Project acronym: ASSESS DHT
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Project full title: Development and harmonisation of methodologies for assessing digital health technologies in Europe
Website: www.assess-dht.eu

Call for Experts
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1 Call for expert input in the development of assessment frameworks for Digital Health Technologies

This call focuses on the importance of increasing the adoption of trustworthy and effective Digital Health Technologies (DHT) across Europe. To develop and harmonise methodologies for assessing DHTs in Europe, a multi-stakeholder perspective needs to be adopted, to ensure that the resulting methodologies and approaches are fit for purpose and address the real needs of all those involved.

ASSESS DHT (Development and harmonisation of methodologies for assessing digital health technologies in Europe) is looking to engage with external experts on a continuous basis by communicating specific requests for input to the project work in advance, to which the experts can respond depending on their availability. Expert contributions will be remunerated.

What is ASSESS DHT

ASSESS DHT is a European project running from January 2024 to December 2026 that aims to boost the adoption of reliable DHTs across Europe, contributing towards a unified digital single market for healthcare systems and patients to access DHTs and establishing a strong European market. The project will develop a novel assessment framework, surpassing existing models, to ensure consistent Health Technology Assessment (HTA) adoption throughout Europe and addressing emerging challenges in areas such as Digital Therapeutics, Artificial Intelligence, and telehealth.

ASSESS DHT is implemented by a consortium comprising 14 partners from 7 countries representing HTA, research organisations, DHT companies, professional and patient organisations as well as intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder associations at EU, Member State, and regional level.

More information about the project can be found at www.assess-dht.eu.

1.1 Expert groups called to inform, develop, and harmonize methodologies

We want to establish expert groups comprising different viewpoints, which are engaged in various activities to help inform the development and harmonisation of the proposed methodologies.

ASSESS DHT has an ambitious workplan spanning three years covering a plethora of activities related to consolidation of existing knowledge and materials, development of new approaches, tools, and manuals for assessing DHT, testing and validation of those approaches, and setting the ground for wider uptake and sustainability of the project work.

The input of external stakeholders is seen as crucial for the success of the project, especially so for the first project year which foresees very intensive development, which would strongly benefit from co-creation and expert knowledge.

ASSESS DHT foresees the creation of four expert groups (EGs):

1. EG1: Digital health developers/industry
2. EG2: Policy makers & regulators
3. EG3: Clinical experts
4. EG4: Patients/citizens

1.2 How to contribute

The input may be in the form of participation in an online event (e.g. a two-hour webinar), provision of written feedback to a draft shared document, participation in an online interview, etc. It is not foreseen that experts will be required to travel physically.
It is expected that experts are provided with a reasonable number of requests spanning the project timeline, for example 4 requests in 2024, 2 requests each in 2025 and 2026, but not for more than 6-8 requests in total.

ASSESS DHT has reserved budget for remunerating experts. Specific budget lines are agreed based on the specific assignment at hand, and usually vary between 50 € and 400 €.

The budget poses limitations, therefore in case of a significant number of approved applications (i.e. extending to more than the 6-8 requests foreseen), the evaluation scores of the applications will form a ranking to represent a priority list for engagement (a pool of experts). In this sense, a successful application is not a guarantee for a definite request for a given expert.

1.3 Desired expert profile

Depending on the expert group, ASSESS DHT is looking for experts according to the short profiles below. It is important to note that the experts are individuals, representatives of a stakeholder group.

Digital health developers/industry

Digital health developers/industry have a crucial role in identifying healthcare systems and end-user needs and shaping the design, development, and deployment of DHTs. Their input is vital because they possess expertise in technology innovation, user experience, and market dynamics, ensuring that DHTs are both technically feasible and commercially viable. Additionally, their insights can help address potential barriers to adoption and scalability, ultimately improving the effectiveness and accessibility of digital health solutions.

Policy makers & regulators

Policy makers and regulators play critical role in establishing the legal and regulatory framework governing the use of DHTs. Their input is important to ensure that DHTs meet stringent standards for safety, efficacy, and data privacy, safeguarding public health and trust. Moreover, their decisions can influence reimbursement policies, market access, and interoperability standards, shaping the broader landscape for digital health innovation and adoption.

Clinical experts

Such experts bring valuable insights into the practical application of DHTs within health and care settings. Their input is crucial for assessing the clinical validity, utility, and integration of DHTs into existing workflows and care pathways. By leveraging their expertise in medical practice, evidence-based medicine, and patient care, clinical experts can help optimise DHTs and DHT assessment processes to better meet the needs of healthcare providers and improve patient outcomes.

Patients/citizens

Citizens, patients, and caregivers are the ultimate end-users and beneficiaries of DHTs. Their input is essential for ensuring that DHTs are user-centred, culturally sensitive, and responsive to diverse healthcare needs and preferences. By actively involving patients and citizens in the assessment and design process, stakeholders can enhance the usability, acceptability, and relevance of DHTs, fostering greater engagement, empowerment, and satisfaction with healthcare delivery and outcomes.

