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A Look Back at the EU RTD Programme FP-6

In our previous issue, we provided an overview of healthcare IT projects awarded under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research. As noted, many underscore the EU's response to its e-Health agenda and pathways to use IT to cope with the challenges of an ageing population. Given below is a summary of healthcare IT projects under the Sixth Framework Programme.

Healthcare IT Projects in FP-6

The EU's Sixth Framework Programme for Research (FP-6), which ran from 2001 to 2006, had 54 key healthcare IT projects, with total EU funding of 197.4 million Euros. Though most projects fell under the e-Health sub-heading of FP-6's Information Society Technologies Activity, we have re-classified them according to the five categories used in the current Seventh Programme.

This is designed to facilitate comparison and assess elements of continuity and/or re-prioritisation. Given the difficulties with demarcation, we have preferred the 'IT architecture and infrastructure' category to profile projects, which might well have an applicative element in patient safety, but where the over-arching challenge involves IT, above all in terms of interoperability, real-time access to distributed data, and standards.

The five groups, along with project numbers and EU funding are: IT architecture and infrastructure (18 projects, 53.1 million Euros), advanced ICT for patient safety (22 projects, 102.04 million Euros), personal health systems (6 projects, 12.19 million Euros), ICT and ageing (4 projects, 9.93 million Euros), bioinformatics and robotics (4 projects, 19.95 million Euros).

In this issue of *Healthcare IT Management*, we provide an overview of projects in three categories: IT architecture and infrastructure, as well as ICT and ageing and bioinformatics and robotics. We shall describe the remaining two (advanced ICT for patient safety and personal health systems) in our next issue.

ICT and Ageing:

The 4 project consortia were led by organisations in Germany, Italy and Spain (2 projects), with EU support averaging about 2.5 million Euros per project.

IT Architecture and Infrastructure:

The 18 projects had consortia led by organisations in Italy (7 projects), followed by the Netherlands and Turkey (3 each), and one each for Austria (the single largest project in terms of funding), as well as Belgium, France, Germany and Sweden. Interestingly, in the light of intense debates on the subject, three key health systems interoperability projects were headed by Turkey'sMiddle East Technical University.

Bioinformatics and Robotics:

4 projects with consortia led by organisations based in Italy, the UK and Spain (2 projects). The most ambitious (and expensive) effort seeks to provide decision support systems for cerebral aneurysms and is led by Spain's University Pompeu Fabra.

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