

Leveraging EU funds for health system transformation

Workshop on the Health Investment Hub

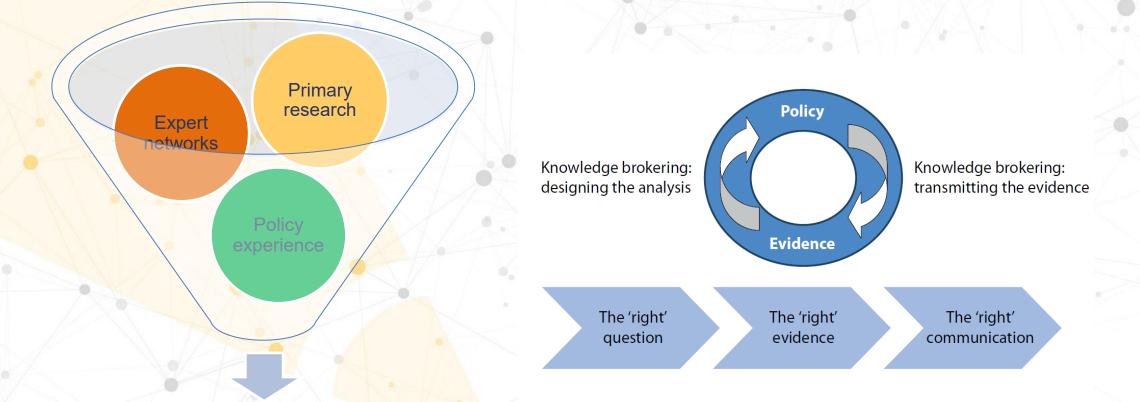
Dimitra Panteli & Nicole Mauer

The Observatory is...

- 1. A WHO hosted partnership building bridges between policy makers and research and across countries
- 2. A collection of Member States, EU, decision makers, academics & health system actors who are focused on generating and communicating evidence for policy
- 3. A project that delivers for countries through its 4 functions:
 - Country monitoring
 - Policy analysis
 - Health systems performance assessment and
 - Knowledge brokering
- 4. A resource for planners, policy and decision makers



The OBS model of supporting decision makers and tailoring evidence outputs





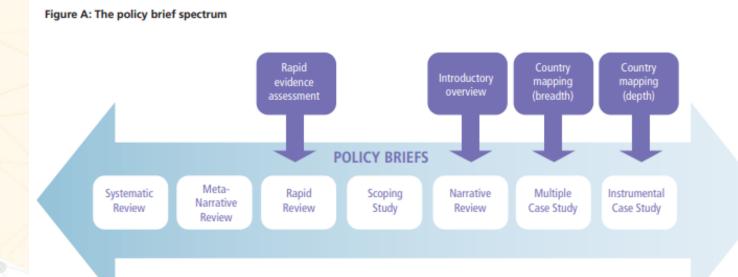
Support to Member States

and EURO colleagues





The policy brief spectrum:

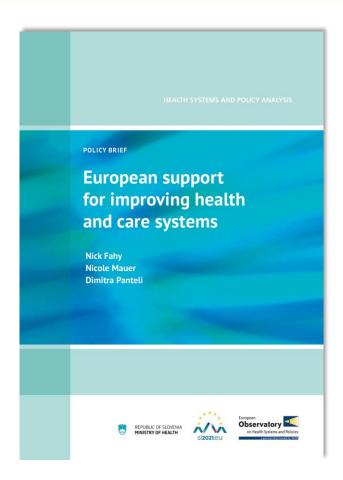


Tailoring approaches to different policy issues



Policy Brief: How can we capitalise on EU tools?

- 2021 Slovenian Presidency: mapping of European Union support for improving health and care systems
- Though health systems are primarily the responsibility of Member States, the EU provides an increasingly shared context
- A wide range of EU tools related to health systems have grown up over time
 - Not always clear what is available and how to access
 - How can these tools be combined effectively?





