

HEALTH RELATED EUROPEAN FUNDING IN THE NORTH WEST

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FOREWORD

NHS North West has high aspirations for R&D to promote the North West as the place of choice to undertake high quality health research. NHS North West aims to support outstanding individuals to conduct leading-edge research in world-class facilities to improve health outcomes.

As a result of the strength of its research capabilities and infrastructure the North West has achieved phenomenal success in attracting funding for health research through national programmes. However, the North West has not experienced such similar high levels of success in relation to attracting EU R&D funding.

This report was commissioned to identify areas of strength in the North West in attracting EU R&D funding and to build on these strengths in collaboration with the North West Health Office in Brussels through the development of a robust approach to increase the numbers of successful bids for EU R&D funding from the North West.

NHS North West and the North West Health Office in Brussels are committed to implementing the recommendations outlined in this report. We are clear on what we want to achieve and over the coming months we want to work with our stakeholders in academia, the NHS, Local Government, Industry, the Third Sector and not least patients and the public to identify our particular contribution and the contributions of our partners in delivering our aspirations.

We aim to develop an inclusive approach and to achieve this we must engage with everyone who can contribute to its success. This report is the starting point.

Our approach is about doing things differently and involving others. When we have delivered the recommendations contained in this report we expect the North West EU R&D funding landscape to look different from how it does today.

This approach builds on the strength of existing relationships and our collective ambition to promote and develop the North West as a forward thinking and vibrant research community.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North West region has achieved great success in attracting health research funding through national programmes due to the depth of its research capabilities and research infrastructure. However, similar success has not been witnessed at attracting EU funding in the past. The current EU projects within the North West are down to individual researchers efforts at Universities. The region has taken positive steps in the direction of attracting further funding by establishing the North West health office in Brussels, a first such from the UK and setting up EU information dissemination processes in the region through the R&D team at NHS North West. Though the efforts are in the right direction, they have not been very effective due to the following reasons:-

1. The current process of disseminating information is very efficient in delivering the information through various channels to researchers in the North West.
2. The researchers almost never respond to the EU research calls forwarded as they feel lost and have little awareness about the overall EU funding process. Hence, there is a greater need for **hand holding** of researchers for making EU bids.
3. It is also imperative that researchers in the North West **first gain exposure to EU projects by starting as collaborators** and subsequently progress towards leading a project by building personal networks.
4. It is difficult to obtain information about past successful EU projects in North West.

Veneto in Italy stands out from other European regions, as being the most innovative and successful at attracting funding from the EU. A closer examination of the region reveals an excellent organisational structure (an international office within the region and representative offices in Venice and Rome), leadership of Dr. Bertinato, long-term planning horizon and a collaborative approach in sharing knowledge as major reasons for the success.

Veneto teaches some important lessons and if adapted intelligently within the North West, they can have a transformational effect on the region. Based on the inadequacies in the current process and learnings from Veneto the following are the recommendations made by the report:

1. Increase awareness about EU funding within the region.
2. Raise the profile of the North West institute and researchers within Europe.
3. Develop a long term vision for R&D in the region and select 4-5 priorities every year to develop into EU projects.
4. Provide administrative support to researchers who wish to bid for EU projects.
5. Provide a leadership role within the region that can serve as a link between the researchers and the Brussels office and provide strategic vision for driving their efforts.

The initiatives must be actioned using a long term phased model with raising awareness through social movement within the region as a priority first step.

INTRODUCTION

The North West has adopted a very pro-active and different approach to accessing Health related European funding by forming the health office in Brussels and the regional R&D department within NHS North West. However, the current process of disseminating EU information to researchers in the North West and the provision of help is complex and supported with a network of organisations involved at EU, National and Regional level.

The report takes a closer look at the strategy and the current process in the first three sections, it looks at the best practices from other regions in section IV and finally presents recommendations in Section V.

Section I

In order to appraise the current process, it is first important to understand direct and indirect stakeholders involved and the European funding schemes. The key stakeholders involved can be divided into the following categories:

1. European Level: Organisations deciding on EU Policy and Grants. I also discuss the EU funding programmes in the section.
2. EU/UK Support: Organisations that are specific to the UK/North West who help in disseminating funding information.
3. Regional Support: Organisations within the North West or specific to health sector who help in disseminating funding information.
4. Researchers: Includes organisation/individuals who are chief beneficiaries of EU funding

Section II

In the section, I describe the current process using a process map. The exercise objectively describes information flow and highlights the role played by each actor in the system.

Section III

The section uses a wider framework CATWOE to analyse the current process. CATWOE stands for

- C – Customers (victims or beneficiaries of the system)
- A – Actors (Who carry out the activities of the system)
- T – Transformation Process (describes the process)
- W - Weltanschauung (the view of the world)
- O - Owner (who owns the process)
- E - Environment (Other factors affecting the system)

The framework analyses the pros/cons of the current process and makes a comment on the current strategy. More information about the framework can be obtained in the book “Multiple criteria decision analysis: an integrated approach” By Valerie Belton, Theodor J. Stewart.

Section IV

The section describes the Case of the Italian region of Veneto which had been very successful in the past at accessing EU funding. A set of best practice is provided as a conclusion to the section. The data for Veneto is gathered from online resources, annual reports of the institutes involved and primary research interviews with experts from the region.

Section V

In light of the current situation in the North West and set of best practice, a set of recommendations is provided for the region.

SECTION I: THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

A. EU FUNDING ORGANISATIONS AND SCHEMES

The European commission awards money in the form of grants to projects or activities to implement European Union policies. The common features of the grants include:

1. EU grants form **complementary funding**, regional projects are never awarded 100% of their costs.
2. Cannot be awarded retroactively.
3. Each directorate published an **Annual Work Programme** highlighting the scope/subject of projects that will be sponsored.
4. The Annual work programme is followed by **Calls for proposals** which are for specific funding calls with timelines and budget.
5. The information is published on the Internet via the **EUROPA** portal with specific information also available on the **CORDIS** portal.

The commission manages all the grants through the Directorate Generals (DG) for specific areas of work. There are over 30 DG's who distribute funding to implement annual work programmes to implement specific EU policy.

The DG's most relevant for **Health and Medical funding** include:

1. **DG Research and Innovation:** Manages the largest **FP7 programme**. The DG is supported by a large number of executive agencies and will be discussed later with the FP7 Programme.
2. **DG SANCO:** Manages the **public health programme**.
3. **Other DG's:** The DG's like DG Sports and DG Education can provide funding for programmes to fund research in their field. For example DG sport has recently published a white paper highlighting its policy to support public health research programmes linking sports and public health.

During primary investigation, it was revealed that the information and support provided by individual DG's regarding their funding programmes varies in quality.

FUNDING PROGRAMMES

1. Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)

The seventh framework programme is the EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe and will run from 2007-2013. The programme aims at implementing EU policy to build a knowledge based economy. The total budget for the programme is approx € 52bn for seven years.

How is FP7 organised?

FP7 is organised in four main blocks of activities forming four specific programmes and a fifth specific programme on Nuclear Research. The following table highlights the programmes and the budget allocated.

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Programme	Topics	Allocated Funds
Cooperation – Collaborative Research (Budget: € 32bn)	Health	€6.05bn
	Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology	€1.935bn
	Information and Communication Technologies	€9.11bn
	Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies	€3.5bn
	Energy	€2.3bn
	Environment (including climate change)	€1.8bn
	Transport (including Aeronautics)	€4.18bn
	Socio-economic sciences and Humanities	€0.61bn
	Security	€1.35bn
	Space	€1.43bn
Ideas – European Research Council	Frontier research actions	€ 7.46bn
People- Human Potential, Marie Curie actions	Initial training of researchers - Marie Curie Networks	€4.73bn
	Life-long training and career development - Individual fellowships	
	Industry-academia pathways and partnerships	
	International dimension - outgoing and incoming fellowships, international cooperation scheme, reintegration grants	
	Excellence Awards	
Capacities – Research capacities	Research infrastructures	£4.3bn
	Research for the benefit of SMEs	
	Regions of Knowledge	
	Research Potential	
	Science in Society	
	Support to the coherent development of research policies	
	Specific activities of international cooperation	

Health forms part of the co-operation or collaborative research programme and is allocated a total budget of **€ 6.5bn**. The other programme within FP7 where NW institutes have received funding in the past is the Regions of Knowledge (RoK) in Capacities. Frontier research which forms part of the Ideas programme can support basic research.

There are three pillars or broad themes where research in FP7 is encouraged:

1. Biotechnology, Generic Tools and Technologies for Health.
2. Translating research for human health.
3. Optimising delivery for health care.

Across the three pillars, research on topics such as child health, health of an ageing population and gender related health issues is encouraged.

Process for funds disbursement

A work programme containing the topics of research is published at the start of the year. The work programme is followed by calls for proposals which contain specific information like timelines, budgets and type of project. For example: the work programme for 2010 was published on 29th July 2009 followed by calls for proposals on 31st July.

