Medtech4 Europe
Interreg Europe

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

Stimulating medical technologies: the role of regional innovation policies

A policy paper from Medtech4 Europe project partners

La Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

The Capital Region of Denmark

FONDAZIONE CLUSTER LOMBARDO TECNOLOGIE PER GLI AMBIENTI DI VITA

DÉL-DUNÁNTÚLI RIÜ

GAPR

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

STEINBEIS-EUROPA-ZENTRUM

provincie limburg

With this Policy Paper, eight regions of Medtech4 Europe consortium[1] aim to share their mutual learnings and experience resulting from the first phase of their **Interreg Europe** project. They plan some significant changes in their policies to better support their medical technology ecosystems and will conduct specific actions in 2021 and 2022. All rely on a specific and detailed comparison or "benchlearning" exercise that will shine some light on the strong and unique assets of regions, succeeding to set up a dynamic environment for medical technology research and innovation.

This paper describes these different perspectives to better stimulate knowledge, innovation, internationalisation and competitiveness. This particular point of view from regions is obviously invaluable in the current context shaken by the COVID-19 outbreak and the need to better support EU industrial ecosystems, especially in health products.

The Medtech4 Europe partners recommend to enhance outreach about these policies and to make Europe an attractive landscape for medical technology investment. They do not claim to cover the full range of possible actions to implement in Europe. Other regions, represented in the S3P-IM Medtech platform[2], present similar assets to the same objectives.

Representatives of the eight partners regions would welcome the consideration of this document in future EU conversations on the strategic research agenda of Europe regarding innovation in medical technology.

This policy paper has been written by Francoise Charbit, CEA, advising partner of Medtech4 Europe

[1] Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region (FR) - Baden Württemberg, represented by Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum der Steinbeis Innovation gGmbH (DE) - The Capital Region of Denmark (DK) - Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council (FI) - South Transdanubia (HU) represented by South Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency Nonprofit Ltd - Lombardy (IT) represented by Foundation Lombardy Cluster Technologies for Living Environment / TechForLife - Province of Limburg (NL) - Upper Silesia (PL) represented by Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development Ltd. (GAPR)

[2] https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/medical-technology

1. What is medical technology and what is at stake?

Medical technologies are products, services or solutions used to save and improve people's lives, from prevention, to diagnosis to cure. There are three main categories of medical technologies:

- **Medical devices** (MDs) are products, services or solutions that prevent, diagnose, monitor, treat and care for human beings by physical means.
- **In vitro diagnostics** (IVDs) are non-invasive tests used on biological samples (for example blood, urine or tissues) to determine the status of one's health.
- **Digital health and care** refers to tools and services that use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and management of health and lifestyle.

The strategic importance of medical technology sector (or "medtech" sector) in Europe is illustrated by the key figures below.

The European Medical Technology sector
Key figures[3]

Direct jobs:	730 000 employees (in comparison: 765 000 for pharmaceutical industry)
Added-value:	160 000€ / employee
Companies	32 000 companies among which 95% are SMES, the majority of which employ less than 50 people
Market	€120 billion (2nd largest after USA)
Annual growth rate	4,2% average, over the last 10 years
A positive trade balance	€11,7 billion in Europe (2018)

Medical technology is a small part of total health expenditure in Europe: 7,4%, less than 1% of GDP

Medical technology is a key sector for the future in Europe by bringing solutions to reduce healthcare costs in a context of ageing population. With the emergence of new and cross-sectoral technologies, medical technology is one of the most innovative high-tech sectors which faces a strong global competition, hence requiring each time more innovation.

The importance of Research and Innovation for the medtech sector has been underlined in the recent Reflection Paper of Medtech Europe[4], the European professional association, who recognises that strong regional ecosystems facilitate the interaction of partners to speed up the R&I of innovative solutions, with the support of regional policies:

"Regional authorities act as catalysts to maintain excellent conditions to innovation: campuses and infrastructures, collaborative projects, entrepreneurship programmes, networking among startups, participation in venture funds, services to promote clinical trials locally."

Medtech Europe therefore encourages its stakeholders to co-invest in regional European ecosystems to reinforce trust in the EU medical technology industry locally.