European support along the process of change

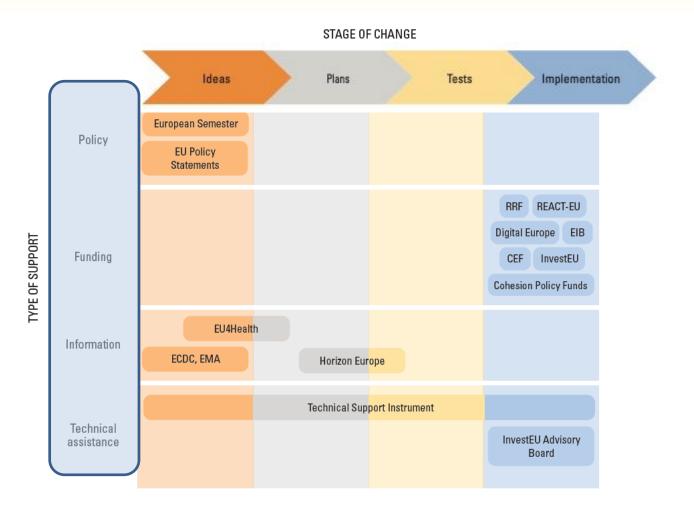
- Ideas
 - What are the overall policy aims?
 - Good practice elsewhere?
- Plans
 - Detailed options for implementation
 - Who and how: Stakeholders, financing, evaluation
- Tests
 - Pilots, small-scale tests
- Implementation
 - Large-scale system change in practice





Many instruments, different uses and objectives

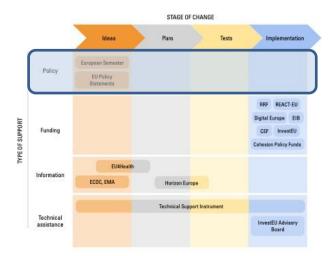
- Which types of support does the EU provide?
- Which stage can each instrument help with?





Policy: Providing direction

- Country-specific recommendations within the European Semester
 - Recommendations for health systems have become central
 - Linkage to Recovery and Resilience Facility
- EU policy statements for coordinated health action
 - Commission Communications
 - European Health Union
 - Council Recommendations and Conclusions





Funding: New infrastructure for health systems

Cohesion funds

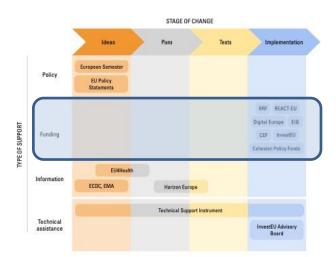
 Infrastructure (including technology and medical equipment), skills and training, health promotion

European Investment Bank

- Low-cost loans
- Large infrastructure (hospitals), but also Primary Health Care (e.g.: Austria, Ireland)

Recovery and Resilience Facility

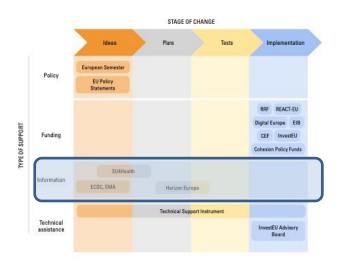
- Temporary additional boost to recovery after Covid
- Health is one of six priority pillars
- Use shaped by national plans, several incorporating health (e.g.: Germany, Italy, France, Austria)





Information: Evidence for action

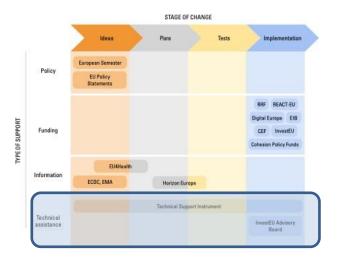
- EU4Health
 - Widest range of health-relevant activities
 - Cross-country evidence, best practices, cooperation, models for implementation, expert advice
- Horizon Europe
 - Focus on technological innovation
 - Emerging research on health systems
- EU agencies
 - ECDC, EMA
 - Expert advice and scientific evidence





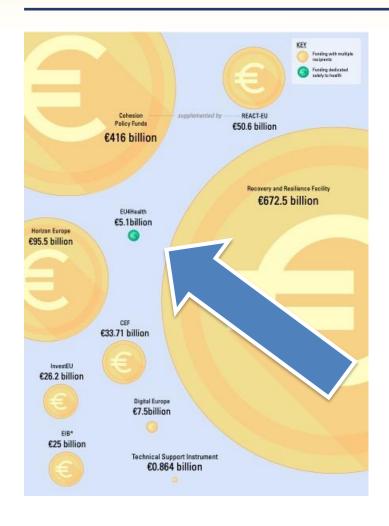
Technical assistance: Adapting to the national context