All the projects are published on the internet (CORDIS Portal). The portal provides a single source of information and application submission. The portal also provides functionality for online submission of project documents and help for finding project partners.

Types of projects supported in the health theme

The projects under the Health theme should satisfy the cooperation theme by having a minimum of 3 partners from different EU countries. The types of projects depending on maximum funding and partners required are:

1. Small or Medium-scale focussed research project (FP) with max funding of **€3mn or €6mn**.
2. Large scale integrating project (IP) with funding in range of **€6mn to 12mn**.
3. Coordinating Action (CA).
4. Supporting Action (SA).

Web links

The information about FP7 can be found on the website

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html

2. Public Health Programme

The second programme for community action in public health came into effect from 2008 with a total budget of **€ 321mn over 6 years from 2008-2013**. The programme is managed by DG SANCO and Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC). The objectives of the programme are:

1. To improve citizens health security.
2. To promote health, including the reduction of health inequalities.
3. To generate and disseminate health information and knowledge.

The programme is less complex and the funding can be obtained in following ways:

1. **Co financing of projects** that satisfy the set objectives.
2. **Tenders** for specific work.
3. **Co-financing of the operating costs** of a non-governmental organisation or a specialised network.
4. **Joint financing** of a public body or non-governmental organisation by the community and one or more member states.
5. **Joint Actions** with other community programmes.

The funding through the programme is subject to maximum of **50-60% of the total cost** of the projects in most cases. The projects must also be executed **with “2” other European partners**. The project teams usually consist of the following partners:

1. **Main Partner:** The project co-ordinator who will act as a main point of contact with the executive agency.
2. **Associated Partner:** Works on the project for delivering specific work packages and is contractually bound by EAHC. However, all the interactions with EAHC must be through the Main Partner.
3. **Collaborative Partner:** Participates in the programme but has no contractual obligations.

The funding information for every year is set out using the annual work programme. The work programme is then followed by calls for proposals with specific deadlines and budgets.

Web links

Further information about the programme can be obtained from the EAHC website

<http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/index.html>

3. Other Health Related Funding Schemes

3.1 Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)

IMI is a unique Public Private Partnership (PPP) between the pharmaceutical industry and the European commission. IMI receive part of its funding from the FP7 programme and the rest from the pharmaceutical sector. The second call for proposals will be launched on 30th October

2009, with over €76.8mn contributed by EU commission and at least a matching contribution from the private sector. The information can be obtained from the web link <http://imi.europa.eu/>

3.2 EU Structural Funds

EU structural funds are aimed at resolving the structural economic and social problems in Europe. Out of the 4 funds available only the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), whose principal objective is to promote economic and social cohesion within the European Union through the reduction of imbalances between regions or social groups, is relevant. More information can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/prord/prord_en.htm

B. SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS IN BRUSSELS

There are several layers of support organisations to help disseminate EU funding information to researchers in North West and provide help in making application.

1. North West Health Office in Brussels (NWHBO)

The NWHBO represents the interest of the NW in Brussels. The office is funded jointly by:

- NHS North West SHA
- North West Public Health Group
- Health Protection Agency
- PCT's

The office headed by Chris White, helps organisations within NW access EU funds. NWHBO provides information about EU funding calls, help in preparing application and EU consultations on behalf of institutes in the North West. NWHBO doesn't charge for the services provided.

Web Link: www.northwesthealth.eu

2. UK Research Office (UKRO)

UKRO is the UK's leading information and advice service on European funding for research and higher education. Established in Brussels in 1984, UKRO is jointly funded by the seven UK Research Councils (of which MRC is a part) and through subscription fees from 142 universities.

UKRO provides following (relevant) services

1. Information Services, providing up-to-date information about EU funding schemes.
2. Guidance on application
3. Enquiry service by a team of European Expert Advisors
4. Training in the UK

Most of the Universities in the North West are a part of the subscription package provided by the UKRO. An annual subscription costs approximately £3000.

Web link www.ukro.ac.uk

3. NHS European Office

NHS European office is run by the NHS confederation and funded by SHA's. The office was set up because of the increasing impact of the EU policy and legislation on the NHS. One of the core objectives is informing NHS Organisations of EU funding opportunities. The office also responds to consultation calls from the views received from the members.

The NHS European office could play an important part when lobbying for consultations on behalf of organisations within North West. Web Link

www.nhsconfed.org/Nationalandinternational/NHSEuropeanoffice/anout-us/Pages/About_Us_FINAL.aspx

C. NATIONAL SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

1. National Contact Point for FP7 programme (FP7UK)

National contact point for the framework programme is FP7UK who provides information and guidance for application to FP7 programme. FP7UK support is divided into themes similar to FP7 programme, the contact for the Health programme is Jill Jones from Medical Research Council. FP7UK also runs a newsletter service for its subscribers. Apart from these services, there is very little information about previous case studies, or ability to be involved in consultations in FP7.

The site however provides the partner search service which has expertise offered/wanted section. The partner search lists partnerships available for specific calls.

Web Link: <http://www.fp7uk.dti.gov.uk/Site/overview/default.cfm>

2. National Focal Point for Public Health Programme

National focal points are available in all the EU member states for providing guidance on the public health programme. The National focal point in the UK is Ms Bryony LLOYD International Support and Development Officer, Department of Health. However, no further information about her work is available online. The reference of NFP can be found in:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/agency/docs/nfp_en.pdf

D. REGIONAL SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

1. Frameworks NW

Frameworks-NW is the regional contact point for the FP7 programme. It was set up to raise awareness of opportunities and support NW organisations in preparing proposals. The service is funded by the North West Development Agency and delivered by technology transfer company, RTC North Ltd, and provides a platform through which researchers and regional organisations will be able to access European funds for R&D.

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The services promised by Frameworks cover the complete life cycle of EU R&D funding process from raising awareness through to guidance on proposal submission.

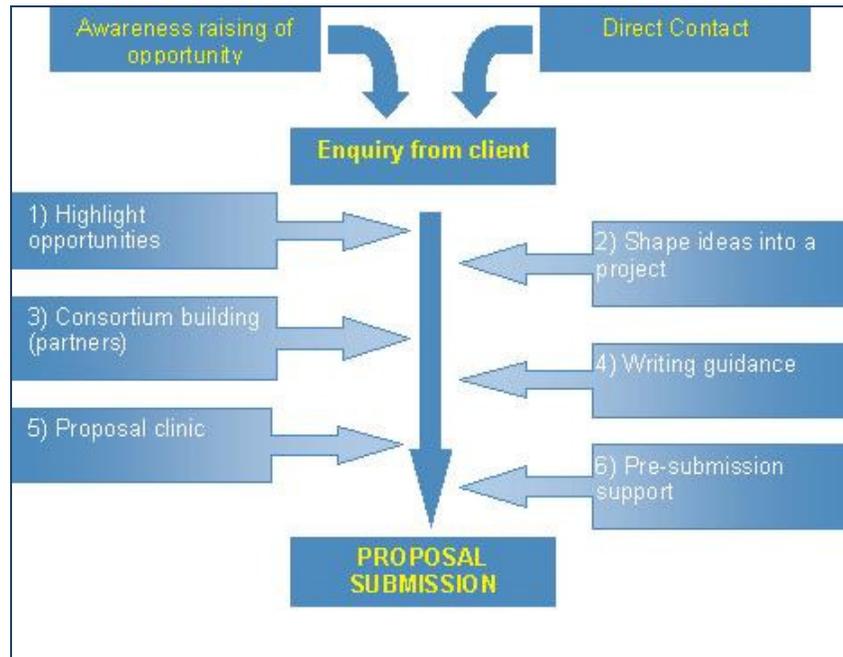


FIGURE 1 SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRAMEWORKS NW

Frameworks-NW also has a newsletter service where subscribers get information about calls and events (regional, national and EU) related to FP7. During recent consultation, not many recalled Frameworks NW for help or information about FP7 Health scheme.

Web Link: <http://www.frameworksnw.co.uk>

2. R&D team in NHS North West

The research and development team based in NHS North West plays an important part in targeting the EU funding information to researchers interested or having a background in the research topic. The knowledge available within the R&D team is due to their holistic view of research activities in the North West. The information is partly captured in contact sheets. Maria Thornton, Assistant Director, R&D NHS North West, is the main source of information due to her extensive network and knowledge of R&D activities in the North West.

E. RESEARCH LANDSCAPE IN THE NORTH WEST

The beneficiaries of EU funding are the research organisations in the North West. The research landscape is a complex one with inter-organisational linkages. The North West has made significant progress with the implementation of the national strategy. Income has increased from £32 million in 2006 to £72 million in 2009/10. The reputation of the North West continues to improve and the region is well placed to achieve the aspirations which have been set out.

