

Briefing

October 2015 Issue 22

EU funding for research and innovation 2014-2020

Seizing the opportunities for NHS organisations

Who should read this briefing?

- This briefing will be of interest to all NHS organisations, including national bodies and regional organisations such as academic health science networks, as well as colleagues working in public health.

What this briefing is for

- The briefing outlines the background of the 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing' programme of Horizon 2020 – the EU's research and innovation funding programme, including what the funds will support in the 2016-2017 period and the main opportunities for the NHS in England and how to access the funding.

Key points

- EU research and innovation funding from Horizon 2020 offers a big opportunity for the NHS.
- The proposed funding is timely in light of increased attention on innovation for better patient outcomes.
- There is significant potential for academic health science networks (AHSNs) to act as regional drivers to promote these opportunities.
- Previous experience has proved that NHS organisations can be successful partners and leaders of projects, but there is now scope for NHS organisations to access EU funds in a more systematic way.

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Introduction

Research and innovation have never been so high on the European Union (EU) agenda. Horizon 2020, the European funding programme for research and innovation for the period from 2014 to 2020, aims to improve access to finance for research and innovation so that innovative ideas can ultimately be turned into products and services, creating growth and jobs in Europe.

The UK, particularly its academia, has significant experience of accessing EU research funding. UK organisations are the largest beneficiary of EU health research funds, having secured more than €670 million from the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) – the predecessor of Horizon 2020. There is, however, scope for greater NHS involvement and access to these funds, and the new approach introduced in the programme will facilitate NHS participation. This *Briefing* gives an overview of Horizon 2020 and of the opportunities it offers to the NHS.

Background

Horizon 2020 is the EU's overarching, multi-disciplinary research and innovation funding programme that will run from 2014 to 2020. It will see the EU contribute more than €70 billion over seven years to support the EU's position as a world leader in science, help secure industrial leadership in innovation, and help address major societal challenges.

The societal challenges addressed by the programme cover seven key themes:

- health, demographic change and wellbeing
- food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy
- secure, clean and efficient energy
- smart, green and integrated transport
- climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials
- inclusive, innovative and reflective societies
- secure societies.

Horizon 2020 provides opportunities for NHS organisations throughout the different areas mentioned above, and in particular the theme on 'health, demographic change and wellbeing'. This has an indicative budget of almost €7.5 billion, offering significant financial support for associated European research and innovation work.

Compared to FP7, the rules to participate in the new programme have been simplified and the timeline for successful projects to be selected and financed by the European Commission (EC) has been shortened, making Horizon 2020 more accessible to the NHS.

More information on Horizon 2020 can be found at www.ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020



Horizon 2020 funding for health and opportunities for the NHS

Health research and innovation is a big priority for the EU, which has placed health at the top of the 'societal challenges' strand of Horizon 2020.

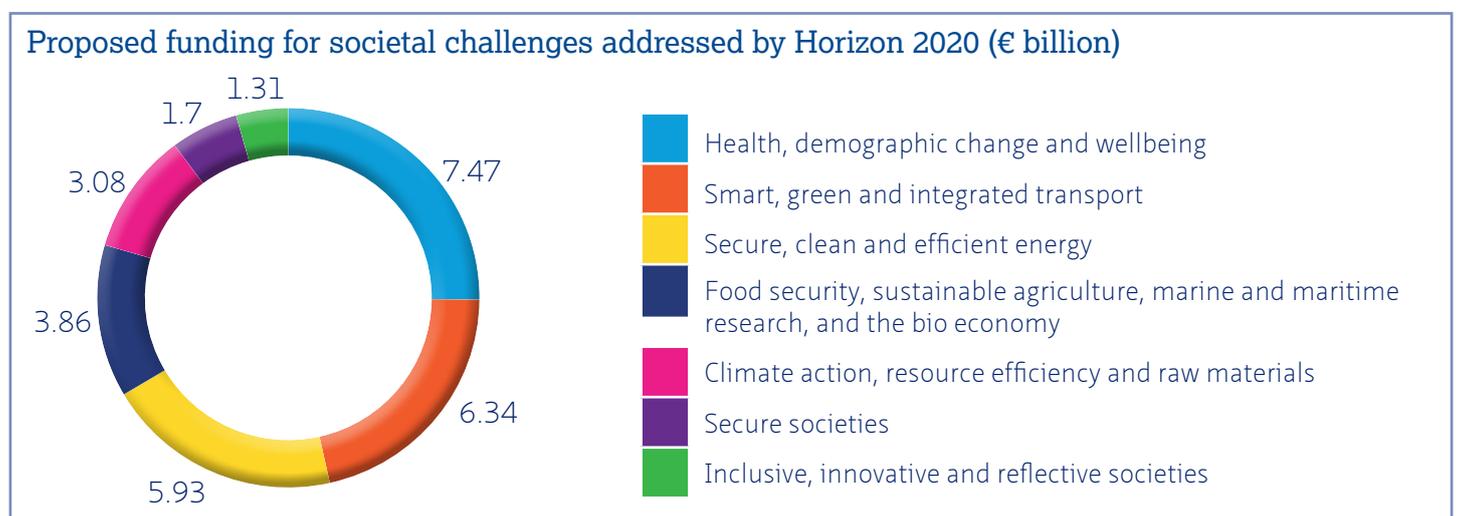
The 'health, demographic change and wellbeing' theme covers activities from research to market, with a focus on impact and innovation-related activities. Through Horizon 2020, the EC is promoting a more challenge-driven approach, encouraging the involvement of clinicians and patients and bringing together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines.