- Technical Support Instrument
 - Expert support across all stages of change
 - Potential to implement country-specific recommendations from European Semester, Recovery and Resilience Facility
- InvestEU Advisory Hub
 - Technical assistance to plan, develop and implement investment projects drawing on EU funds





Maximising EU support requires combining tools



The EU has many instruments that can potentially support health systems

- Challenge of aligning different objectives with the needs of health systems
- Different health systems have different needs and interests in having EU support
- There is scope for making process of identifying and combining tools easier to navigate for policy-makers

Comparative size of different EU funding tools

EU4Health is the only tool dedicated exclusively to health



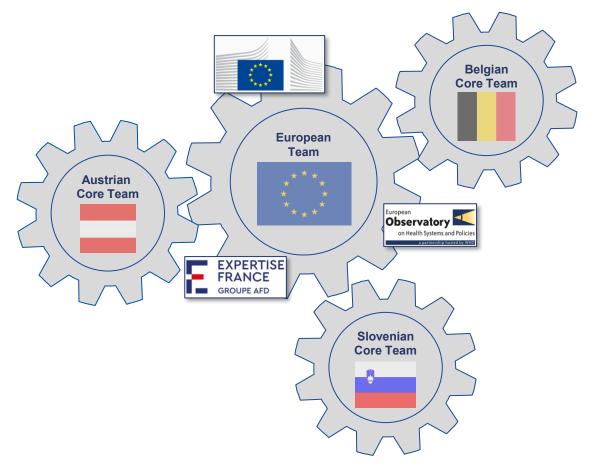
TSI 2022 – 2024: Resources hub for sustainable investment in health

A multistakeholder project with two workstreams

Work stream 1: Making the case for public investment in health

Work stream 2: 'One-stop-shop' EU Health Resources Hub

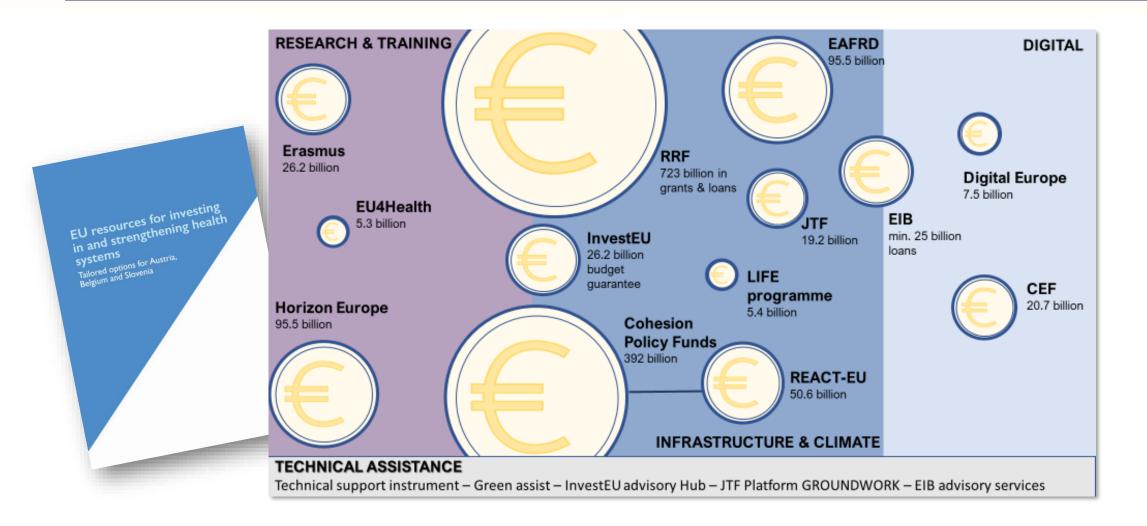
- ➤ Austria: Greening health care facilities
- Belgium: Implementing population health management for integrated care
- ➤ Slovenia: Strengthening primary health care through a telephone triage system