The important research institutes in North West include:

1. Manchester Academic Health Science Centre (MAHSC)

MAHSC is one of only five Centres awarded nationally. The remit is to facilitate the translation of research innovations into improved healthcare and health outcomes across the wider NHS and internationally. Web Link: <http://www.mahsc.ac.uk/>

2. Bio Medical Centres

The North West has the Manchester Biomedical Research Centre in Developmental Medicine, and the Liverpool Biomedical Research Centre in Microbial Disease, which are two of only 12 centres awarded nationally. The remit is for leading NHS and university partnerships to drive progress in translating innovation in biomedicine into NHS practice.

3. Manchester Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (the CLAHRC)

Manchester CLHRC is one of the Nine CLAHRC that have been established to undertake high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients and to support the translation of research evidence into practice in the NHS.

4. NIHR Clinical Research Networks

NIHR formed the research networks to provide a world-class infrastructure for clinical trials in all areas of disease and clinical need within the NHS. The NIHR Clinical Research Network consists of a managed set of Topic Specific Clinical Research Networks, a Primary Care Research Network and a Comprehensive NHS Research Network.

All the research networks have a regional network based in the North West. The research networks are:

Comprehensive Clinical Research Network

CCRN will provide a world-class health service infrastructure to support research in all areas of disease and clinical need in the NHS. There are 3 local research networks in NW. Web Link: <http://www.crnc.nihr.ac.uk/index/networks/comprehensive.html>

National Cancer Research Network (NCRN)

The NCRN was established in April 2001, and aims to provide the NHS with an infrastructure to support high quality cancer clinical studies and to improve the speed, quality and integration of research resulting in improved patient care. There are local research cancer networks in NW.

http://ncrndev.org.uk/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

Dementias and Neurodegenerative Diseases Research Network (DeNDRoN)

The Dementias and Neurodegenerative Diseases Research Network (DeNDRoN) facilitates the conduct of randomised prospective trials and other well-designed studies of dementias and neurodegenerative diseases, including those for prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

North West DeNDRoN provides support for research studies and clinical trials for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of degenerative neurological conditions, including: Dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), Parkinson's disease, Motor Neurone Disease, and Huntington's disease.

<http://www.dendron.org.uk>

Diabetes Research Network (DRN)

The primary goal of the Diabetes network is to achieve benefits for people with diabetes, or at risk of developing diabetes, through excellence in clinical research.

The local DRN network is based in Salford Royal Hospital NHS Trust.

<http://www.ukdrn.org/>

Medicines for Children Research Network (MCRN)

The MCRN has the central objective of facilitating the development of medicines that are both safe and effective in the treatment of children.

Two of the six Local Research Networks nationally are based in the North West, specifically the Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales MCRN LRN and the Greater Manchester, Lancashire and South Cumbria MCRN LRN.

<http://www.mcrn.org.uk/>

Mental Health Research Network (MHRN)

The Mental Health Research Network (MHRN) supports vital large-scale research which will help to raise the standard of mental health and social care research throughout England. In addition, it acts as a central point of information and reference, connecting service users and carers to researchers and mental health professionals.

NHRN has a research hub in North West. <http://www.mhrn.info>

Primary Care Research Network (PCRN)

The Network will bring together a wide variety of primary care practitioners, including GPs, dentists, pharmacists and health visitors and will offer patients in primary care settings unprecedented opportunities to become involved in high quality clinical studies involving innovations in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and health care delivery in the community. There is a local PCRN based in the North West.

<http://www.pcrnnw.nhs.uk/>

Stroke Research Network (SRN)

The Stroke Research Network (SRN) provides a world-class health service infrastructure to support clinical stroke research and remove barriers to conducting research.

The aim of the Network is to facilitate stroke research by bringing about focused, effective investment to enhance NHS research infrastructure for stroke, and to increase collaborative working between academics, stroke clinicians, stroke service users and research funders. SRN has a local network in the North West.

<http://northwest.uksrn.ac.uk/>

5. Institute of Higher Education

There are 12 institutes of higher education which do research in health related fields in the North West. Researchers from the institutes participate in research under research networks, Bio Medical Centres and CALHRC. The institutes are:

- University of Cumbria
- University of Lancaster
- University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)
- Bolton University
- Salford University
- Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)
- University of Manchester
- Edge Hill University
- University of Liverpool
- Liverpool John Moores University (L JMU)
- Liverpool Hope University (LHU)
- University of Chester

SECTION II: MAPPING THE CURRENT PROCESS FOR DISSEMINATING AND PROVIDING GUIDANCE ON EU FUNDED PROJECTS

The process can be described in the following series of steps.

Information from EU Commission

1. EU health research funding either via FP7 or the Public Health Programme is published on the **EUROPA portal**. The alternative platform where FP7 information is available is the **CORDIS** portal. The documents published include the Annual Work Programme, Calls for Proposals, and Tenders for Work. Apart from the information about calls, a comprehensive help section with partner search facility, database of previous projects and contact information of the National contact points is available.
2. The “calls for proposals” under any programme is usually followed up with **Information Days** held across various cities in Europe. The information days are also a good source of networking to find EU partners.
3. Apart from formal events, there are a large number of **informal events** available to discuss the EU funding sources. The information is also widely available through the pan European networks like **EUREGHA**.

Support organisations in Brussels and the UK

4. The funding information gathered from the events and the portals regarding the FP7 programme is picked by the national contact point (FP7UK) and published on their website. The calls are also part of their newsletters which can be subscribed to by anyone in the UK. The FP7UK website also provides information on partner search.
5. Similar to National Contact Point for FP7 programme, there exists a National Focal Point for the public health programme. However, the NFP has no website but just a contact in the department of health.
6. The UK research office (UKRO) also collects the information about the EU funding and publishes it in their widely distributed newsletter (Almost all major UK universities are subscribers of UKRO). UKRO also has a designated contact person who specialises in vertical domains of research and is responsible for a specific geographical region.
7. The NWHBO distributes information through 2 different mediums; one is through the topic specific contact directory, maintained in the Brussels office and the other is through the R&D team in the NHS North West and Public Health experts. NWHBO also published funding information in their newsletters which is available for anyone in the North West.

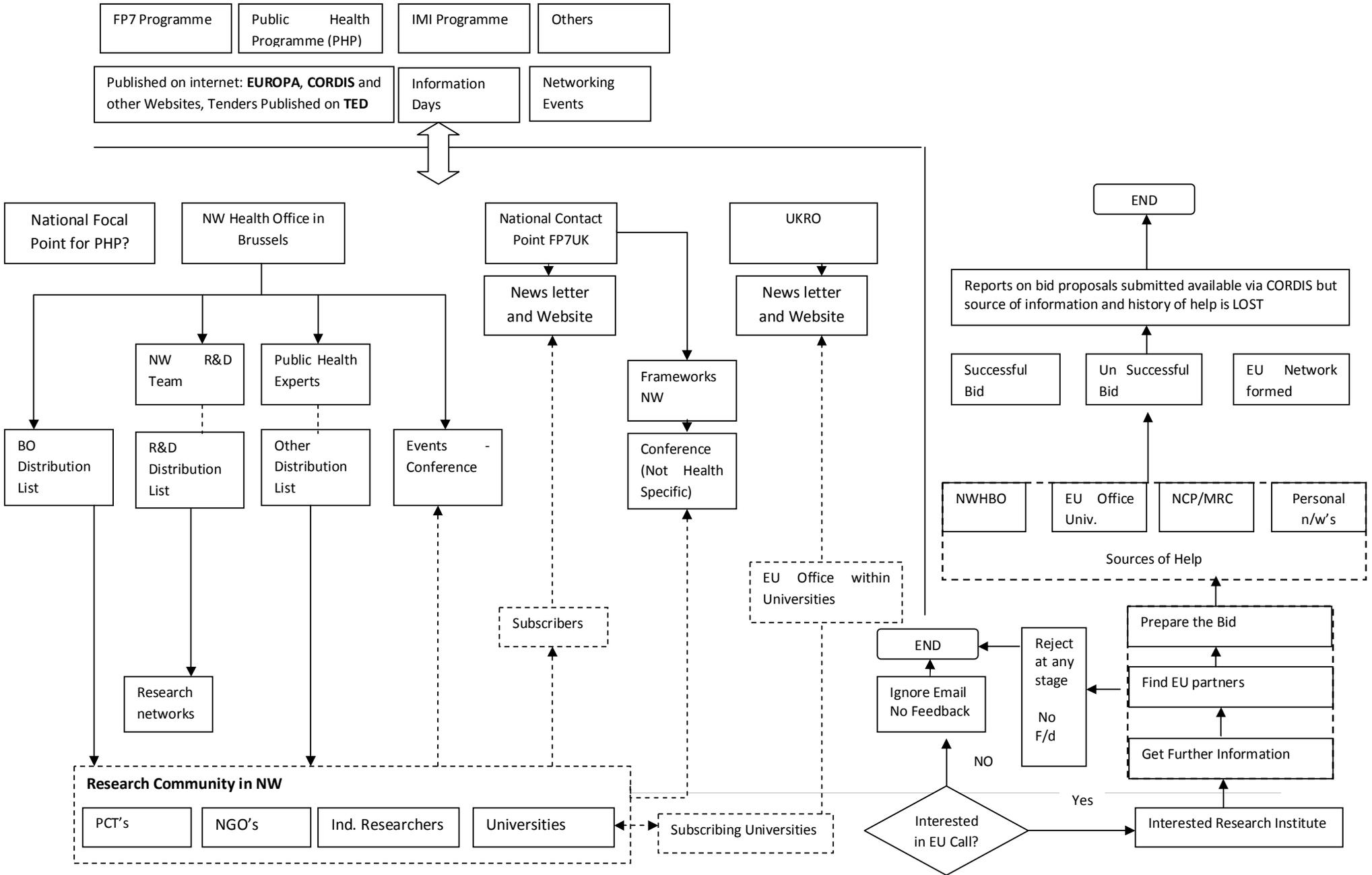
Organisations in the North West

8. The R&D team in NHS North West maintains a topic specific contact list which is used for further targeting the information about EU funding. The contact list is updated based on the intelligence gathered from the networking events on the ground. NHS North west targets the NIHR clinical research networks to further distribute the information.