We are particularly inviting individuals with good, generic knowledge of patient and carer agency in a broad array of health and care areas that are subject to digital transformation. They should ideally have experience in co-creating services together with innovators, have participated in digital health services design and design validation as well assessment and evaluation of health technologies. They would also typically actively participate in their own prevention, health maintenance and care planning in close cooperation with their physicians.
2 How to apply

The call is open to natural persons able to participate in the envisaged requests for input as outlined in section 1.3. If an applicant has relevant experience suitable for representing more than one of the four expert groups, the most suited group should be prioritised (applications for multiple groups are not allowed).

2.1 Application process and deadline

Interested parties are required to submit their applications electronically by submitting a filled in application online form. The different forms are:

- Application form ASSESS DHT Expert Group 1: Digital health developers / industry: Link
- Application form ASSESS DHT Expert Group 2: Policy makers & regulators: Link
- Application form ASSESS DHT Expert Group 3: Clinical experts: Link
- Application form ASSESS DHT Expert Group 4: Patients/citizens: Link

The forms must be completed in English.

The deadline for application is 29 March 5 April 2024 17:00 CET.

Any questions about the call must be sent to applications-assess-dht@empirica.com before 20 March 2 April 2024. Answers will be made available at https://assess-dht.eu/call-experts/ by 3 April 2024.

2.2 Evaluation process

The ASSESS DHT coordinator will appoint an Expert Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisting of experts from the ASSESS DHT consortium.

Members of the EEC are appointed in their personal capacity. After application deadline, the ASSESS DHT coordinator will provide the EEC members with access to the submitted applications. The EEC will read the applications and score them based on the award criteria scorecard below. Each EEC member provides a score for each award criterion. A final joint decision is reached by a simple majority vote in a dedicated EEC meeting chaired by the ASSESS DHT coordinator. Applications must score above the thresholds given, for each threshold. Applications that do not reach the minimum quality thresholds (individual and totals) will be rejected.

The following award criteria will be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award criteria</th>
<th>Maximum points</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications by digital health developers / industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced level of experience related to developing DHTs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced level of experience and knowledge of technological trends, innovation processes, and market dynamics in the healthcare sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with and knowledge of regulatory requirements, data privacy considerations, and industry standards for digital health solutions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with communication skills and an ability to articulate the perspectives and needs of the stakeholder group you represent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total maximum for applications by digital health developers / industry</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Applications by Policy makers &amp; regulators                                    |                |           |
| Evidenced experience with working in (European or national)                  | 5              | 2         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award criteria</th>
<th>Maximum points</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>governmental or regulatory bodies responsible for digital healthcare policy, legislation, or oversight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced experience and knowledge in health law, policy analysis, public health administration or other relevant experience with a focus on digital health and medical technology policy and regulation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced experience (if any) and familiarity with international standards, guidelines, and best practices for evaluating and regulating digital health technologies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total maximum for applications by policy makers &amp; regulators</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications by clinical experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award criteria</th>
<th>Maximum points</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of professional experience in the healthcare sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced experience and knowledge in clinical practice, research, education, or healthcare leadership roles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant references and publications</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total maximum for applications by clinical experts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications by patients/citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award criteria</th>
<th>Maximum points</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of interest in the topic of digital health technology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of relevant lived experience as patient or caregiver having used or desired to use digital health technology for their or others’ health needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced ability to articulate the perspectives, preferences, and priorities of the patient/citizen community regarding the use of digital health technologies, including accessibility, usability, and privacy concerns</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total maximum for applications by clinical experts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A five-point system is defined as:

1. **Insufficient** (fails to address the criterion under examination or the criterion cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information).
2. **Poor** (the criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses or gaps in expected information).
3. **Fair** (while the criterion is broadly addressed, there are some weaknesses to it or gaps in expected information).
4. **Good** (the criterion is addressed well, although improvements or further information would have been highly desirable).
5. **Very good** (the criterion is addressed well, although certain improvements or additional information are still possible).
6. **Excellent** (all relevant aspects of the criterion are successfully addressed; any shortcomings are minor).

In case of a conflict of interest identified by an EEC member, he/she will immediately notify the ASSESS DHT coordinator and will withhold from providing an evaluation for that particular application.

Based on the scores, applicants will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation (i.e. whether they have been selected (above threshold) and under what rank/prioritisation).
2.3 Expert remuneration and conditions

ASSESS DHT has reserved budget for remunerating experts. Specific budget lines are agreed based on the specific assignment at hand, and usually vary between 50 € and 400 €. Assignments and conditions are agreed between the ASSESS DHT coordinator and the expert via email.

The budget poses limitations, therefore in case of a significant number of approved applications (i.e. extending to more than the 6-8 requests foreseen), the evaluation scores of the applications will form a ranking to represent a priority list for engagement (a pool of experts). In this sense, a successful application is not a guarantee for a definite request for a given expert.