Adapted from Knoll & Fornaroli, 2024



WS 2: EU resources for investing in and strengthening health systems





COHESION POLICY FUNDS

POLICY AREA: Regional cohesion poli AREA OF SUPPORT: Research & Trail

HEALTH SYSTEM BUILDING BLOC

BUDGET: EUR 392 billion32

BACKGROUND

Previously known as the European Struc collectively one of the largest and oldest 2027), these funds are combined with na Cohesion Policy Funds include the follow nighlighted in bold):

- The Cohesion Fund
- The European Regional Develop
- The European Social Fund Plus (
- The Just Transition Mechanism (JTM Facility (PSLF), and the Just Transition

EU Regulation 2021/1060 sets up a com programmes 90. As part of the Cohesion called into life to increase available fundir the pandemic91. REACT-EU constitutes a allocations and was distributed to eligible Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEA

OBJECTIVES

Broadly, the aim of these funds is to stree egions and to promote balanced social Cohesion Policy funds support actions in

- Greener Europe: promoting a clean mitigation and adaptation measures
- Connected Europe: enhancing mobil
- Inclusive Europe: implementing the of Social Rights
- A Europe closer to citizens: fostering development at territory and local I

The individual Cohesion Policy instruments are presented in f detail in the following pages.

EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) (33,34)

POLICY AREA: Regional cohesion policy

AREA OF SUPPORT: Infrastructure & Climate; Digital

HEALTH SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS: Service delivery: Medical products, vaccines &

BUDGET: EUR 200 billion (including EUR 537 million to Austria; EUR 1.15 billion to Belgium; EUR 1.54 billion to Slovenia)

BACKGROUND

The ERDF has traditionally funded numerous health infrastructure projects, including modernisation projects and the roll out of new digital infrastructure, which have been particularly beneficial to some of the newer EU Member States. For the 2021-27 period, funding opportunities are focused primarily on the first two overarching policy objectives of the Union's Cohesion Policy.

OBJECTIVES

The ERDF's primary objective is to fund projects aimed at correcting regional imbalances across the Union. Particularly regions which are experiencing specific social, economic, or demographic challenges can receive financial support to reduce disparities with other Euro-

Eligible organisations include public institutions, universities, associations, NGOs, voluntary organisations, as well as some private sector organisations (including small businesses) Funding is usually allocated directly to projects, not authorities. This requires interested parties to submit a project proposal for funding. There is no minimum size or minimum number of participating organisations for projects.

APPLICATION PROCESS

ERDF funding is under shared management by the European Commission and competent regional and national authorities in Member States. Applications are processed and evaluated by managing authorities, which can be found for each country on the European Commission's website (85). They are in charge of running calls for project proposals, selecting which projects to finance and supervising implementation, with objectives for financing projects laid out in tailored Operational Programmes for each region.

GOOD TO KNOW

30 % of the overall allocated funding must be spent towards climate objectives, 8 % towards sustainable urban development.

Funding allocation varies by regional development status:

More developed regions must dedicate at least 85 % to the first two Cohesion policy objectives (i.e., a smarter and greener Europe), transition regions are to spend at least 40 %, and less developed regions at least 25 % on the first policy priority (smarter Europe), respectively.

The ERDF is compatible with other funding instruments, notably Horizon Europe, where different types of synergies can be possible, including simplified selection processes based on seals of excellence, transfer of funds across instruments or cumulative funding of the same project.

Instrument	DG and/or Ex- ecutive agency responsible	Area of sup- port (Research & Training; Infra- structure & Cli- mate; Digital)	Type of sup- port (Funding, technical support and/or other)	Type of man- agement (Direct, indirect, and/or share)	Single vs. multi- country projects	Budget size	Where and when to apply?
Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) (28–31)	DG ECFIN RECOVER	Research & Training; Infra- structure & Climate; Digi- tal	Funding (Loans, Guaran- tees, Quasi-eq- uity and/or di- rect equity)	Direct and in- direct man- agement	There is no obliga- tion to include cross border projects	EUR 723.82 billion	National RRP al- ready approved. Eventual funding op- portunities are coun- try specific.
Cohesion Policy Funds (32)							
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) (33,34)	DG REGIO	Infrastructure and climate; Digital	Funding (Grants, Loans, Microcredit, Guarantees, Equity)	Shared man- agement	Cooperation be- tween regions and countries is not re- quired, but possible	EUR 200 billion including: EUR 537 million for AT; EUR 1.15 billion for BE; EUR 1.54 billion for SI	Member State spe- cific. Refer to the managing authority of the concerned re- gion.