9. Public health experts also help NWHBO distribute information amongst researchers on their contact lists. There are several information flows for research funding (university research offices, NHS North West or NWHBO) which can result in recipients receiving multiple notifications of research funding opportunities.
10. Researchers within universities also receive information about EU funding from their universities EU officer/s who track EU funding information.
11. Apart from these sources, the organisations within the North West are also part of pan-European networks such as EUREGHA and CYNDI. These organisations will have sources similar to the organisations in Brussels.

Getting help if interested

12. Organisations who are not interested in applying for EU funds simply ignore the email providing no feedback to information providers.
13. Organisations that are interested, but find the bidding process too bureaucratic and/or time consuming with a very low success rate, may also decide against bidding and ignore the emails. Hence provide no feedback to providers of information.
14. Organisations interested in the call need to undertake the following steps for the bidding:
 - a. Collect further information about the call
 - b. Find EU funding partners and
 - c. Prepare an application for the fund
15. The organisations can obtain the information required from the EUROPA/CORDIS portal. They can also use NWHBO or an EU Funding officer or UKRO or NCP or Pan European networks or a combination of one or more organisations depending on the need.
16. At any stage, if the NWHBO is not involved, they will receive no feedback if the organisation decides to pull out of the current call.
17. The possible outcome of the bidding process could be a successful bid or an un-successful bid with EU networks established. However, as there are different sources of information, without a formal closure of the process it can't be ascertained who the EU funding information was received from.



SECTION III ANALYSING THE CURRENT PROCESS

The process of EU funding information is loosely controlled with a large number of volunteers participating in disseminating information. The process can be analysed in greater detail using the parameters provided by the CATWOE framework.

Customers

The customers of the current process are the researchers within the North West. The customers are diverse with varying commitment to research. The customers include researchers in Universities, NHS Trusts, PCT's and other not for profit organisations. The researchers are further organised in different networks depending on their research interests. Examples of these research networks include the clinical research networks, bio medical research centres, research networks within universities and pan European networks. The EU funding information is received from different sources and different contexts (partner search) from different sources. Most of the researchers **lack the information** about the bigger picture in EU funding and consider it **bureaucratic**. They consider their **chances of securing funds** as **very low** due to the presence of large EU consortiums and lack information and motivation on how to further pursue the funding information. Many referred to the EU as a '**black box**' where the website was said to be '**presenting the data, but hiding the information**'.

Actors

There are a large number of EU funding support organisations in the UK. Most organisations like FP7UK, Frameworks NW, National Focal points are specific **to the largest seventh framework** programme. There are organisations like **UKRO** who provide EU funding information from all the major programmes and structure EU funding schemes but **not health specific**. However, **NWHBO** is the only organisation which provides information about the **health research specific funding**. From a regional point of view, **R&D North West** is a major source of EU funding information to NHS organisations, while the universities are served with information from **UKRO and supported by an EU officer** in universities.

The common theme amongst different organisations is the **lack of collaboration** and information sharing, preferring to operate in silos. Also, **NHS European Office** supported by NHS Confederation is **not currently used** for any strategic lobbying.

Process

Strengths

- Information **reaches its intended** audience.
- The process is not controlled which allows for multiple people/organisations to **voluntarily** contribute to its distribution.
- There is a **lot of help** available to gather further information about projects, find EU partners for the call and prepare the application. But individual researchers need to take initiative.
- Project champions, organisations or individuals, who have successfully bid for EU funds are available in the North West and open to helping others.

- The organisations like NWHBO, NHS North West, Frameworks NW and FP7UK provide information **without any costs** resulting in wider acceptance of information.

Weaknesses

- As the process is so loosely controlled, there are no **defined accountabilities** or ownership. Hence, the information distribution and uptake is entirely dependant upon individuals within organisations.
- The information actually **loses its content** as there are multiple organisations forming the middle layer.
- Presence of multiple contact directories within organisations/individuals is formed by tacit knowledge collected over years and there is **no clearly defined way of updating the information.**
- The free information and multiple sources means there is **no auditing** process which can determine the current successes or failures or even the suitability of the information provided.
- The individual researchers receive information about research funding as a single line such as “Biology and control of vector-borne infections in Europe. Up to €6-12m is available and only 1 project will be selected” the information is void of any context whilst the complete information is available on the CORDIS portal. There is no link or mention of how to find this information.
- There is a lack of a clear road map, challenges and help available for researchers. Most of the researchers end up with the questions about how to start thinking about applying for funds.

Opportunities

- EURO 6 billion available under FP7 programme from 2007-2013, EURO 650 million under Public Health Programme from 2008-2013. Yet untapped, Structured European funds available under different directorates.
- With NWHBO and SHA R&D teams, the North West is in the best position in the UK to form collaborations in the region and bid for EU funds. The NW could act as a model for other regions within the UK to copy and learn from, giving the NW a boost.
- There exist synergies (yet to be realised) between organisations such as UKRO, University European Office, NHS Confed., FP7UK, NWHBO and SHA North West to collaborate and affect the annual health programmes.
- Number of volunteers available in the North West, who in the past have successfully bid for EU funds, to act as process champions

Threats

- A lot of information about researchers in the North West and EU funding information is available in a **tacit form. Names of individuals are more recognisable than organisations**, presenting a real threat of loss of the process forever if they decide to leave the organisation.

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- The EU funding process tends to prefer projects with partners from eastern and southern Europe. Very few researchers in these regions have a strong track record in conducting research. Hence, meaningful partnerships with these organisations must be established early.

World- The wider context

The UK has a mediocre representation in leading EU funded projects in health. The information about the success rate by country is difficult to obtain for FP7UK (specific to health programmes) and EU structure funds. The public health programme provides a perspective.

The country with the highest number of submissions (i.e., with organisations from the country as the main partner) is Italy, followed by the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Spain, the UK and France.

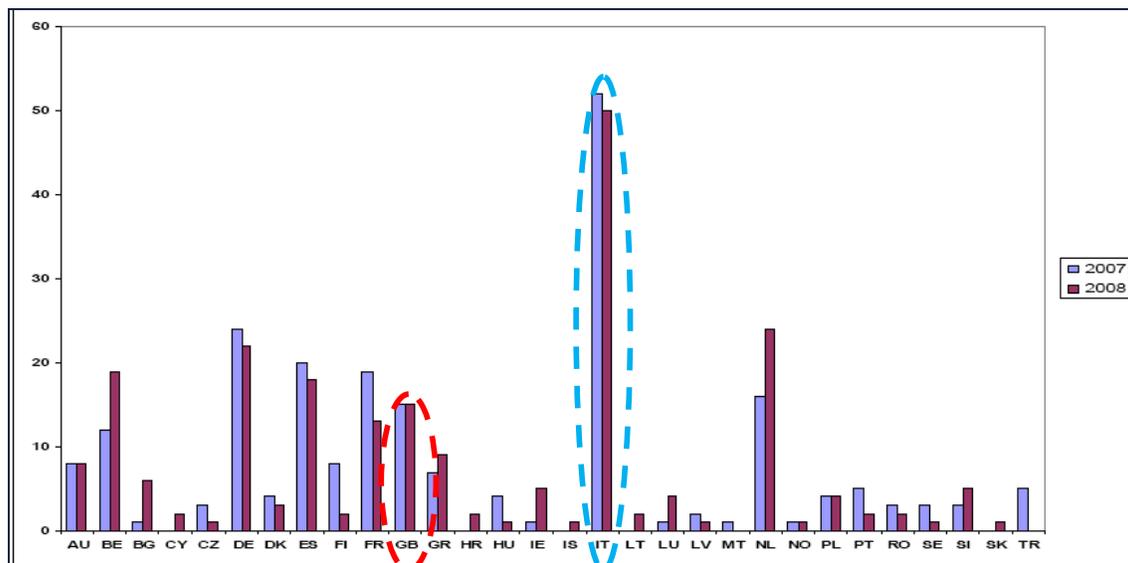


FIGURE 2 PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMME 2007-2008 ANALYSIS OF MAIN PARTNERS BY COUNTRY

Hence, there are regions in the EU who are successful in securing EU funds. The regions must be studied for learning best practice.