[3] The European Medical Technology Industry in figures, 2020 www.medtecheurope.org
[4] Innovation in Medical Technology, Reflection Paper, October 2020 www.medtecheurope.org

The eight regions partners of Medtech4 Europe host about 2600 companies in medical technology, most of them being SMEs. Global leaders such as Medtronic, Philips, bioMérieux, BD, Fresenius, ThermoFischer, Mobidiag, Orion, Stryker, Aesculap/Braun, Karl Storz, are based in these regions. These global companies are contributing to the regional GDP and are active stakeholders in the local innovation ecosystems. All regions currently implement specific actions to support research infrastructures in the biomedical field, directly accessible to medtech companies. All of them have organised local clusters based on a public/private cooperation to facilitate interactions between public research, universities, health providers and private companies. Some regions such as Capital Region in Denmark, Helsinki Uusimaa, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Limburg, have dedicated policy instruments to contribute to start-up creation and growth in the medical technology sector.

The main challenges from a regional policy perspective are threefold:

1. **Maintain high level research infrastructures**, to allow more collaborative R&D between companies, research institutes and clinical centers, including education. Cooperation within the regional ecosystem is considered as a cornerstone in strengthening competitiveness. The larger the region, the more difficult it is to organise and coordinate.

2. **Comply to the new regulations**: The new EU regulations elaborated since 2017[5] both for Medical Devices and In-vitro diagnostics (MDR/IVDR) raise many issues for companies, especially SMEs. The difficulty to access to clinical studies, already present for many companies, is reinforced by the new regulated framework, more demanding for safety reasons. Regional clusters, industry associations and regional authorities have raised awareness about regulation compliance. Educational programmes and advising services are available but the challenge is far from being fully addressed and might significantly hamper the growth and innovation capacity of SMEs.

3. **Prepare and implement the digital transition**: Digitalisation helps service-oriented models and decentralised healthcare to cut healthcare costs. The global digital health market was valued at USD106 billion in 2019 and is expected to witness approximately a 28.5% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) through 2026[6]. Digital health is turning to be a cornerstone in managing the COVID-19 pandemic and health systems have changed more rapidly during the last months than in past years. By nature, digitalisation is highly innovative and will change the way diseases are diagnosed, treated, prevented and monitored. This transformation presents as many opportunities as threats for existing stakeholders if not well prepared.

Moreover, regions have strongly contributed these last months to the fight against Covid19 in close cooperation with companies. There are numerous examples of how innovation steered with regional support has led to adapted or new medtech solutions to manage the pandemic or its consequences, through innovative products in protection equipments, disinfection systems, detection kits, rapid tests, tracing apps and digital health applications to facilitate data sharing and observation about the pandemics. Some regions have also set fast response calls to help innovative ideas to concretise as fast as possible.

[5] Will be applicable from May 2021 due to COVID 19 outbreak, instead of May 2020

[6] Global Market Insights, 2020, Digital Health Market Share Trends 2020-2026 Growth Report, https://www.gminsights.com/industry-analysis/digital-health-market

2. Medtech4 Europe project: main outputs

During 30 months, Medtech4 Europe partners have conducted visits, workshops, on-line meetings to share information, discuss, exchange, understand achievements and difficulties, all activities involving the key stakeholders of their innovation ecosystems. People coming from research labs, start-ups, SMEs, incubators, large companies, clusters, universities, regional authorities, cities, hospitals, have shared their knowledge and experience. Physical interaction without social distancing has been the best way to feel both the atmosphere on sites and the personal motivations of participants, all key assets of regional ecosystems.

Phase 1 in Medtech4 Europe project: mutual learning and inspiration for future policies
Dedicated workshops back to study visits

June 2018 – Kick-off meeting (Lyon, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France): partners have presented their "State of Play" a first description of their regional medtech assets and agreed on a common methodology to analyse their strengths and weaknesses.
December 2019 - Interregional seminar (Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany): partners organised a market place for their good practices, through short "pitch" presentations, answering to questions of other partners, who selected some of the most inspiring initiatives worth to "buy".
March 2019 – What makes a campus successful (Maastricht, Limburg, Netherlands) 4 thematic workshops were organised to discuss the most important dimensions of medtech regional ecosystems and campuses (1. "clinic-friendly" setting for innovation, role of Clinical Trials organisations, 2. Cooperation between Public and Private stakeholders, 3. Attractivity for medtech Start-ups and SMEs, 4. Education and training dimension for medtech, in particular role of students).
June 2019 – Business-models of RDI infrastructures (Gliwice, Upper Silesia, Poland): Partners worked on the Business models for RDI infrastructure management in the medtech sector.
October 2019 – Good practices in details (Pécs, South Transdanubia, Hungary): Partners detailed some of the good practices with stakeholders, allowing in depth discussion and exchanges of views.
February 2020 – Challenging action plans (Copenhagen, Capital Region, Denmark): Partners worked collectively on the content of their draft action plans.