A key focus of the 'health, demographic change and wellbeing' theme is that research and ideas funded by Horizon 2020 need to be translated into practice and to demonstrate clear advantages to patients. This means that NHS organisations are in an excellent position to coordinate and partner in research and innovation projects on topics that are of clear interest to healthcare professionals, and which will have a real impact on population health and wellbeing.

The establishment of AHSNs in England is a timely opportunity to drive further NHS involvement in Horizon 2020. The greater focus Horizon 2020 places on testing and commercialisation of research fits well with the AHSNs' role in driving regional collaboration across health, academia and industry. There is potentially a key role for AHSNs in leading, coordinating and disseminating these funding opportunities.

“AHSNs can be a key driver for communicating and coordinating funding opportunities arising from Horizon 2020. Our role will be to foster collaboration and to develop the networks and experience that already exist in the region on the European stage. We are excited to work with the NHS European Office on exploring the new opportunities for EU funding on innovation in health.”

Dr Liz Mear, Chief Executive, North West Coast AHSN. This AHSN is supporting Eastern Cheshire CCG to participate in a pan European public procurement of innovation project which is designed to pilot an innovative procurement process to improve the lives of older citizens: www.stopandgoproject.eu



Priority topics for funding in 2016-2017

The EC, as the manager of these EU funds, has prepared a work programme for the next two years of implementation of Horizon 2020's theme on 'health, demographic change and wellbeing'. During 2016 and 2017, around €1 billion of funding will be available for six priority action areas in the 'personalised medicine' package, which are of interest to NHS organisations. The six priority action areas are:

- understanding health, wellbeing and disease
- preventing disease
- treating and managing disease
- active ageing and self-management of health
- methods and data
- healthcare provision and integrated care

A total of 21 topics are specified under these six areas. The EC is very clear about the results it expects from each topic. The projects need to fit in well with the anticipated impact of each topic area.

It is worth noting that 3 of these topics are specifically designed for public procurers wishing to procure innovative ICT solutions with public partners from elsewhere in Europe who have the same procurement needs. NHS organisations would be well placed to access funding under these topics.

There are also 16 coordination topics which seek to establish pan-European collaborative research on specific topics where Europe has an added value.

The headline goal of the programme is better health for all. Key aims of this work programme will be to improve health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, promote market growth and to promote active and healthy ageing by supporting the translation of research findings into hospitals and other health and care settings. This means that it has never before been so relevant for NHS organisations to be involved in planning and implementing EU research and innovation projects and in translating the results into practice.

A table giving the details of each topic specified under the six priority action areas and the coordination activities for 2016-2017 can be found online alongside this *Briefing* at www.nhsconfed.org/eupublications

“Activities supported under this Societal Challenge offer a unique opportunity to improve the quality of life of EU citizens, to position the EU as a central player in the global context and to stimulate the high quality of European research and innovation (R&I) and industrial competitiveness by mobilising relevant European R&I performers, both public and private.”