Owner

The process requires an owner to have accountability and audit in place. There are current questions on overall ownership and regional ownership of the current process.

- The current funding process requires NWHBO to take ownership of the end-to-end process. However, with current resources this will put additional pressure on NWHBO.
- There is a need for regional ownership of EU funding. The ‘regional owners’ should be responsible for educating researchers, disseminating information, collecting feedback and spreading best practice.

Any new solution will have to be hosted by an owner and have clearly defined accountabilities.

Environmental Constraints

There are several environmental factors which will determine the success of the current process.

1. **Need:** With current NIHR funding available, is there a sufficient capacity for research to secure additional funding from EU?
2. **Collaboration:** Most framework programmes require collaboration with at least 2 other EU partners. The research should solve EU priorities which can compromise the local development agenda. Hence, not all the research programmes are suitable for EU funds.
3. **Time:** Most of the NHS researchers also have day jobs, to accommodate research and co-ordination of an EU programme is a significant work load. Hence, the time commitment is a significant constraint.
4. **Experience:** Without prior experience in an EU funded project, it is difficult to manage a project. Hence EU strategy must be planned over multiple year horizons.
5. **Large EU consortiums:** During the primary research, the topic of large EU consortiums who regularly received funding was highlighted multiple times. The consortiums are not a formal body but loosely structured network of people/organisations that have in the past worked together on an EU project and are expert in their field. These consortiums rarely advertise for partner positions. As a programme manager of a currently EU funded project recalled “If you see a partner search call advertised on a website, their (the advertisers) chances of getting an EU funding is a probability tending towards zero”

Conclusions

The “as-is” analysis of the current EU funding processes reveals problem areas as summarised below.

6. The current process of disseminating information is very efficient in delivering the information through various channels to researchers in the North West.
7. The researchers almost never respond to the EU research calls forwarded as they feel lost and have little awareness about the overall EU funding process. Hence, there is a greater need for **hand holding** of researchers for making EU bids.
8. It is also imperative that researchers in the North West **first gain exposure to EU projects by starting as collaborators** and subsequently progress towards leading a project by building personal networks.
9. It is difficult to obtain information about past successful EU projects in the North West.

SECTION IV: CASE OF VENETO ITALY

A. INTRODUCTION

Veneto, in Italy, has been very successful in the past in attracting health related R&D funding. Italy is one of the most successful countries in the EU to receive funding through the Public Health programme. In 2008, over 50 project proposals were submitted from Italy compared to a distant 26 by Netherlands at 2nd position and 18 proposals from the UK ranked 7th. In 2008, there were 19 EU based projects in the region with a total of €2.2mn. To achieve the level of EU funding, Veneto has adopted a very proactive approach and efficient state mechanisms and presents a very compelling case for other regions to follow.

B. BACKGROUND

Health Care in Veneto

Healthcare in Italy is free of charge and is funded through general taxation. The health care administration is done through a 3 tiered architecture: **National** for setting objectives and principles, **Regional** for planning and co-ordination and **Local** for delivery. At the regional level there is a strong co-ordination being fostered between the health and social care institutes.

With a total budget of €7.2mn, regional authority in Veneto delivers healthcare through 21 local health authorities who manage over 60 hospitals, 2 public hospital trusts and 1076 specialist health care professionals.

The two important changes happening in Veneto include

1. The **decentralisation** of the health care system with decisions on health systems planning left to the regional health authorities.
2. Regions being allowed to pursue their **interests** with the **EU parliament directly**, without national intervention.

Hence, Veneto has a representative office in Venice, Rome and Brussels to help them gain visibility at National, European and World (WHO) levels.



Health Research in Veneto

Health research is an integral part of the Health and Social Affairs plan. The emphasis is on increasing biomedical research, health research and the use of technology in healthcare.

Health Research in Veneto is managed by the following institutes

1. Local Health Authorities (ULSS): Each local health authority has a mandate to carry out health based research through clinicians based in hospitals and through social care networks. The research is co-ordinated centrally with the help of Veneto regional office and is funded through the National and EU funding.
2. Universities: University of Padova and University of Verona are the biggest and most active in Health related research.
3. Collaborating Networks: Having recognised its priorities, Veneto has Biomedical and nanotechnology research centres bringing researchers from universities, clinicians and the private sector together.

EU funding in Veneto

Veneto is a very active participant in EU funded projects. Veneto is especially successful in accessing EU funds through the public health programme. At the heart of the successful organisation is the strategy to learn best practise in health care from other regions.

There are currently 19 live EU projects in Veneto, the following table summarises the finance received

Area	No. of Projects	Total Budget (€)	EU Funding (€)	Co-Financing (€)	% of EU funding
Health	13	50,949,137	2,183,102	3,487,780	38%
Social Affairs	6	1,577,823	139,205	155,081	47%

TABLE 1: CURRENT EU FUNDING IN VENETO¹

An interesting observation is of €3.48mn of co-financing €3.3mn is in kind². The regions also have 4 further projects in the pipeline from 2008 funding.

Veneto is referred to by their counterparts in Europe as a ‘project factory’, applying for funds under almost every programme. Even after large number of attempts, the success rate remains close to 50%³.

C. ORGANISATIONS WORKING FOR EU FUNDING

The success of Veneto is down to the use of innovative managerial and organisational models for research funding. The organisations in Veneto and Brussels working for EU funding are shown in figure 1⁴.

¹ “Veneto Health System”, Presentation by Daniela Negri, 11th May 2009, Brussels

² Presentation by Elisa Boscolo, Venezia, 23 Feb 2009

³ Interview with Daniela Negri, Kailash N, 12th November 2009

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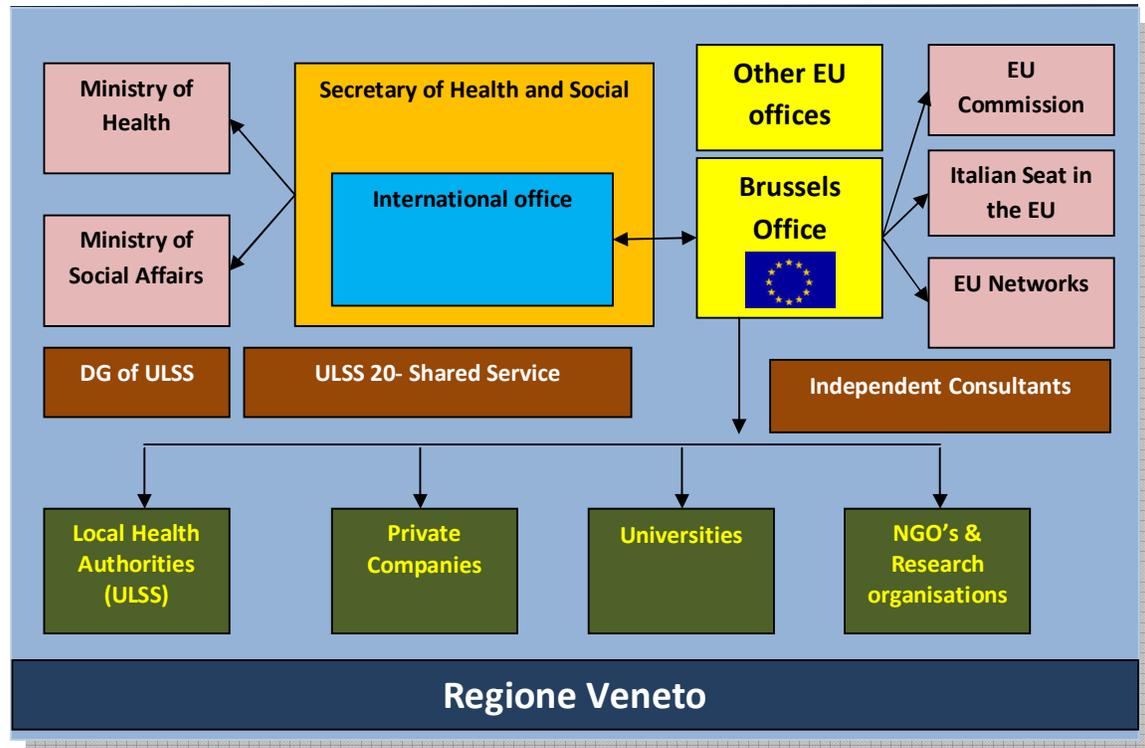


FIGURE 3: ORGANISATIONS IN VENETO FOR EU FUNDING

International Health and Social Affairs Office

The international office of Health and Social affairs is responsible for international development of the region. The office has smaller representative offices in Rome and Brussels to lobby on behalf of the region. The office headed by Dr. Luigi Bertinato, a charismatic leader and an expert in EU policies and projects.

