



Smart Open Services for European Patients - Open eHealth initiative for a European large scale pilot of patient summary and electronic prescription

1 July 2014

Dear epSOS contributors,

The epSOS project came to an end in June 2014. With this letter we would like to highlight the achievements of the project, outline initiatives taking the results forward, inform about where project outputs can be accessed after the project, and last but not least thank you for your collaboration and support during these past years.

The epSOS project set out to develop, pilot and evaluate cross-border eHealth services, and to formulate recommendations for future work. The focus has been safe, secure and high-quality services for exchange of patient summary data and ePrescriptions between European countries.

When the project was initiated in 2008 it involved a few stakeholders, but it gradually grew to encompass 25 countries and about 50 beneficiaries. The project was partially funded under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP), as part of the Competitiveness and Framework Programme by the European Commission.

The epSOS project has broken new ground

The project has achieved considerable results in a range of areas.

Main technical deliverables include development of a solid basis for the pilot services, considering: governance, use cases, data content, semantics, specifications, architecture, testing mechanisms, etc. The main technical aspects are summarized in a project deliverable¹, and are also intended to be maintained as part of an evolving document².

Importantly, epSOS has taken the abovementioned results into concrete practice: 16 pilots of epSOS services achieved live operations during the project³. Although there were fewer cases of real patients using the services than originally envisioned, the pilot operations constitute substantial progress.

¹ Deliverable [D3.A.7 Specifications](#)

² https://publicwiki-01.fraunhofer.de/epSOS_specification/index.php/Main_Page

³ Deliverable [D4.E.3 Report on Pilot Operations](#)

Much of the rich experience from epSOS is captured in the project's evaluation⁴ and recommendations⁵, informing future endeavours in the area of cross-border eHealth services.

Initiatives to maintain and advance the outcomes of epSOS

There is a strong momentum for eHealth interoperability in Europe.

European eHealth interoperability is supported by the Directive (2011/24/EU) on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. There are also several related undertakings^{6,7} at European level that can support the outcomes of epSOS. Nevertheless, implementation of cross-border eHealth services is to a significant extent a national prerogative.

With regard to initiatives at European level with specific epSOS relevance, the eHealth Network⁸ has established a subgroup of Member States dedicated to the continuation of the epSOS services. Also, the EXPAND project⁹ has as one of its objectives to secure the epSOS pilot services in anticipation of a handover to the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Questions in this regard could be addressed to the Shared Services of the Portuguese Ministry of Health (expandsecretariat@spms.min-saude.pt).

It is envisaged that concerned entities at national and European levels will progressively address governance, legal and technical issues required for sustainable cross-border eHealth services.

Access to information and repositories of epSOS and its outputs

Recognizing that epSOS results will be relevant for future initiatives, actions have been taken to facilitate access to the outputs also beyond project duration.

The epSOS.eu website will remain accessible until end 2017. The website contains a wealth of information about epSOS, including national contacts, deliverables describing project results, information about the design process, etc. The website will be hosted by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)¹⁰ that also hosted the project coordination.

The epSOS project has resulted in a new European open source community, the OpenNCP community¹¹. This community has been instrumental in developing open source software to support national implementations. The OpenNCP community has prepared a roadmap for possible future development and intends to remain active, provided continued support from in particular national stakeholders.

Another achievement of epSOS is the development of thorough pre-pilot testing procedures to ensure that systems and components meet certain requirements. The testing environments will be available also after the project¹². Should further support be needed enquiries could be addressed to Integrating the Health Enterprise (IHE) – Europe (secretariat@ihe-europe.net).

⁴ Deliverable [D1.2.4 Evaluation](#)

⁵ Deliverable [D2.2.7 Recommendations](#)

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/european-multi-stakeholder-platform-ict-standardisation>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/policy/network/index_en.htm

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/policy/network/index_en.htm

⁹ www.expandproject.eu

¹⁰ www.skl.se

¹¹ <https://openncp.atlassian.net/wiki/display/ncp/OpenNCP+Community+Home>

¹² <https://openncp.atlassian.net/wiki/x/A4D9AQ>

The epSOS services are based on central semantic services, which in its turn rely on epSOS translations and agreements with standards development organisations (SDO). This infrastructure is discontinued after June 2014, but could as/if deemed appropriate by concerned stakeholders be re-established based on the experience accumulated through epSOS. To this end epSOS has where applicable made relevant output available to the respective SDOs.

Many outputs of the project, including the open source software, will also remain available from JoinUp¹³, a resource to share and reuse interoperability solutions for public administrations.

The epSOS consortium members will until end 2017 have access to the repositories of epSOS at Projectplace¹⁴. The contents of Projectplace will also be archived in digital form at SALAR.

After project closure, enquiries regarding epSOS could be addressed to concerned stakeholders (please refer to the epSOS website), SALAR (info@epsos.eu) or the European Commission, DG CNCT (CNECT-H1@ec.europa.eu).

Thanks are due to you!

As a result of your commitment and hard work, epSOS has become the ground-breaking project it set out to be. The achievements of epSOS have brought Europeans closer to the prospect of sustainable, safe, secure and high-quality cross-border eHealth services.

The value of epSOS and your work is confirmed by the continued commitment of stakeholders at national and European levels. The results are taken forward by various endeavours. These will be all the more effective and rapid the more support you can give, also when we enter this new phase.

On behalf of the PC Team & ITC,



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¹³ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/nexus/content/repositories/releases/eu/europa/ec/joinup/ecc/>

¹⁴ <https://service.projectplace.com>