Building a hands-on catalogue of instruments

31



Different types of management, different rules

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Cohesion Policy Funds (32)							
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Austria's pilot case: Greening health care facilities

The Austrian health system generates 7% of the national CO2 footprint

- New Competence Centre for Climate and Health within Austrian Public Health institute, *Gesundheit Österreich* (GOEG).
- In 2022, the Competence Centre launched the pilot project *Beratung klimafreundliche Gesundheitseinrichtungen* [Consulting for climate-friendly health care facilities].
- Project supports health care facilities across Austria with identifying, planning and implementing initiatives to move towards climate neutrality in coming years
 - o Development of a tailored action plan for each participating facility



Austria's pilot case: Greening health care facilities

Areas of intervention

- Infrastructure (Renewing buildings)
- Energy (Enhancing energy efficiency and potentiating use of renewables)
- Green spaces (Creating more green spaces)
- Mobility (Expanding availability and use of greener transport modalities)
- Resource and waste management (Improving the use and management of resources)

- Sustainable procurement (Redesigning procurement practices)
- Food provisioning (changing what is on offer and optimising food waste management)
- Awareness raising and communication (raising awareness among staff)
- Organisational integration of climate change mitigation measures (integrating environmental management approaches)

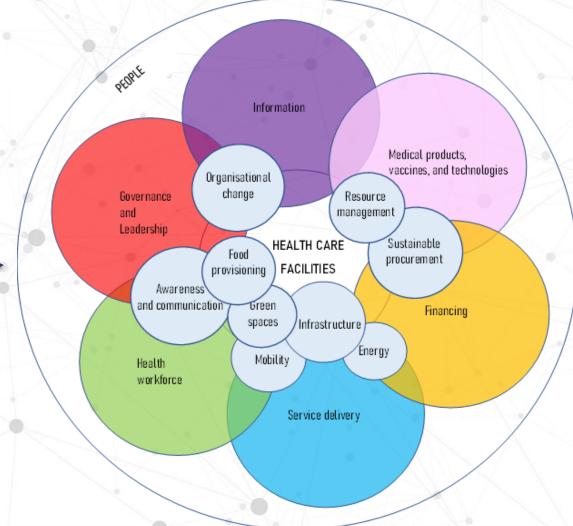
Targeted areas of intervention were clustered into two categories that could benefit from EU funding:

- Cluster 1: Infrastructure, energy, and green spaces
- Cluster 2: Awareness, communication, and organisational integration of climate change mitigation



Austria's framework: Mapping instruments by building block & area of intervention





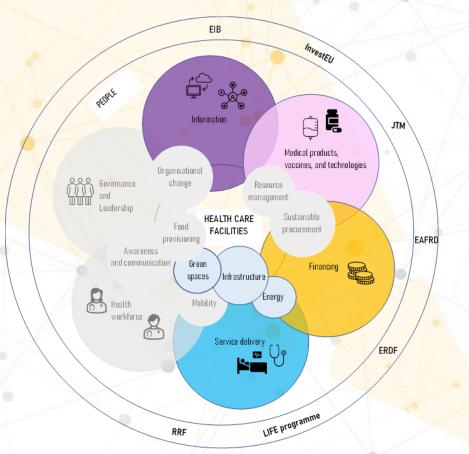


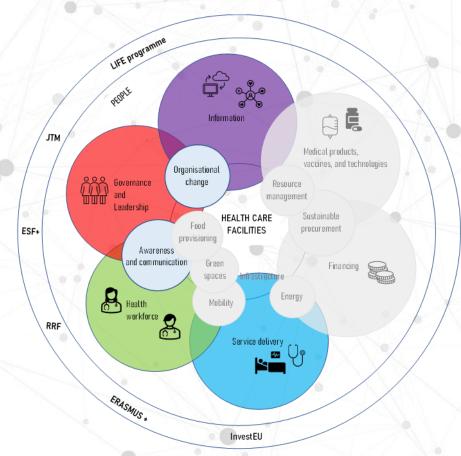
Austria's tailored mapping: Greening health care facilities