The role of the international office has increased due to de-centralisation of the health decisions to the local regions. The international office gets involved in joint projects with WHO and the EU commission to develop and promote policies in favour of Veneto regions. The major activities of the international office are:

- Development of joint programmes with the WHO and other International agencies.
- Health care emergency programmes with regions surrounding Veneto.
- Interregional coordination with the Italian Ministry of Health, the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Italian Red Cross.
- Organisation of study visits of regional delegations to Brussels and within the region.
- Organisation of workshops for training .

The international office therefore, is primarily involved in raising the profile of the region internationally. The joint initiatives with WHO and the EU commission are widely recognised by the experts.

⁴ L. Bertinato, F. Ronfini, F. Toniolo, LE RELAZIONI SOCIO-SANITARIE, INTERNAZIONALI REGIONE VENETO, 2000-2005. (Report on the working of International office of Regione Veneto)

Veneto Brussels Representative Office

Established in 1997, the Brussels representative office has gone from performing a merely static function of providing information; to developing a network of relationships with other Italian regions, regions from other EU countries, Italian Permanent Representation with the European Parliament and Commission and other institutions Community and with numerous exponential collective interests.

The functions of the Brussels office can be organised into three areas:

1. *The first major area concerns information and comprises:*
 - The collection, storage, organization, processing and dissemination of information within the regional community and the Venetian territory;
 - The gradual development of an integrated European information network (branch offices, papers, phones, computers, etc..) to support the regional actors of Veneto;
 - The development of information programmes, training and refresher courses for regional administrators, and for regional personnel and the local residents;
 - Advancing information (unofficial) on future programmes and invitations through networking and attending events.

2. *A second area concerns the whole process ranging from research and assistance on EU funds and grants (both indirect in nature, such as the Structural Funds and Community Initiatives and direct, such as research and innovation) up to creating and managing Community projects. This work includes:*
 - Getting directly involved in developing EU projects of interest to the region;
 - Providing help in final drafting stages of projects, reporting and certification of consultants;
 - Development of transnational networks for the exchange of good practice and development of joint projects;
 - Searching for partners in member countries, candidate countries and everywhere in force, making cooperation agreements for the extension of programs.

3. *The third area, then is the work of advocacy and representation of the region to the other Italian regions in the EU, the Italian Permanent Representative to the EU, with European parliamentarians (especially those elected in the College of the North-East), with the Commission and other institutions and organizations, with the Italian institutions in Brussels with representatives of economic groups and other organizations for the protection of interests within the Venetian community. In this area in particular, the Brussels Office takes care:*
 - Designing and managing events in support of specific or general interests of the Region and the actors of the Veneto area;
 - Designing and managing initiatives for visibility within the EU resources and environmental planning Veneto, cultural, economic and productive, social and institutional.

European Networks

EU networks are used by the Brussels office as a source of raising the profile of the region, connecting and improving with other regions and forming groups to positively influence the research funding from the EU commission.

The networks where the Veneto region is active include

Network	Role	Purpose	Comments
Regions for Health Network	Participant	To promote collaboration and information sharing across regions in the Europe.	Useful for getting projects and networking http://www.euro.who.int/RHN
Alpe-Adria Working Community	Participant	Network to promote cross-border sharing of best practices in health	Veneto has advantage due to its central location which allows for greater cross border collaboration
ERRIN European Regions Research and Innovation Network	Participant	Collect and give pre-information on FP7, providing ERRIN network with a technical background in FP7; Discuss and circulate methods, tools and good experiences on how regions tend to identify and develop regional development strategies; Develop proposals to open consultations; Networking	http://www.errin.eu/en/
EUREGHA European Regional and Local Health Authorities	Owner-Manager	Share information and experiences; Forum for EU institutions and local / regional (health) authorities; Raise awareness of local / regional dimension and enhance local / regional influence on EU health initiatives; Provide expert knowledge and added value to EU institutions; Cooperate with other health networks and NGOs.	Formed and Managed by the Veneto Brussels office, the network is used for promoting regional interests in EU The network has formed working groups on specific health topics and are working to form projects and influence the related policies

International Relations Office

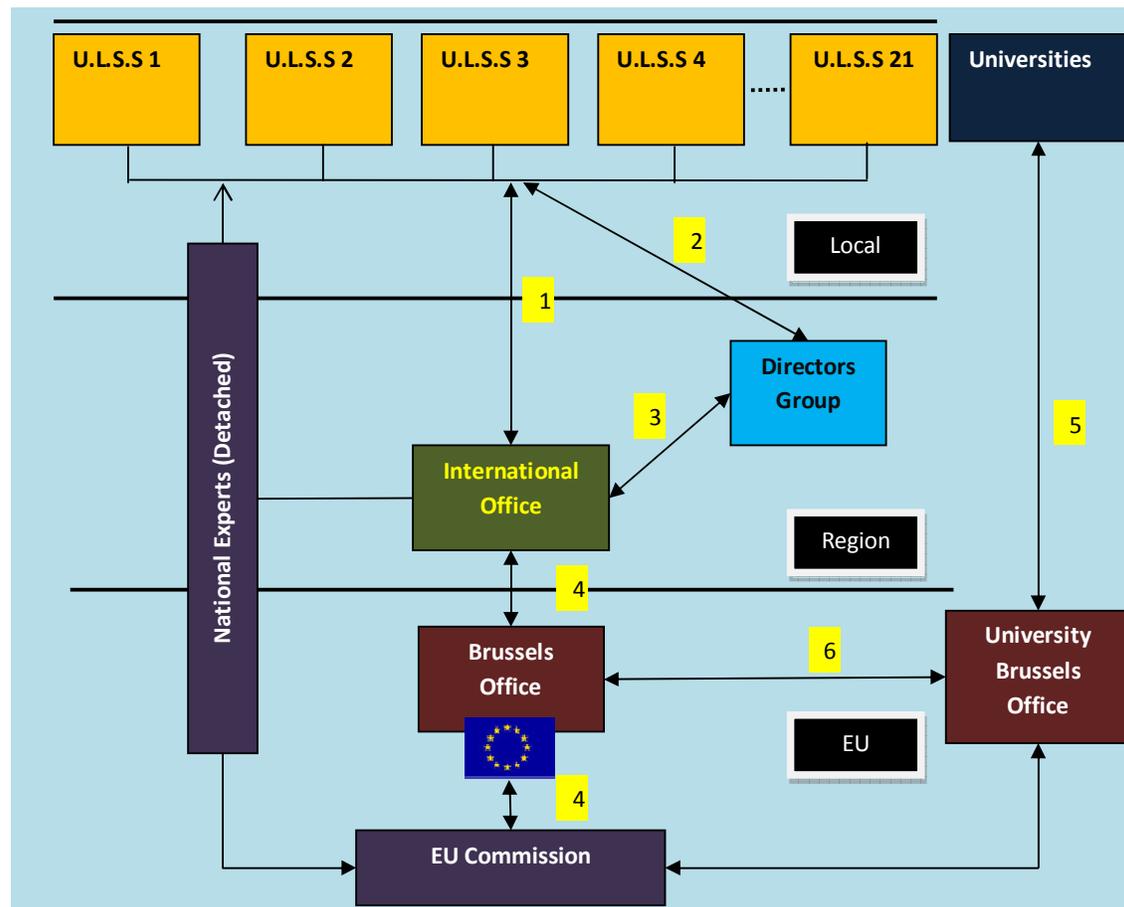
The local health authority of Verona (one of 21 local health authorities in Veneto) has formed a special project management group within the region. The main purpose of the office is to provide consultancy work to EU funded projects within the region. The activities can be summarised as:

- Design and elaboration of international health and social development projects.
The projects include AdRisk, Apollo, BePraSA, Domestic incidents and Safety Watch among others.
- Dissemination through the publication of regular contributions to international newsletters oriented to health and social sectors.
Eurosafe Alert is a newsletter published on a quarterly basis and contains news, interviews and information covering the whole spectrum of EuroSafe's Programmes and Task Forces.
- International relations through active participation in several networks operating in the public health and social sector
 - The office manages the international network EDDN (European Disaster Disability Network)
 - The International Relations Office collaborates actively with several institutions and organizations at international level, namely Eurosafe, European Commission, Olympic Committee, Italian and European Civil Protection and Italian National Institute of Health.

Group of Directorates of Local Health Authorities (ULSS)

The group of directors of the local health authority meet annually (or more frequently as required) to set the priorities for health and social services research within the region. The sessions chaired by the international office determines the EU projects which will be promoted from the region to get EU funding. The projects are chosen based on the criterion “suitability to become an EU wide project” that includes the chance of getting funded, local relevance and likely benefit from other EU regions. According to sources (hearsay and not confirmed) every year 4-5 projects are chosen to be developed further for EU funding.