European Commission: Horizon 2020 Work Programme, Health, demographic change and wellbeing 2016-2017 (published draft)

Other initiatives funded under the health theme

Funding for the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) and Active and Assisted Living (AAL) also falls under the 'health, demographic change and wellbeing' theme of Horizon 2020. NHS organisations could also be involved in these more specific initiatives of Horizon 2020. It should be noted that they have separate processes for funding projects to the information provided in this *Briefing*. For more information on how to get involved in these initiatives, please contact the NHS European Office.

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is Europe's largest public-private initiative between the EU and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), aiming to speed up the development of better and safer medicines for patients. IMI supports collaborative research projects and builds networks of industrial and academic experts in order to boost pharmaceutical innovation in Europe. For more, see www.imi.europa.eu

The Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Joint Programme (formerly Ambient Assisted Living) is a funding framework that aims to create better conditions of life for the elderly and to strengthen the industrial opportunities in Europe through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). It supports multi-national projects (with at least three countries participating) that involve small and medium enterprises (SMEs), research bodies, health and care providers and user organisations (representing elderly people). For more, see www.aal-europe.eu



Case study: TRUST

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was the coordinator of the TRUST project that aimed to train urology scientists to develop treatments.

The TRUST project was an inter-disciplinary training network involving eight European university institutes and three enterprises that have a wide variety of complementary expertise in urology. Through the TRUST project, researchers have received training from different leading European research institutes on multiple complementary disciplines that empower them to explore and unravel the mechanisms underlying Overactive Bladder Syndrome, and to develop novel diagnostic, preventative and treatment strategies.

The project received 100 per cent funding of around €3.2 million from Marie Curie Actions.

"EU funding has been incredibly helpful in supporting the TRUST training network. I would strongly encourage NHS organisations to take a lead in future EU research and innovation grants. Based on our experience, it is important to allow plenty of time for the bid preparation and to choose your partners carefully – they must be enthusiastic, committed to the project and capable of taking the aims of the project forward."

Michelle Battye, EU Project Coordinator for TRUST

Other funding sources from Horizon 2020

Although the 'health, demographic change and wellbeing' theme offers the most obvious funding opportunities for NHS organisations from Horizon 2020, health organisations will be able to participate in other strands and themes of the programme. It would be possible, for example, to see a project on nanotechnology and health being funded through another strand of Horizon 2020. If you have an idea for a research and innovation project that does not fit with the priority areas or topics of the 'health, demographic change and wellbeing' theme, it may be worth contacting the NHS European Office before dismissing Horizon 2020.

Case study: NEO-CIRC

The NEO-CIRC project is coordinated by Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust. The project has two aims: to develop and study an age-appropriate formulation of the drug Dobutamine for newborn babies; and to develop a new definition of neonatal shock. Dobutamine is a drug that is given to newborn babies with circulatory failure after birth. Currently the drug is given off label and off licence.

The project received almost €6 million, around 77 per cent of the overall project budget, from the FP7 health programme. It brings together experts and partners from a variety of sectors including healthcare providers, universities, academic institutes and commercial companies from six European countries, plus Turkey and the USA. More information on this project can be found at www.neocirculation.eu

"In our experience, we would encourage NHS organisations to be well connected to national and international potential partners before/when applying for EU funds."

PD Dr Heike Rabe, Senior Clinical Lecturer, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, and Honorary Consultant Neonatologist, Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital

Marie Curie Actions

Marie Curie Fellowships are European research grants available to researchers regardless of their nationality or field of research. In addition to providing funding for specific research activities, the scheme allows scientists to gain experience abroad and/or in the private sector, and to complete their training with competences or disciplines useful for their careers. Britain had significant success with the scheme during the previous funding programme, receiving almost €950 million in funding over 6 years, covering nearly 3,500 British institutes in a range of subjects. Approximately €6 billion will be available for the 2014-2020 period for fellowships, research exchanges and mobility programmes. Clinical research is welcomed under this programme, which is structured around:

- **Early stage researchers**
Doctoral and initial training of researchers proposed by international networks of organisations from public and private sectors
- **Experienced researchers**
Individual fellowships for most promising experienced researchers to develop their skills through international or inter-sector mobility
- **Exchange of staff**
International and inter-sector cooperation through the exchange of research and innovation staff
- **COFUND**
Co-funding of regional, national and international researcher mobility programmes.

www.ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions



Getting a bid off the ground

Simplified rules

Horizon 2020 has simplified and streamlined processes and rules compared with previous funding programmes. The whole project management process is now electronic (including proposals, contracts and reporting) which means it should now be easier to apply to and participate in projects. The reimbursement of project costs is simpler with a single reimbursement rate for most projects. That means less paperwork and fewer audits.