1 Infrastructure, energy, and green spaces

es

Awareness, communication, and organisational integration







Austria's tailored mapping: Overview of relevant instruments

- Infrastructure and energy projects complemented by initiatives for organisational change
- Multiple instruments are relevant for both clusters
- Funding may be blended with advisory support or other types of financial services, provided appropriate synergies are established; double financing to be avoided
- For instruments under shared management, funding earmarked for specific outputs - opportunities for support can be explored with the competent managing authorities

Instruments	Type of management (Direct, indirect, and/or share)	Single vs. multi-country projects	Where and when to apply?	Comments
LIFE programme	Direct and indirect management	Single country projects	Call for proposals can be found on the EU Funding & Tenders portal (52)	To improve the physical spaces, infrastructure, and energy characteristics of healthcare facilities (Cluster 1) To support training, awareness raising and organisational integration (Cluster 2)
RRF	Direct and indirect management	Single country projects	National RRP already approved. Eventual funding opportunities are country specific.	To improve the physical spaces, infrastructure, and energy characteristics of healthcare facilities (Cluster 1) To support training, awareness raising and organisational integration (Cluster 2)
ERDF	Shared management	Multi-country possible but not mandatory	Application to be submitted directly to the managing authority of the concerned region.	To improve the physical spaces, infrastructure, and energy characteristics of healthcare facilities (Cluster 1)
EAFRD	Shared management	Single country projects	Subject to calls for proposals through managing authorities at national and regional level	To improve the physical spaces, infrastructure, and energy characteristics of healthcare facilities (Cluster 1)
InvestEU	Indirect and direct management	Multi-country possible but not mandatory	Project initiators should reach out directly to implementation partners in order to explore appropriate financing options based on the financial instruments backed by the EU guarantee.	To improve the physical spaces, infra-structure, and energy characteristics of healthcare facilities (Cluster 1) To support training, awareness raising and organisational integration (Cluster 2)
Erasmus+	Indirect and direct management	Multi-country	Detailed information on opportunities scopes, deadlines and application can be found in the programme guide (60)	To support training, awareness raising and organisational integration (Cluster 2)
ESF+	Direct, indirect, and shared management	Multi-country possible but not mandatory	Application to be submitted at the national level	To support training, awareness raising and organisational integration (Cluster 2)
JTF	Shared management	Single country projects	Subject to calls for proposals through managing authorities at national and regional level. Only specific regions are eligible (as set out in the territorial plans)	To support training, awareness raising and organisational integration (Cluster 2)

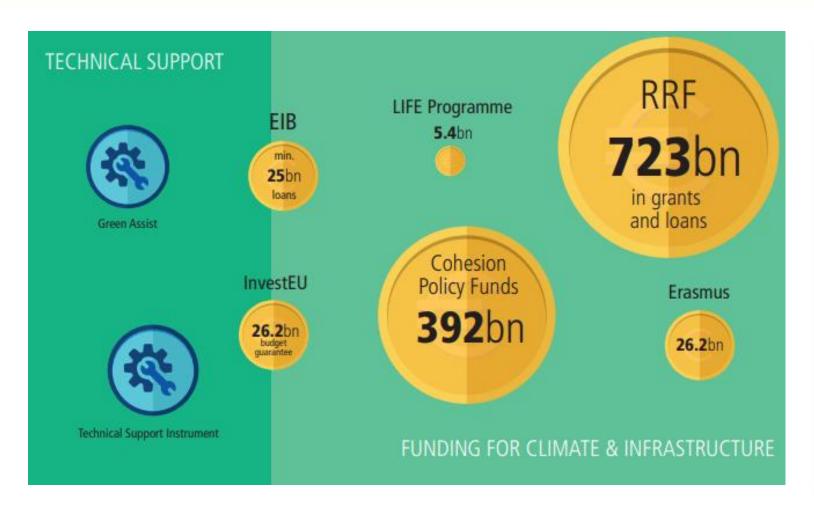
Bringing stakeholders together, building the foundations for the future