D. EU FUNDING – A PROCESS OVERVIEW AT VENETO



The process can be explained in the series of steps summarised below:

1. Monitor, collect and distribute information on EU projects to researchers in the areas of expertise (public health, food safety, biomedical research; Development Cooperation).
2. The local health authorities come together to decide on the EU funded project and finalise 5-6 projects a year that will be supported by the international relations office.
3. International and Brussels office provides assistance to the territorial (regional offices, provincial and municipal, ASL, universities, etc.) on community projects. They also design, preparation and presentation of live and / or in the interests of the regional or local health authorities of European projects.
4. Brussels office role in the projects
 - a. Brussels office also provides assistance during the evaluation phase (lobbying and contacts with the offices of the Commission) and during the next phase of the negotiation of the financing contract.
 - b. It also sometimes is involved in the direct management (administrative and financial) of award or project management assistance.

- c. Activity reporting (financial) to the completion and presentation of results of work through the CD. "Activity Report" which is assessed by the European Commission and, depending on the quality of their work is sometimes published as an official document of the Commission.
5. Universities have their extensive network in Europe for the projects and partner search, the effort is usually supported by the EU representative in the Regionale Veneto office in Brussels.
6. The Brussels office often shares the project information on Health with the university office and vice versa.

E. LESSONS LEARNT FROM VENETO

Veneto is an excellent example of how effective organisation and management of EU support organisations can bring manifold increase in the EU funding. The following lessons can be learnt from Veneto:

Strategy and Planning Horizon

EU funding is distributed under various programmes with strict boundaries and qualifying criteria. The planning of these programmes is done well in advance and published annually via a work programme. Hence, a reactive approach always will fall short of time. Rather institutes must adopt a proactive planning approach.

Veneto adopts a 3-5 year planning strategy for developing EU projects. Every year only a select few are chosen to bid for funds.

Organisation and Management Structures

Bidding for EU projects requires significant investment of time, money and effort on the researchers' part without guarantees of actually getting funding for the project. Also, EU projects have grown bigger and require administrative and financial support in an institutionalised environment.

Hence, Veneto has adopted a 2-tiered architecture of obtaining funding. The EU office is responsible for scanning the EU horizon for information and networks whereas International office in the region helps with short listing local projects most suited for EU funding.

Once the matching process (between funding and projects) is successful, the project is developed by pulling in the expertise of the Brussels office and local services via the international office or external consultants. Help is also provided to cover sunk costs for developing the project and co-funding required.

Raising Profile in the EU

Whilst the EU project selection process has no corruption and is transparent, the process is still biased towards the large consortia (Informal or formal) who regularly bid for EU projects. The consortia are formed through informal networking in Brussels and/or through the pan European networks. Hence gaining an entry into these consortiums is of utmost importance.

Veneto participates in various pan European networks and has also formed EUREGHA network. The Brussels office regularly invites local institutes to come and make presentations at various opportunities available in the region thereby raising their profile and gain exposure to the big wide world of EU funding.

Advocacy of Local Policies and Interests

Vento, through its European Networks, have helped develop working groups bringing researchers from different member states to collaborate on issues of regional interest. These working groups help disseminate best practice from different member regions and help in developing opinions.

The working group can help in developing joint consultations for EU commissioners and help shape the work programme in favour of local interests.

Leadership

The process of planning and supporting only a few key projects at EU level requires facing stiff opposition. There is also a considerable investment in forming shared services, EU networks and training before the EU funding comes to the region. Also, knowledge of local priorities for research and EU programmes is required to confidently develop and drive projects to obtain EU funds.

Dr. Luigi Bertinato, Head of the International Office, is an influential leader and drives the regions international policies. Dr. Bertinato chairs the meeting of the local health authority directors to decide on research priorities and helps shortlist 5-6 major projects. He also shapes the policies for European networks and selects researchers in the region to make project presentations in Brussels.

Sharing of Best Practice

EU is a wide playing area with over 300 member regions participating and lobbying for interests. Hence, it is difficult and inefficient to centralise all the access to Europe. Veneto disseminates information about EU funding, promotes sharing of best practice through training and workshops, collaborates with other Italian regions and University Brussels offices and certifies external consultants for bidding and managing EU projects. The activities ensure that without significant direct help from the Brussels office, research institutes within the regions still have access to EU funds.

SECTION V: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NORTH WEST

The report has thus far analysed the “as-is” situation in the North West with regard to EU funding, provided a background of EU funding programmes and presented the case of the Italian region of Veneto which has been very successful in the past when bidding for EU funding. Further, we look at recommendations for the North West region to help improve access to EU funding.

The overall concept of EU funding should move from mere distribution of information to a more focused approach of developing selected projects in the areas of expertise for the North West. In developing this approach the focus should be on projects which will be most benefited by partnerships with other EU partners and not just on getting funding money from Europe.

The following are the recommendations that will help the North West develop a focussed approach.

A. INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT EU PROJECTS

(Change in current process)

Why Change?

During the consultations with the researchers in the region, most were unaware of the funding programmes such as FP7 or Public Health Programmes. The current method of distributing the information about funding is using a “Push” strategy. Hence, most of the information bites reach the researchers who are unaware of the context of the funding calls. With a limited time to apply for the funding (often less than 4 months) the task of gathering information, forming EU partnerships and putting forward a bid seems farfetched.

What Should Change?

There is a need for researchers to self-learn the EU funding information through various easy to use tools. The strategy of distributing information must be “Push” where researchers are made aware of the context of funding and then interested or self learned researchers subscribe to information on a regular basis.

The current methodologies used for the purpose are the Information Days in the region. Though immensely informative, they are at best held quarterly for a limited audience.

Way Forward

The agenda for this awareness should be managed locally with the help of the North West Brussels office. An intelligent knowledge management framework is required to raise awareness.

There are expert EU researchers in the North West who have had past experience of EU projects and are willing to help. These EU projects could be made available to other researchers through an interactive “**Map of the North West**” with details of researcher/projects. The **ACTNoW** database could also be extended to include this functionality. ACTNoW already contains a mechanism to contact the researchers through the interface and with minimal changes the functionality could be added.

The concept of a **Dashboard** could also be used effectively, where the dashboard contains information about current live projects, past projects and current Open EU funding calls. The dashboard could have the added functionality of **forums**, where people can discuss experience, bidding process and get help from experts. Forums are an effective tool for newcomers to ramp up knowledge without the fear of direct interaction.

The website of R&D North West and/or North West Brussels office could be extended to include the functionalities discussed above. The following are some of the pictorial representations of the concepts discussed.

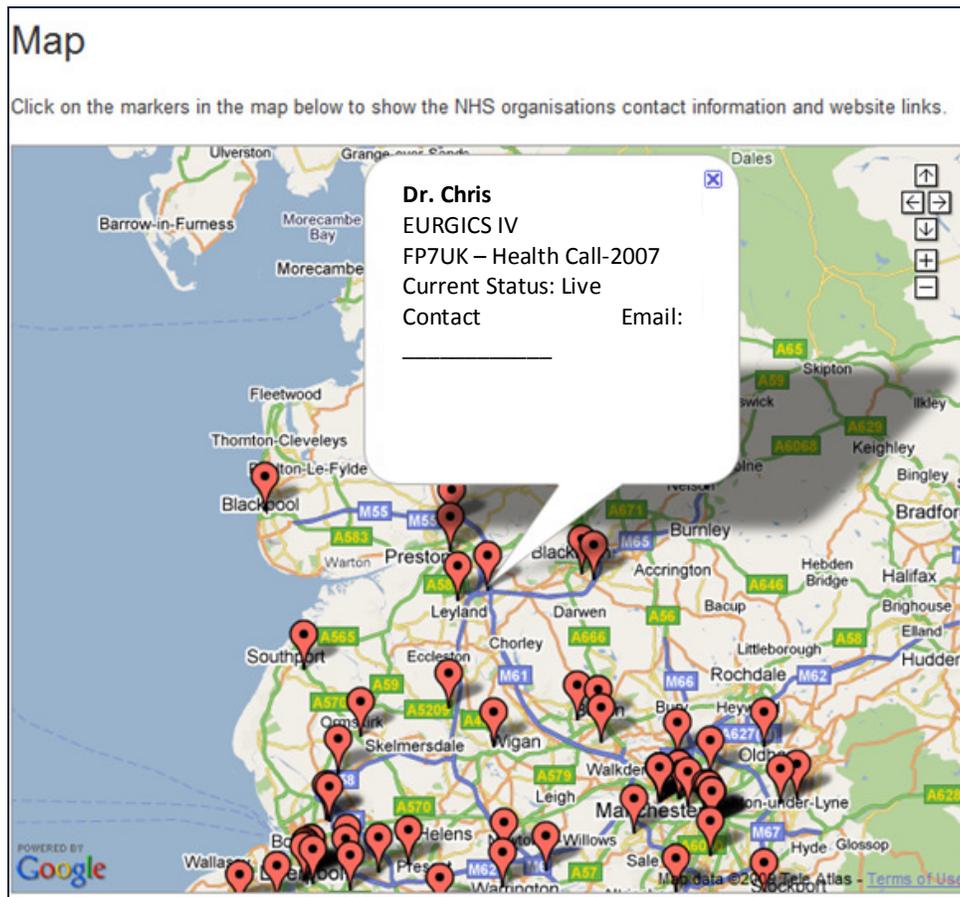


FIGURE 4 MODIFIED MAP FROM THE NORTH WEST R&D WEBSITE



FIGURE 5 SAMPLE OF A DASHBOARD

B. RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE NORTH WEST IN EUROPE AND PROVIDE EXPOSURE TO RESEARCHERS

(New activity/Upgrade current process)

There is an increased need for raising the profile of the North West in Brussels and providing exposure of researchers in the region to the EU way of making things happen.