In FP7, it would be normal to expect at least a year to get a decision from the European Commission about a project. However, under Horizon 2020, the time between sending an application and receiving a grant should be limited to eight months.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that European funding applications will still require a significant amount of time to develop, and the process can be challenging and competition will be strong. NHS organisations considering Horizon 2020 funding may be best advised to join project partnerships as a participant if they do not have previous experience of EU funds, rather than acting as the lead coordinator.

Calls for proposals

Funding is issued through open calls for proposals with strict deadlines for submission of projects. All projects are submitted electronically. The website dedicated to the electronic administration of EU research and innovation projects is:

www.ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal.

All 2016 topics will be single stage calls involving the submission of a full proposal from the outset. In 2017, a limited number of topics will be launched as two-stage calls, where the first stage will involve submission of a short proposal/concept note. Successful candidates will then be invited to submit a full proposal.

All organisations participating in a project will need a 'participant identification code' (PIC) to be used in project submissions. The PIC can be obtained by registering the organisation online. This can be done at any time, even in advance of the calls. In order to avoid last minute complications, it is advisable to register your organisation as soon as you can.

www.ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/register.html

The two year work programme document and the annotated model grant agreement (which interprets the legally binding agreement you will have to sign if your bid is successful) are two key documents to guide you as you prepare your bid.

www.ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf

There is also a Horizon 2020 online manual which takes you through each step of the application process.

www.ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/index_en.htm

Partnerships

Successful European projects are built on a strong level of collaboration. Projects must involve at least three partners from three different EU member states or associated countries (Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Israel, Moldova, Switzerland [partial association until Dec 2016], Faroe Islands, Ukraine)

Other countries such as the USA have a bilateral agreement with the EU and can also receive funds. It is also worth looking at the text in the topic you are applying for, as the topic may also indicate other eligible partner countries.

Identifying suitable partners is highly important but can often be challenging. The priority should be the quality of the partnerships, not the quantity. NHS organisations should be wary of involving too many project partners for the sake of obtaining high scores in the proposal evaluation, without a clear idea of how they can contribute to the success of the project and take the results of the project further. Along with universities and health institutions, industry is an increasingly important partner for projects. The involvement of SMEs is encouraged where possible, as the EU sees these organisations as the main drivers of economic growth. The trick in building a project consortium is to have a number of SMEs whose main business activity will directly benefit from the project results. In addition, companies that are used to being involved in research will understand how to actively participate in the project.

If you are looking for advice on how to find a suitable partner organisation for your project, please contact the NHS European Office.

Evaluation criteria for project proposals

The proposals submitted will be evaluated on the equal basis of scientific and technical quality, impact and quality and efficiency of the implementation. In terms of impact, it is very important for applications to demonstrate how the results of the project clearly fit with the expected results of the call for proposals. The project must also identify from the outset how it will contribute to the overall challenges defined by the EU. Projects must demonstrate that there is an added value of conducting collaborative research with European partners as opposed to research that can be effectively undertaken at national or local level. Competition for these funds is extremely high - only projects with the highest evaluation scores receive funding. It will be essential to prove the impact of the project and to consider the overall goals of the programme, which are to improve health and well-being outcomes, to promote healthy

and active ageing, to promote market growth, job creation and the EU as a global leader in the health area. Some examples of project deliverables that the European Commission may consider as high impact are; the development of new clinical guidelines, new evidence based therapies or innovations, responses to emergencies (such as Ebola), new knowledge and partnerships, more jobs and patents and better health outcomes for society and patients.

Financing

In FP7, the general rule was that the beneficiary (whether a public authority, SME or research entity) also contributed to the cost of the project. However, for Horizon 2020 most research and innovation projects can be funded up to 100 per cent by the EC. Most projects can also charge a flat rate of 25 % for overheads

The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing is a non-funding, collaborative partnership scheme where key stakeholders (end users, public authorities, industry and so on) come together to foster innovation in products, processes and services for elderly people. The scheme has awarded 32 European regions with one to three stars in recognition for the work they carry out in their own region to promote innovation in health and care systems tailored to the needs of an ageing population – they are called European reference sites on active and healthy ageing. England currently has two reference sites; Yorkshire and Humber and Liverpool.