EU instruments relevant for Austria's greening needs







Austrian hospital carriers target the LIFE programme

- Tirol Kliniken: Health Education Getting Green
 - Renovation and refurbishment of hospital facilities + green skills training programme
- KAGes: Psychiatric Ward Bruck an der Mur,
 - New wood-hybrid construction, geothermal plant, heat pump, roof garden and surrounding gardens





Austrian hospital carriers target the LIFE programme

Early lessons:

- EU instruments suitable for greening interventions are usually not set out to fund projects in the health sector
- Timing is a key challenge: projects need to match with programmes' timeframes, application requirements and eligibility criteria
- External support and experience often needed due to complexity of application process and requirements (e.g., need for a business plan)
- Highly competitive and resource intensive process The application submitted by Tirol Kliniken was 100+ pages and entailed one full-time equivalent for duration of application process





The Austrian experience beyond the hub: Implementing primary care reforms

Figure 1: Roadmap of the Austrian experience: challenges, changes and utilised EU tools

Identifying reform challenges · 2 in 3 primary health care practitioners at retirement age by 2030 Underprovision in rural areas · High expenditure on Devising an action plan inpatient care · Increased demands from · Promote a smooth ageing populations and generational shift and secure chronic diseases primary care in rural areas · Increase attractiveness of a career in primary care Initiating a reform · Increase and improve health care facilities 2013-2017: Goverance reform · Scale up multidisciplinary 2017: Primary Health Care Act teams in primary care 2017 - ongoing: Organisational and structural improvements to meet future demands Structural Reform Support Service Can we leverage support Technical support to develop a beyond the national level to implement a reform? toolkit for primary care practitioners: · Consultancy services . Start up guide · Dissemination strategy and European Investment Bank training of regional . Loans, financial, and advisory administrators support to build new primary care facilities and rehabilitate existing infrastructure Recovery and Resilience Facility · National Recovery Plan: 100 million euros for primary · New infrastructure, greeing and digitalisation of existing

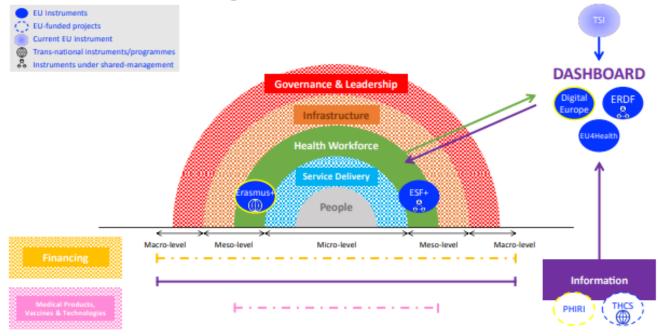
Austria combined several EU instruments in support of their primary care reforms, including:

- 1. Technical support from the Structural Reform Support Service (now TSI)
- 2. Loans and financial advisory services from the EIB
- 3. Funding from the RRF and EAFRD

Source: Authors' illustration.

The Belgian pilot: Implementing PHM approaches for integrated care

Figure 15 EU instruments to support health workforce and other relevant stakeholders' training on population health management and on data collection and integration



related IT infrastructure

Developing a digital PHM dashboard and

- Digital Europe
- ERDF
- EU4Health
- Providing training on PHM approaches and data collection/integration
 - Erasmus+
 - **ESF+**

Source: Authors' compilation, adapted from references 13, 24 and 25.