Rationale

The evaluation process for EU funding grants is a highly visible process with little or no corruption involved. However, an informal chat with an EU project expert would unearth the open secret in Brussels about informal/formal consortia that have prior knowledge of topic/s in the next annual programme. These consortia choose people they have worked with before and stand maximum chance of getting the EU funds.

What Change?

Institutes in the North West stand maximum chance of getting EU funding if they are part of these consortiums and would eventually (with experience and exposure) form such consortiums. To gain the exposure and be recognised, it is important for researchers work to be recognised in Europe. A way of achieving this objective is to link researchers to pan European networks (EUREGHA, ENSA) where researchers would have platforms to speak about their research topics and become part of various inter-regional working groups.

Way Forward

North West Brussels office should create the presentation opportunities through their membership of various networks and means must be provided for researchers to travel and make presentations.

C. DEVELOP REGIONAL HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH AND SELECT 4-5 PROJECTS ANNUALLY FOR EU FUNDING**Rationale**

Obtaining EU funding for a research project is a complex activity with large competition from 300 other EU regions. Hence, concentrated effort must be made to only develop those projects which help local research priorities, will obtain maximum benefit from EU partnerships and have reached the level of maturity required for EU.

What Change?

Concentrated effort on few EU projects would require a stronger matching process between the local projects and EU funding available. This would also call for a collaborative agreement on research topics within the region and effort with 3-4 years of planning horizon by the research institutes. There is a need for local leadership for the matching process and governing council to select the research topics.

Way Forward

- Form a **catalyst group** for EU funding with members from PCT's, research networks and other research organisations (Bio Medical centres, Academic Health Science Centre).
- The core group to decide on the top 4-5 research themes to be developed further. The group would also require strong local leadership to make effective and fair decisions.
- The core group will convince research organisations to include EU funding as a core part of their research strategy and invest in it with 3-4 years of planning horizon.
- Develop an initial filter criteria (with the help of EU project experts) to determine fit for EU funding and can be used as an online tool for researchers as a guideline.
- North West Brussels office to help identify EU funding calls, project partners, relevant EU networks, and develop the project bids.

D. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL) FOR EU FUNDED PROJECTS DURING BIDDING AND INITIAL STAGES OF EXECUTION

EU projects have become complex and it is almost impossible for an individual to carry out administrative, project management and financial engineering work by himself (of course apart from research expertise). With the luxury of an initial concentrated approach a shared service can be instituted in the North West to help put together the bids. The shared service can also be used for providing project management support to projects in the initial stages. Though an upfront investment would be required to set up the shared service (on project basis), the service would eventually be managed by a network of expert consultants (certified by the SHA).

E. INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTES WITHIN THE REGION AND IN BRUSSELS**Information**

There are several redundancies in the current system of procuring and disseminating EU funding information to researchers. An obvious overlap exists between the information provided by UK Research office, North West Brussels office, FP7UK and European Website (CORDIS) for the funding calls. Whilst some of the overlaps are unavoidable there is a possibility of synergising some of these services.

University EU Office

Universities within the North West have a dedicated staff for advice and development of projects for EU funding. These personnel are often shared by the Health and other research faculties. There is an opportunity to collaborate with university staff within the region and university office in Brussels to collaborate on information sharing, project development and joint consultations.

The staff within the North West could also help support and setup the shared service (Point D) as it will help in pooling the cost to form a bigger service.

Brussels Office of NHS Confederation

The NHS Confederation's Brussels office provides consultations on behalf of the NHS. The NHS Confederation office could be used to raise the profile of the region through active participation in consultations and lecture/presentation opportunities.

UK Research office (UKRO) and FP7UK

Partnership with UKRO can help in getting research information, conduct training sessions within the region and build strong partnerships with other regions in the UK and Europe.

F. LEADERSHIP ROLE WITHIN THE NORTH WEST

As seen in the case of Veneto, a strong local leadership is essential in the region to complete the matching process between EU funding opportunities and local priorities. An effective matching process would help shortlist 4-5 projects which can then be incubated locally (provide national funding) and then taken at EU level when appropriate.

The local leadership in the North West lies naturally with the NHS North West R&D team as they have a holistic view of the research in the region and strong relationship with the North West Brussels office. The diagram below helps describe points C and F in further detail:-

HEALTH RELATED EUROPEAN FUNDING IN THE NORTH WEST

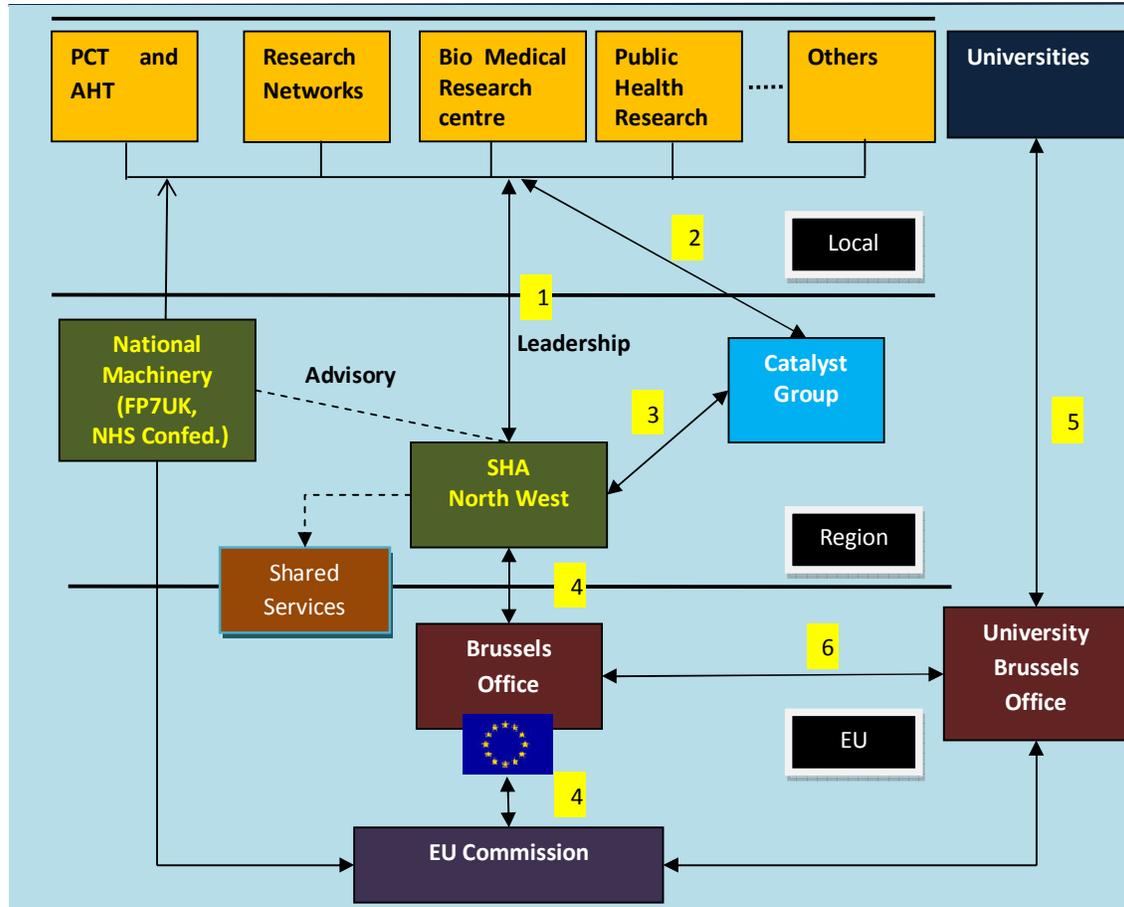


FIGURE 6: PROPOSED OPERATING MODEL FOR NORTH WEST EU R&D

Next Steps

1. Ratify and Audit the Recommendations
2. Project and Budget Planning for implementation of the proposed model
3. Plan the Catalyst Event
4. Develop the Knowledge Management Framework
5. Consultations for greater collaboration with UK Research Office, NHS European office, Universities and FP7UK