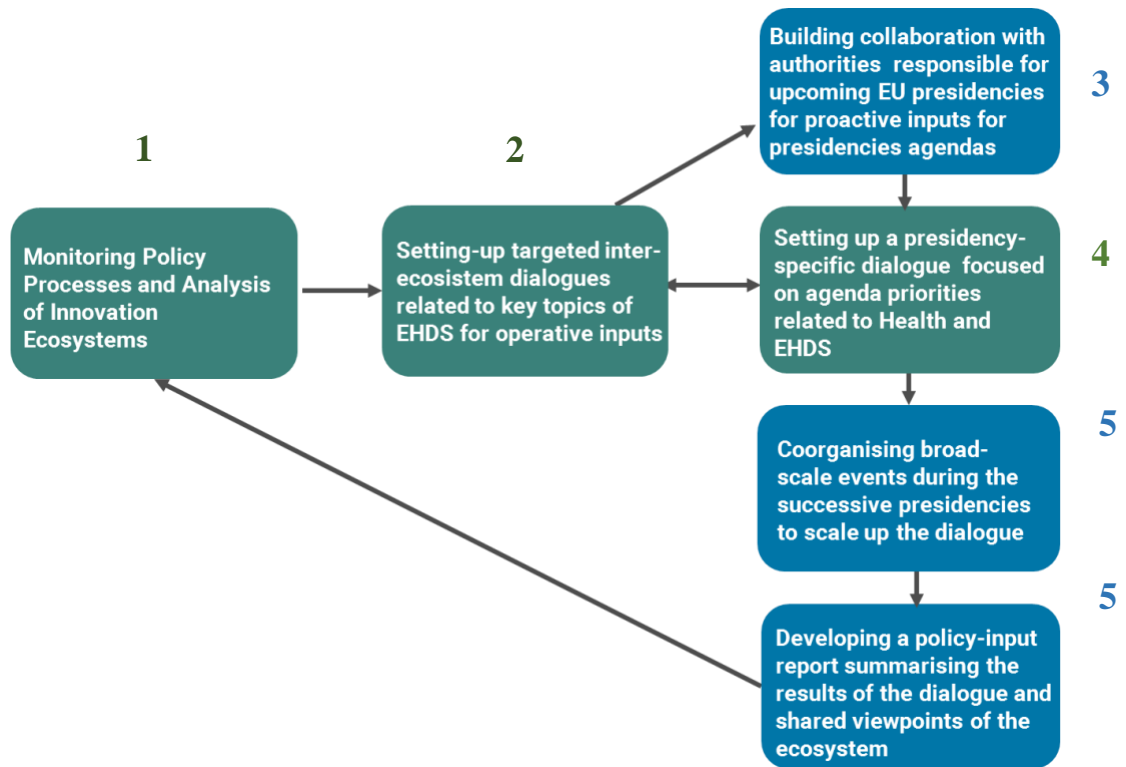


Figure 1: Workflow of the EDAH project: step 1 is the analysis of Innovation Ecosystems

List of consortium partners and beneficiary numbers

Beneficiary #	Name	Acronym	Country
1	BIOCAT LA FUNDACIO BIOREGIO DE CATALUNYA	Biocat	ES
2	HEALTH CLUSTER PORTUGAL	HCP	PT
3	SCANBALT	ScanBalt	EE
4	COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN BIOREGIONS	CEBR	BE

Work Package 4 – Fostering broad-scale dialogue linked with EU presidency agendas.

Objectives

- Scaling up the dialogue processes started in WP 4, both in terms of 1) the audience/participants in the dialogue process and 2) linkages with high-level EU policymaking (via inputs to the EU presidency agendas).
- Providing proactive input to the agendas of the EU presidencies in the project period based on complementarities/synergies identified with the priorities of the specific presidency framework regarding topics relevant to advancing the EHDS.
- Co-organising four EU-wide events linked with the upcoming four presidencies to scale up the dialogue and gather further input relevant to the Joint Action Plan.

Task 4.2 Providing inputs to the EU presidency agenda and co-organising the presidency-related event in Belgium

The consortium is consistently tracking advancements in various important EU-level policy processes and monitors progress related to initiatives such as the follow-up of the TEHDAS project and GAIA-X (e.g., key milestones achieved), relevant new studies and analyses, etc. This information will be processed and analysed to identify potential synergies, needs for action and inputs by EDAH to support important developments in line with the idea of more dynamic, inclusive, gender-diverse, and connected innovation ecosystems for the joint development of the European Health Data Space, fostering innovation in industry and the public sector.

The work under this task will materialise into monthly Strategic Progress Updates (SPUs) prepared for the monthly EDAH Coordination Working Group meetings. The SPUs will cover the key developments as well as suggestions for related responses and actions in the context of the EDAH project.

In addition, the consortium is constantly looking for opportunities to establish contacts with various key stakeholders to collaborate and provide input to the EHDS process.



1 – Overview of the outreach to relevant stakeholders in Belgium

1.1 Reaching out to the national authorities responsible for the presidency program.

As the Belgian Presidency approached, the consortium partners took several key steps to build strong relationships with local authorities and important national institutions involved in the Belgian EU Council Presidency. They proactively reached out to groups like EIT Health Belgium-Netherlands, Flanders.Bio, Sciensano, the Flemish Government, EFPIA, EuropaBio, EUREGHA and EUCOPE. These organizations showed a genuine interest in working together and being part of the ongoing conversations around the European Health Data Space (EHDS).

Thanks to these connections, members of the EDAH consortium were able to take part in various events and discussions on EHDS during the Presidency. This not only allowed them to share and gain valuable insights but also helped them align their activities with the goals of the Belgian Presidency.