Each region organised a local group of stakeholders and held in parallel to the cross-regional learning process, an internal reflection about its own strengths, weaknesses, possible ways to do better and how to adapt the relevant good practices from others to their specific context. This learning/strategic double process during the first phase provided the following outputs:

1. Eight reports describing regional medtech ecosystems: each region delivered a **State of Play** on the same template to describe their specific innovation ecosystems in medtech, their dedicated infrastructures, their policy instruments, and underline their strengths, weaknesses and objectives for improvement.

2. A catalogue of **good practices**: projects, initiatives, policy instruments, actions, considered as successful. A particular attention has been paid to SMEs and start-ups given their critical role in medtech, but many other dimensions were taken into account such as relationship with hospitals, entrepreneurship, procurement, technology transfer, role of research infrastructures and public debate regarding healthcare dimensions. 20 good practices have been selected and detailed for outreach on Interreg Europe web site.

3. A joint cross analysis report has been edited by CEA, advising partner

4. **Eight action plans** have been delivered and a selection of these actions have been publicly communicated during an on-line policy event on 17 November 2020, as an occasion to showcase partners efforts towards medtech sector.

During this stepwise learning process common to all Interreg Europe projects, and under the supervision of the lead partner Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, partners of Medtech4 Europe have marked their progress towards their action plans through inspiration, interaction with their own stakeholders, partners meetings and bilateral discussions.

The following sections present their main learnings and how they will be transformed into practical actions for the next 2 years.

3. Bench learning: benchmark and learn from each other

Among the 40 good practices identified by partners, some of them are considered as more inspiring in building their action plans to address the future challenges of medtech innovation. Some are specific to the healthcare area, others more generic but still relevant. These "best" good practices correspond to four major issues:

- **Access to clinical trials is the weakest link**. The challenge is to bridge the gap between an innovative idea easily followed by a proof of concept and the final use in clinics. Medical technology needs validation, and clinical studies are mandatory, not only to prove efficiency and safety, but also to assess the economic value of the new device/solution in transforming care pathways and provide added-value to patients and health systems. Three regions have presented original initiatives to facilitate this critical step, especially towards SMEs:
    - Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes with its Clinical Investigation Center dedicated to Innovative technologies, that provides guidance, expertise, and connection to a national network of similar centers;
    - the Capital Region of Denmark that hosts the initiative Trial Nation, a single-entry point for companies, patient organisations and clinical researchers wishing to conduct clinical trials in Denmark, both for pharmaceuticals and medical devices;
    - Helsinki Uusimaa where the Helsinki University Hospital offers a Testbed facility that allows device and service usability testing in a real user environment. Helsinki University Hospital is also part of a digital health ecosystem (Clever Health network) that facilitates the use of digital innovations in healthcare practice through dedicated projects.
- **Entrepreneurship on innovative health markets needs support.** Medical technology is characterised by a constant flow of innovations, which result from a high level of research and development, and close co-operation with users. The challenge is to educate and support entrepreneurs to extend their networks, skills, knowledge about business opportunities and constantly moving environments. With the digital transformation, new perspectives open up. Three regions have presented initiatives to support entrepreneurship in health technologies:
    - Limburg with Brightlands Innovation Factory, a full package (offices, labs and services) to support entrepreneurs, for instance for Medtech start-ups, a 11 weeks bootcamp, free office space, assistance of venture experts and advising services;

