Interreg Danube Region

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DIGI4Care

Towards AI-supported healthcare

Policy Factsheet

Recommendations to support national decision-making in taking up digital healthcare technologies

prepared by Health RTD Cluster (HRTD_BA), Republika Srpska (RS), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Key messages

1. Digital healthcare technologies and tools can be successfully implemented in long-term care settings in less-developed Danube Region countries — **the innovation gap is bridgeable** through transnational cooperation.
2. Policymakers in RS can use validated transnational evidence from Pilot 4 to **build the case for public investment in digital healthcare technologies** for elderly patients with dementia and cognitive disorders.
3. Regulatory, financing, and skills-related barriers to digital healthcare adoption in RS (BiH) can be systematically addressed through the strategies and action plans developed within DIGI4Care.

Learnings & Results

As partner of **DIGI4Care** (Transforming patient journeys through digital innovation in healthcare) in Pilot 4, Health RTD Cluster (HRTD_BA) coordinated the **introduction of digital cognitive rehabilitation tool** at **Retirement home (JU Dom Penzionera), Banja Luka, RS.** Over 40 **patients with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or other cognitive disorders** participated in the pilot. Tablet-based cognitive **rehabilitation software was deployed in a long-term care setting,** representing the first structured transnational pilot of this kind in RS. Healthcare professionals at **Retirement home** were trained using the DIGI4Care Training and Capacity-Building Toolbox prior to the pilot. In parallel, HRTD_BA coordinated the transnational knowledge-building activity, gathering local data on barriers and good practices in digital health adoption across the Danube Region. Especially the training of healthcare professionals at **Retirement home** using the DIGI4Care Training Toolbox, the implementation of tablet-based cognitive rehabilitation software for 40+ patients, and the coordination of the transnational knowledge-building workshop series covering seven thematic dimensions of digital health adoption contributed to our **learning from the project and its results**.

Main results achieved through the participation in the project include:

- **Increase of institutional capacity:** HRTD_BA and its associated partner - **Retirement home** gained hands-on experience in implementing and evaluating digital health tools in a care setting. Healthcare professionals received structured training on cognitive rehabilitation software, significantly enhancing the care team's digital skills.

HRTD_BA also strengthened its capacity as a regional knowledge cluster by coordinating transnational knowledge-building activity and actively participating in co-creation and co-evaluation processes across the project.

• **Use of Digi4Care strategies and action plans:** HRTD_BA co-elaborated an Institutional-Level Action Plan aligned with the Digitally Enabled Integrated Care Model (ICM) strategy, adapted to the RS healthcare context. This action plan provides a concrete roadmap for integrating digital technologies into healthcare provision in RS, covering regulatory compliance, skills development, and technology financing.

• **Uptake and use of Digi4Care solutions:** HRTD_BA utilised the DIGI4Care relevant digital health solutions suitable for the RS context. The Training and Capacity-Building Toolbox was directly applied at **Retirement home** to prepare healthcare professionals for AI-supported digital tool for cognitive rehabilitation. HRTD_BA also contributed to and will continue to use the project Dashboard to support evidence-based advocacy toward national decision-makers. Upon completion, the project's outcomes aim to deliver country-specific insights and facilitate evidence-based decision-making by policymakers.

Integrate the DIGI4Care Digitally Enabled Integrated Care Management (ICM) Strategy and the Institutional Action Plan as a foundational policy framework to embed AI and digital solutions in RS's public healthcare system.

Benefits for policymakers

The DIGI4Care Pilot demonstrated that tablet-based cognitive rehabilitation tools can be integrated into long-term care in RS, with over 40 patients enrolled at **Retirement home**. Evidence from this pilot, combined with data from partner sites in the Czech Republic and Austria, gives policymakers a comparative transnational picture to inform investment in digital elderly care. The DIGI4Care project outcomes serve as a foundation for a sustainable digital health ecosystem in RS.

- **Enhanced Information Sharing**
- **Strengthened Skills in Healthcare**
- **Policy Frameworks & Tools**
- **Data-Driven Decision Making**
- **Improved Transnational Cooperation**

Recommendations for policymakers

In the context of RS (and BiH), policymakers should consider for improving healthcare policy:

1. **Invest in digital literacy programmes** for healthcare professionals in public hospitals and long-term care facilities, utilizing the DIGI4Care Training Toolbox.
2. **Establish a national financing model for digital health technologies** in elderly care, informed by pilot business case analyses.
3. **Implement the DIGI4Care Digitally Enabled ICM Strategy** and Institutional Action Plan as a policy framework for integrating digital solutions into the public healthcare system of RS.