Active and Healthy Ageing is a key priority of the 'health, demographic change and wellbeing' theme of Horizon 2020. These regions have experience of research and innovation and working with a broad European network. They are potentially key contacts and collaborators for EU research and innovation projects, particularly those focused on active and healthy ageing. Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and Ireland are also European reference sites. For more, see www.ec.europa.eu/active-healthy-ageing

What the NHS European Office can do to support your bid

Case study: DevelopAKUre

Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust coordinates a network that received a maximum 15/15 score from the EC's evaluation committee for their project proposal. The DevelopAKUre programme is a major international clinical trial supported by a European network, including 13 hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and consultancies, universities, biotech companies and national alkaptonuria (AKU) patient groups. The countries involved include the UK, France, Netherlands, Slovakia, Denmark, Italy and Sweden.

Research has indicated that nitisinone may be effective in treating AKU. The DevelopAKUre clinical trial programme aims to provide proof of the effectiveness and the safety of nitisinone in treating AKU, the results of which will allow a case to be made to the European Medicines Agency for marketing authorisation. The funding secured for this programme includes €6 million from the European Commission with an additional €5 million co-financing from project partners. For more information, visit www.developakure.eu

"It is important to understand that the European Commission will only fund research that has sufficient scale and importance to be undertaken at European level, and so is necessarily collaborative. Researchers need to understand the issues from a pan-European perspective, and not solely looking at UK-based issues."

Julia West, Deputy Director of Research and Development, Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust

The NHS European Office can assist NHS organisations wishing to apply for EU funds. We can:

- look at a project concept note and help assess whether it would be a potential fit for European funding under Horizon 2020 or other EU programmes
- support your organisation in establishing appropriate European partnerships
- help answer technical and administrative questions on proposal writing and grant management procedures
- help develop capacity in your organisation to apply for and manage EU funds, for example by organising local awareness raising events on EU funding opportunities, or by facilitating training.

The NHS European Office is working closely with the Research and Innovation Unit in NHS England to promote relevant funding opportunities to NHS organisations. See here for more information: www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/research/eu-funding

The NHS European Office also works closely with Innovate UK, which is the main agency responsible for promoting Horizon 2020 in the UK, and in facilitating UK applications. The NHS European Office is their lead partner on healthcare. The Innovate UK Horizon 2020 website is www.h2020uk.org. Innovate UK houses a national contact point for the health theme of Horizon 2020. The current contact point is Jerome de Barros at Jerome.DeBarros@innovateuk.gov.uk

For any questions on projects and EU funding opportunities, or to discuss any of the issues covered in this *Briefing*, please contact sarah.collin-godman@nhsconfed.org, (+32 2 227 6448) or michael.wood@nhsconfed.org, (+44 20 7799 8668). Please also see our page on Horizon 2020 at www.nhsconfed.org/regions-and-eu/nhs-european-office/innovation-and-eu-funding/horizon-2020