    - The Capital Region of Denmark with Copenhagen Health Initiative, an educational programme towards students, aimed at solving practical challenges in healthcare through innovation;
    - Helsinki Uusimaa Regional Council with a general trend to community building among start-ups, service offer, peer support (i.e. initiatives such as Health Capital Helsinki and Upgraded community) oriented to support the growth of young companies.
- **Dedicated infrastructures and spaces help to promote local assets to become "hot spots" in international competition.** Open innovation will remain a key incentive to organise and optimise efforts, and get the most from individual expertise of scientists, companies, students, investors. Two regions host such initiatives embedded in open innovation campuses:
    - Limburg with its Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus, dedicated to healthcare, key infrastructures in MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging) and regenerative medicine, to facilitate interactions on a triple helix model (research, industry, education)
    - Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes with the CEA Open Innovation Center that hosts a technological showroom, to showcase the added value of innovative technologies in products, notably in healthcare, as a tool for marketing and promotion of research.
- **Cooperation between public research and SMEs needs to be boosted.** In general, the boost is provided by financial incentives, to favor collaboration within the regional innovation ecosystem:
    - Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes has an extensive experience of public support to technology transfer from public labs: Easytech programme is aimed at facilitating the integration of digital technologies (electronics, photonics, software) in traditional SMEs products. The Region also supports collaborative projects managed by regional clusters, and experienced innovation vouchers to SMEs, in particular for healthcare companies.
    - Capital Region of Denmark has experimented the Smart Innovation initiative, providing financial support to SMEs to work with Danish Technical University scientists.

Other good practices have been inspiring besides these 4 main challenges:

- the 3D printing Research and Innovation center highly specialised in medical devices at the University of Pécs (South Transdanubia) shows the importance of RDI infrastructures to attract companies to collaborate,
- the dynamic Innovation ecosystem in Lecco (Lombardy) that has proved a great efficiency to connect SMEs with research laboratories,
- the Regional Specialised Observatories in Upper Silesia that provide professional networks allowing many interactions between businesses and research, show the importance of ecosystem support measures.

During visits, workshops and seminar organised during phase 1, the active participation of local stakeholders has made possible to complete the mutual exchange of experience and detail some aspects of implementation.

4. Action plans for improved policy instruments

Elaborated by each region and its stakeholders, the action plan is a document providing details on how the lessons learnt from the cooperation are used to improve the policy instruments addressed within the project. It specifies the nature of the actions to implement, their timeframe, the stakeholders involved, the costs and funding sources as well as the way the action derives from the project.

Medtech4 Europe partners have proposed 20 actions to be implemented during phase 2. These actions show four main strategic orientations.

4.1. Contribute to close the gap between technological innovation and clinical validation

Managing or not the regional hospitals can make a big difference but even with no operational responsibility, encouraging a closer cooperation between hospitals and technology providers, especially SMEs and start-ups, is a common objective for 3 regions, The Capital Region of Denmark, Baden Württemberg and Lombardy. Action plans address 2 different goals:

- Facilitate the access of SMEs to clinical environment, through dedicated services:
  - The Capital Region of Denmark, already well advanced with the Trial Nation initiative, will implement an internal cooperation unit to support all regional hospitals in facilitating cooperation with SMEs, from early stages of product development
  - In Baden Württemberg, it goes hand in hand with the Medical Device Regulation emergency aid program to support companies in implementing the Medical Device Regulation EU 2017/745, especially SMEs. In this programme, a centralised platform (Clinical Study Pilot) acting as entry point for organising clinical trials will be achieved and maintained for the next 2 years.
  - In Lombardy, a Virtual Competence Center about technology transfer and clinical trials will be established as a board of experts. This platform should work both as a think tank and guidance for those willing to set up clinical trials.
- Facilitate the transfer of ideas/solutions from healthcare professionals to companies:
  - The Capital Region of Denmark also wants to improve the hospitals' ability to turn their know-how, knowledge and scientific research into Spinout and Technology Transfer activities through a set of accompanying measures that starts with a good identification of needs.

4.2. Tailor specific policies for medtech SMEs and start-ups

All regions consider SMEs as priority targets for their action plans, as defined by Smart Specialisation Strategies. However, some specific actions address medtech SMEs' specific issues, such as the access to clinical trials (see above 4.1), the transition towards new regulations, the capacity building and the access to technological innovation.

- The transition towards new regulations: Compliance with the new regulations is enhancing the competitiveness of the EU medtech industry as well as it is increasing patient safety and device efficacy. However, the short remaining transition period in comparison with the considerably increased requirements are difficult to cope with for SMEs. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council recognises the urgent need for assistance and mentoring of medtech SMEs, startups and scaleups, who may not have the adequate resources to comply with the renewed regulatory framework; It develops support measures fully dedicated to this goal: training

programme about regulatory requirements, development of a comprehensive Quality management System.