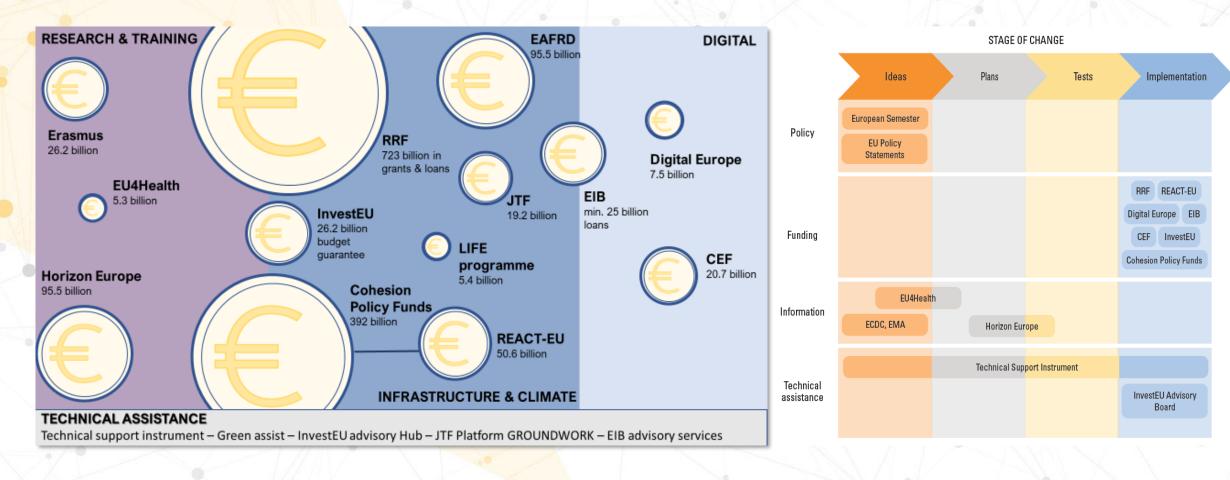
The Slovenian pilot: Strengthening access to primary health care

Mapping of relevant EU Figure 16 instruments for the Slovenian pilot case Governance Leadership **Health Workforce** EU4Health Horizon Europe TSI Digital Europe **CEF Digital** ERDF RRF InvestEU ESF+ Erasmus+

- 1. Development of an implementation plan for introduction of a telephone triage and advice system
- 2. Upgrading existing telecommunication and/or digital infrastructure
- 3. Development of tailored training opportunities for staff to manage the triage system

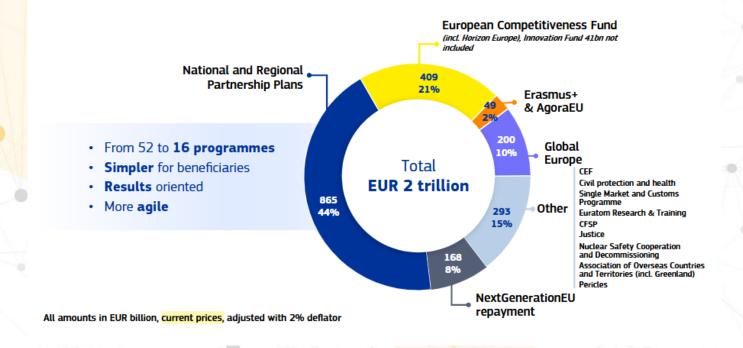
Source: Authors' compilation, adapted from reference 22.

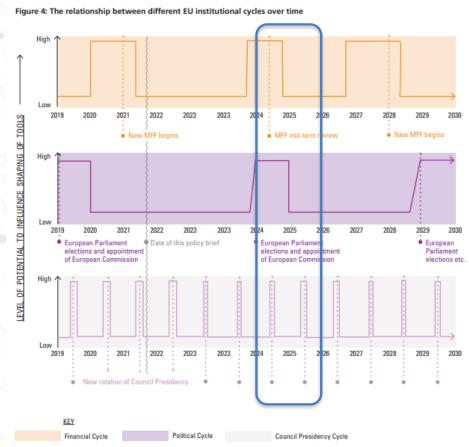
Looking ahead: How will the funding landscape change?





Discussions on the new MFF and a proposed Competitiveness Fund are underway







Early considerations for the new MFF

- Changes may have important implications for health systems, but extent is difficult to foresee as:
 - Different funding instruments tend to fund different types of initiatives along the stages of change (e.g., EU4Health: evidence for action vs. ERDF: infrastructure)
 - There are important differences in budgetary size and other characteristics (e.g., RRF and Cohesion Policy Funds offer comparatively larger share of funding for health)
- Funding instruments may substantially change but the expertise and capacity needed to use them may not
- Proposals focus on simplifying and streamlining processes but how will access to funds work in practice?



Thank you



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