Table heading to go here

Topic	2016 call	2017 call	Anticipated EU contribution for each project	Indicative Total EU budget	Indicative Deadline for calls
Understanding Health, Wellbeing and Disease					
SC1- PM-01: Multi omics for personalised therapies addressing diseases of the immune system	x		12-15 MEUR	30 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1- PM-02: New concepts in patients stratification		x	4 – 6 MEUR	40 MEUR	4/10/2016 (1st stage)
SC1- PM-03: Diagnostic characterisation of rare diseases		x	15 MEUR	15 MEUR	11/04/2017
SC1- PM-04: Networking and optimising the use of population and patient cohorts at EU level	x		8-10 MEUR	30 MEUR	13/04/2016
Preventing Disease					
SC1- PM-05: The European Human Biomonitoring Initiative	x		50 MEUR	50 MEUR (70% of costs)	13/04/2016
SC1- PM-06: Vaccine development for malaria and/or neglected infectious diseases	x		3 – 5 MEUR	40 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1- PM-07: Promoting mental health and well-being in the young		x	2 - 4 MEUR	20 MEUR	4/10/2016 (1st stage)
Treating and Managing Disease					
SC1- PM-08: New therapies for rare diseases		x	4 – 6 MEUR	60 MEUR	04/10/2016 (1st stage)
SC1- PM-09: New therapies for chronic diseases	x		4 – 6 MEUR	60 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1- PM-10: Comparing the effectiveness of existing healthcare interventions in the adult population		x	4 – 6 MEUR	40 MEUR	04/10/2016 (1st stage)
SC1- PM-11: Clinical research on regenerative medicine	x	x	4 – 6 MEUR	30 MEUR + 30 MEUR	13/04/2016
Active ageing and self-management of health					
SC1- PM-12: PCP: eHealth innovation in empowering the patient	x		3 MEUR	18 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1- PM-13: PPI for deployment and scaling up of ICT solutions for active and healthy ageing	x		2-5 MEUR	10.5 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1- PM-14: EU-Japan cooperation on novel ICT robotics based solutions for active and healthy ageing at home or in care facilities	x		1-2 MEUR	5 MEUR	19/01/2016
SC1- PM-15: Personalised coaching for well-being and care of people as they age		x	3-4 MEUR	25 MEUR	31/01/2017
Methods and Data					
SC1- PM-16: In-silico trials for developing and assessing biomedical products		x	4-6 MEUR	19 MEUR	14/03/2017
SC1- PM-17: Personalised computer models and in-silico systems for well-being		x	4-6 MEUR	19 MEUR	14/03/2017
SC1- PM-18: Big data supporting public health policies	x		3-5 MEUR	10 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1- PM-19: PPI for uptake of standards for the exchange of digitalised healthcare records		x	3-4 MEUR	8.26 MEUR	14/03/2017
SC1- PM-20: Development of new methods and measures for improved economic evaluation and efficiency measures in the health sector		x		9 MEUR	11/04/2017
SC1- PM-21: Implementation research for scaling-up of evidence based innovations and good practice in Europe and low-and middle-income countries	x		4-6 MEUR	40 MEUR	13/04/2016

Table heading to go here

Topic	2016 call	2017 call	Anticipated EU contribution for each project	Indicative Total EU budget	Indicative Deadline for calls
Coordination Activities					
SC1-HCO-01 Valorisation of FP7 Health and SC1 research results	x		1-2MEUR	2 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1-HCO-02 Standardisation of pre-analytical and analytical procedures for in vitro diagnostics in personalised medicine	x		2 MEUR	2 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1-HCO-03 Implementing the Strategic Research Agenda on Personalised Medicine		x	5 MEUR	5 MEUR	11/04/2017
SC1-HCO-04 Towards globalisation of the JPI on Antimicrobial resistance	x		1-2 MEUR	2 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1-HCO-05 Coordinating personalised medicine research	x		2 MEUR	2 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1-HCO-06 Towards an ERA-NET for building sustainable and resilient health system models	x		1-2 MEUR	2 MEUR	13/04/2016
SC1-HCO-07 Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases		x		24 MEUR	11/04/2017
SC1-HCO-08 Actions to bridge the divide in European health research and innovation		x	1 MEUR	1 MEUR	11/04/2017
SC1-HCO-09 EU m-Health hub including evidence for the integration of m-Health in the healthcare systems	x		3 MEUR	3 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-10 Support for Europe's leading Health ICT SMEs	x		3 MEUR	3 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-11 Coordinated action to support the recognition of Silver Economy opportunities arising from demographic change	x		1 MEUR	1 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-12 Digital health literacy	x		2 MEUR	2 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-13 Healthcare Workforce IT skills	x		0.5 MEUR	0.5 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-14 EU-US interoperability roadmap	x		1 MEUR	1 MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-15 EU e-Health interoperability conformity assessment	x		1 MEUR	1MEUR	16/02/2016
SC1-HCO-16 Standardisation needs in the field of ICT for Active and Healthy Ageing	x		1 MEUR	1 MEUR	16/02/2016

Please note these topics are based on the draft 2016-2017 work programme published by the European Commission in September 2015 and topics, budgets and deadline dates may be subject to change.

The NHS European Office

The NHS European Office has been established to represent NHS organisations in England to EU decision-makers. The office is part of the NHS Confederation. EU policy and legislation have an increasing impact on the NHS as a provider and commissioner of healthcare, as a business and as a major employer in the EU. Our work includes:

- monitoring and influencing EU policy and legislation in the interest of the NHS
- facilitating access to EU funds for NHS bodies and their partner organisations
- supporting pan-European collaborations and sharing successful EU practices.

For more information on EU affairs of importance to the NHS and to get in touch with the NHS European Office, visit www.nhsconfed.org/europe or email european.office@nhsconfed.org

NHS European Office

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