- The capacity building around skills of entrepreneurs: Upper Silesia and South Transdanubia both address this objective through dedicated actions:
    - In Upper Silesia the action intends to develop the non-financial support scheme for medtech SMEs, through a structured package to start-ups, micro-companies and SMEs (intensive programmes/bootcamps to support product development, digitalisation and internationalisation, support to business models);
    - In South Transdanubia, the goal is to secure the human resources background for the medtech sector, through several components such as the set-up of a capacity development knowledge base, a mentoring programme, knowledge sharing events, including train the trainer courses, and support for individual capacity development projects;
- The access to technological innovation for medtech SMEs: the main goal is to facilitate access to the reservoir of knowledge and capacities offered by Research and Innovation stakeholders: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes intends to improve this access through 2 actions:
    - Improve the visibility of technological platforms and enhance the impact of ERDF and regional funding towards these infrastructures: events will be organised to better disseminate the offer of these platforms towards medtech companies , especially SMEs ("medtech platforms' days", better disseminate RDI service offers through regional channels (competitiveness clusters and economic regional agency), adapt the requirements of calls for new infrastructures (communication capacity, commercial positioning, improving new actions aimed at attracting SMEs etc)
    - Improve the existing voucher scheme to incentivise the access of SMEs to technological research: extension of Easytech voucher programme (cascade funding system) beyond digital applications, in all technological fields used in medical technologies (for instance materials, plastics and polymers, textiles, biocompatibility, etc), to facilitate R&D projects of medtech SMEs working with a technological platform.

4.3 Improve the efficiency of local Research & Innovation ecosystems in medtech

Developing stronger, more efficient, more networked and connected ecosystems, encouraging cooperation and collaborative work through projects, sharing knowledge and providing appropriate services, developing new infrastructures: all objectives are calling for numerous actions that adapt to the local specificities, strengths and weaknesses.

- In the Province of Limburg, the action plan includes a short-term action that consists in funding more medtech projects in ERDF OP South, thanks to residual funding and REACT-EU additional funding. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the need to support medtech innovative projects to fight against the virus and the province tries to address this important objective with available means.
- In Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, the action plan will:
    - improve internal collaboration across various knowledge hubs, organisations, networks and stakeholders in the field of medical innovations, targeting specific areas within the core medical technologies and regional clinical strengths, for example in the fields of intensive care, oncology, central nervous system and dental/crano-facial imaging

    - foster and coordinate initiatives in line with the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region Smart Specialization Strategy that recognizes the major role of medtech sector and health technology in regional economy and the growing role of digitalisation in healthcare as clearly evidenced by the COVID-19 outbreak;
- In Upper-Silesia, the action plan focuses on improving the ecosystem's efficiency:
    - Enhance the professional skills of Business Support Organisations in the field of technology transfer: this action is built upon the experience of Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development in Medtech4 Europe project and consists in transferring this knowledge to BSOs (Training programme, webinars, sectoral fine tuning of a new service by BSO, pilot service delivered to a sample of companies in medtech)
    - Although the Upper-Silesian ecosystem is developing, many companies have not benefited from opportunities due to the lack or low attractiveness of information. Therefore, Upper Silesia's action plan includes an action about communication of opportunities for collaboration with R&D units. It will be operated by the regional Specialized Observatory Technologies for Medicine and will upgrade communication tools through case studies and facilitation.
    - Building a new infrastructure (OncoBiotechLab): the goal is to establish a new research lab, taking advantage of the promising future for personalised advanced tumor treatment – immunotherapy with CAR-T cells. It will be based in an industrial zone to rehabilitate.
- In Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the action targets a better knowledge and follow-up of technological platforms offering services to medtech companies. It includes actions of closer monitoring of already financed platforms, updating the regional overview of the medtech sector and build a comprehensive directory of technological platforms;
- In South Transdanubia, the objective is to fight against the fragmentation and isolation of medtech companies by encouraging the cooperation and networking, in particular to thematize the professional services (development, manufacturing and market access) and to make them available online.