In the lead-up to the period of the Belgian Presidency, the consortium partners worked hard to tap into their networks and connect with key stakeholders at the local level. These efforts were crucial in gathering information for case studies and ensuring that consortium members were actively involved in discussions about EHDS. By syncing their efforts with the Belgian Presidency, the consortium put itself in a strong position to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on health data within the EU.

1.2 Communication activities

- 1) Post about the conference “EHDS, for a Data-driven Health Transformation” on 30 May 2024) on EDAH webpage – [LINK TO POST](#)
- 2) LinkedIn post about the approval of the EHDS regulation by the European Commission (14 April 2024) – [LINK TO POST](#)
- 3) LinkedIn post about the roundtable discussion “Implementing EHDS: findings and recommendations across Europe” at the EIT Health Summit on 18 April 2024 – [LINK TO POST](#)
- 4) LinkedIn post about the session “Session: “Catalonia. A lead experience of an innovative healthcare ecosystem” at the EIT Health Summit on 18 April 2024 – [LINK TO POST](#)
- 5) LinkedIn post about the conference “EHDS, for a Data-driven Health Transformation” on 30 May 2024 – [LINK TO POST](#)

2 – Overview of the EU presidency-related events to scale up the dialogue

2.1 – Participation in the events related to the presidency

Date	Event	Dialogue
18/04/2024	Round table discussion: Implementing EHDS: findings and recommendations across Europe	Project leader Montse Daban participated a round table discussion on the implementation of the EHDS at the EIT Health summit in Rotterdam.
18/04/2024	Session: Session: "Catalonia. A lead experience of an innovative healthcare ecosystem	
27/05/2024	Rountable: De-risking Innovation in Personalised Medicine	Project partners were invited to participate the conference organised by EIT Health as part of the official EU presidency program.
28-29/05/2024	Conference: The convergence of technologies enabling R&I for the healthcare of the future	Project partners were invited to participate the conference organised by EP PerMed as part of the official program of Belgian EU Council presidency
30/05/2024	Conference: EHDS, for a Data-driven Health Transformation	Consortium members organised a conference as a side event to the Belgian EU Council Presidency in collaboration with The Flanders Government and Sciensano.

2.1 – Ecosystem involvment

Type of interaction	Person	Organisation/position
Presentation of EDAH project and discussion on the developments of the European Health Data Space and consulting on the Belgian Case Study	Hans Constantdt	Founder, CEO, Investor & Board Member of the FAQIR Institute and Foundation
Presentation of EDAH project and discussion on the developments of the European Health Data Space and consulting on the Belgian Case Study	Philip Dingemans	Policy Advisor International Relations & Healthtech Smart Hub /Province of Flemish Brabant



Discussion on the developments of the European Health Data Space and the state of play of health data in Sweden and potential collaboration on organising an event during the Belgian Presidency	Anna Wurm	Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Manager at EIT Health
Intro to the EDAH project and possible collaboration on the Belgian Case Study	Katrien Lorré	Programme Manager at flanders.bio
Intro to the EDAH project and possible collaboration on the Belgian Case Study	Willem Dhooge	Chief Operating Officer
Intro to the EDAH project and possible collaboration on an event in Brussels	Nienke Schutte	Head of Innovation in Health Information Systems unit at Sciensano
Discussion on potential collaboration during Belgian presidency	Kathleen D'Hondt	Policy Advisor Department Economy, Science and Innovation - Flemish Gov
Discussion on potential collaboration during Belgian EU Presidency	Monica Åberg Yngwe	Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Lead at EIT Health Scandinavia
Discussion on synergies between TEHDAS project and collaboration during Belgian Presidency	Elina Drakvik	Senior Lead at Sitra
Collaboration and mediating contacts.	Jan-Philip Beck	Partner at Vintura (former CEO of EIT Health)

3 – Summary of the collaboration process

3.1 – The collaboration process with the national authorities

The project partners initiated conversations with representatives from Sciensano, Flanders.bio, and the Flemish Government, successfully connecting with key contacts to discuss co-organizing an event in Brussels as part of the Belgian EU Council Presidency. Additionally, the consortium sought feedback on the results of the Belgian Case Study by engaging with various stakeholders in the Flemish health ecosystem.

One of the most significant interactions occurred with representatives of Flanders.bio, leading to a valuable connection with Hans Constandt, who provided insights on the Belgian Case Study. This relationship also opened doors to productive collaborations with Sciensano and the Flemish Government, which ultimately led to successful partnerships in organizing multiple events. These connections not only enhanced the project but also fostered ongoing cooperation with important players in the Flemish health sector.

The positions and conclusions presented during meetings and discussions under the Belgian Presidency have been compiled into a Case Study on the Belgian digital health landscape. The findings from this Case Study were shared with several representatives of the Belgian e-health ecosystem. During numerous discussions with the representatives of the government agencies and local partners, the consortium members provided relevant information about the EDHS process in Belgium and at EU level in general.

In particular, these discussions culminated in a full-day conference "EHDS, for a Data-driven Health Transformation", held alongside the Belgian Presidency as an event on 30 May 2024.



3.3 – The results of the presidency related to the EHDS

During the Belgian EU Council Presidency in 2024, a significant milestone was reached with the achievement of a political agreement on the regulation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS). This agreement marks a major step forward in the EU's efforts to create a secure and unified framework for health data across member states. The Belgian Presidency played a crucial role in facilitating discussions and negotiations that led to this breakthrough. It is expected to enhance cross-border healthcare, support medical research, and empower citizens with greater control over their health data.

August 2024