4.4 Foster international cooperation

International cooperation is basically the first lesson learnt by partners of Medtech4 Europe project. Not only source of inspiration, but also opening to new partners, increasing market access possibilities, promoting assets... The Province of Limburg is leading on this action due to its experience in cross-border cooperation with Belgium, France and Germany. Two regions partners of Medtech4 Europe joined this objective:

- Lombardy has defined together with the Province of Limburg a bilateral action to implement a closer cooperation between Milano Innovation District and MERLN (Maastricht University) for regenerative medicine. This action is defined in symmetry by both regional action plans.
- Baden Württemberg will join the Province of Limburg in organising on-line events for stakeholders/parties from the various partner regions (example of topics implemented in Limburg that have attracted attention from other partners: the organisation of Brightlands Ecosystem, Financing by revolving funding, MedLim to accelerate Medtech start-ups…). All regions are committed to contribute to this action.

These first actions will constitute the seeds for further cooperation between regional stakeholders in the 8 regions.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Medical technology SMEs are numerous in Europe, but they require an ecosystem around them to operate. Innovation ecosystems mostly supported by regional policies and local networks (clusters, Research and Technology Organisations, research hubs, campuses, large companies) facilitate the interaction of partners to speed up innovative solutions. **Regional authorities act as catalysts to maintain excellent conditions to innovation: campuses and infrastructures, collaborative projects, entrepreneurship programmes, networking among start-ups, participation in venture funds, services to promote clinical trials locally, all good practices present in the eight regions of Medtech4 Europe Interreg Europe partnership.**

In order to answer to the major challenges raised by demographics and ageing, rise of chronic diseases, risks of re-emergent infectious diseases, climate change consequences on health and aspirations of EU citizens to access to healthcare, Europe needs a strong and consistent **industrial ecosystem in medical technology** for which innovative SMEs and start-ups are supported and encouraged.

Medtech4 Europe partners call the European institutions and all stakeholders:

- To recognise **the strategic importance of the medtech industrial sector in Europe** and its major contribution not only to GDP and employment but also to the most important expectations of European citizens - living in good health, and European patients - have access to the latest medical innovations at affordable cost;
- To recognise the **sovereign nature of medtech industry and added value chains**, as demonstrated in the current COVID19 outbreak, and to facilitate a cross-border access of European medtech SMEs to technological and clinical infrastructures;
- To consider **innovation in medtech as an investment** to be achieved in close cooperation with regional innovation policies. Practical challenges are:
    - How to fund the transition between a technical proof of concept and its clinical validation? This process is the critical step to bring innovation to patient. Too many innovations never reach patients because of the lack of funds to support the so-called valley of death of medical devices.
    - How to support medtech technological infrastructures and open innovation infrastructures that are critical for a smooth transfer between advanced biomedical science and clinics?
    - How to educate healthcare professionals, medical students and medtech professionals to the digital transformation in healthcare?
- To support **the inclusion of regional platforms in Medtech** (such as S3P or Medtech4 Europe) **in public-private partnerships** currently implemented in Horizon Europe in order to encourage SMEs and start-ups to participate;
- To help medtech highly specialised regions in Europe to work together to avoid fragmentation and useless competition, in coherence with the request from the Industry Association Medtech Europe:
  "A better interconnection and financial support of these innovation ecosystems throughout EU would add value to their specificities, highlighting the "hotspots" in Europe."

Medtech4 Europe partners will conduct their action plans in the next 2 years and will keep their momentum to make Europe the most advanced continent for future healthcare.

About the Interreg Europe Programme[7]

The Interreg Europe Programme helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. The program creates an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions and policy learning. It also aims to make sure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place. Interreg Europe Programme aims to get maximum return from the EUR 359 million financed by the European Regional Development Fund in the 2014-2020 programming period.

About Medtech4 Europe project[8]

Medtech4 Europe project implementation started on 1 June 2018 and ends on 30 November 2022. The Phase 1 of the project is 2,5 years long, ended on 30 November 2020. The focus of this period is on mutual learning and experience exchange. The Phase 2, dedicated to policy influencing, is two years long and lasts in between 1 December 2020 and 30 November 2022. The overall project budget is 1,716,495.00 EUR.

The main objective of the project is to improve public policies in favour of RDI facilities and infrastructures in the medical technology sector.

Specific objectives of the project are:

- Strengthen the innovation ecosystem of the medtech sector.
- Develop business models of RDI facilities giving better access to SMEs of the sector.
- Create potential synergies by identifying complementary strong domains in each region.

During phase 2, the implementation of individual action plans in order to impact regional/national medical technology relevant operational programmes and policies is due in between 1 December 2020 and 30 November 2022 in each partner region.

[7] https://www.interregeurope.eu/
[8] https://www.interregeurope.eu/medtech4europe/