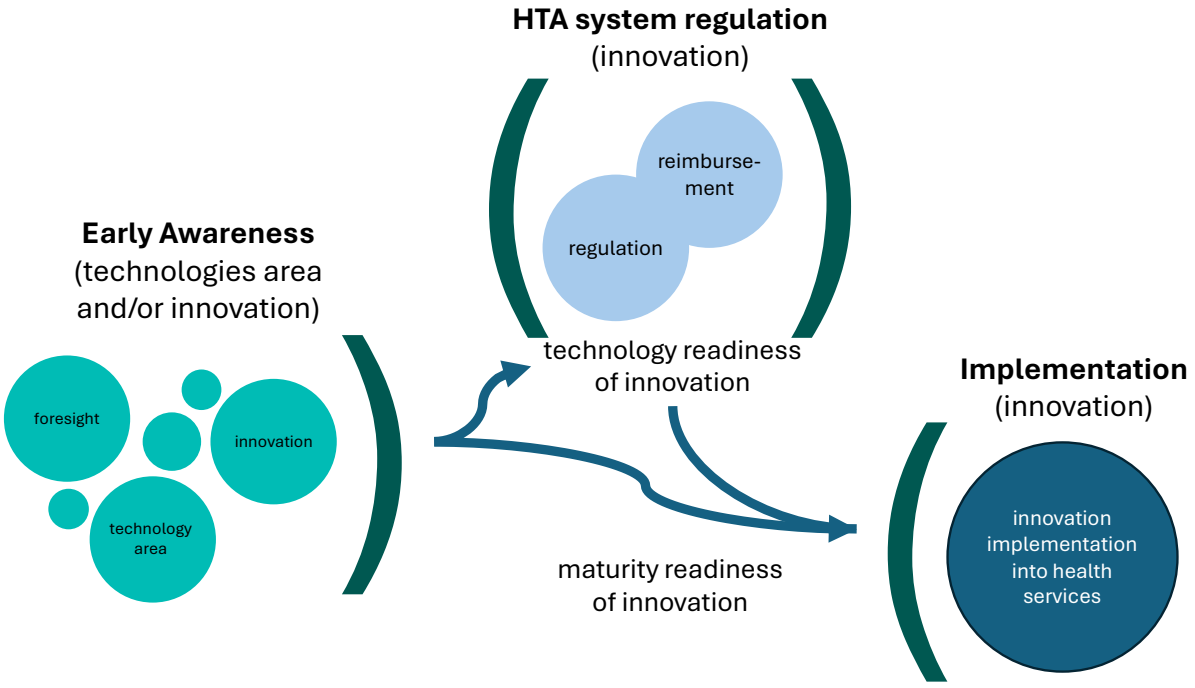
HTAi / EuroScan's Common Interest Group on Implementation Research

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) plays a critical role in evaluating health technologies for implementation in daily healthcare settings by providing comprehensive assessments on their effectiveness, safety, cost-effectiveness, and broader impact on patient outcomes and healthcare systems.
HTA's goal is to ensure that health technologies — ranging from medical devices and diagnostic tools to pharmaceuticals and healthcare practices — deliver value and align with health policy priorities, ultimately guiding evidence-based decision-making for effective, patient-centred care. It helps to justify the implementation of a technology because there is enough evidence to support it.
Early Awareness (EA) is needed to identify technologies and their estimated impact quite early in specific scenarios. This is also leading to requirements regarding the acceptance by decision makers, by providers and customers. Last but not least, the needed infrastructure (logistic, economic, organizational and personal skills) must be described to assure that a technology could be implemented as fast as possible if the legal (regulation) and business (economic) frame as well as the effectiveness is given.
The ultimate aim by combining Early Awareness with HTA is to improve the implementation pathway of technologies from the initial idea to integration demonstrating its effectiveness to reduce time to market and to increase the patient outcome as well as system sustainability including the integration of the 'Health for all policies' concept.



Picture 1: from idea to service

1. HTA's Role in Health Technology Implementation

HTA provides a structured, evidence-based framework that examines health technologies before they are integrated into regular clinical practice. This framework evaluates not only clinical efficacy but also economic implications, patient quality of life, and ethical considerations, estimating whether the adopted technologies meet real-world healthcare needs. Through HTA, decision-makers assess how technologies could perform in practical settings, discussing appropriate and sustainable adoption strategies, resource allocation, and performance metrics for ongoing assessment.

2. Hurdles in Implementing Health Technologies

HTA often anticipates the value of a health technology based on clinical trials. Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), among other types of studies, provide "experiments" under "laboratory conditions" to decide whether a technology could fulfil its intended purpose. Other evidence from real-world use depends on implementation and adoption, which has not yet taken place at the time when decisions about implementation need to be made. HTA is a transparent and robust approach, but it lacks an important ingredient: Real-world experience of where and why a technology works as expected. Under these circumstances, HTA is currently under pressure. Why? Because dynamic contextual factors that support or block appropriate implementation and adoption are not reflected in regular HTA processes as they go beyond a discussion of formal, quantitative evidence. These include the complexity and fragmentation of healthcare systems, economic constraints or resistance to change. This needs to be overcome by new HTA-supporting processes from implementation research.

3. Proposal for Common action on Implementation by HTAi and EuroScan int.net / i-HTS

EuroScan int-net, the legal entity, with its network brand 'international HealthTechScan' (i-HTS), wanted to improve the pathway from idea to market together with HTAi within an Interest group on implementation research. This is following our common approach within the IG Disinvestment and Early Awareness (DEA). The IG should include other societies and scientific areas to describe a common framework for health technologies from the idea to its implementation. Taking up challenges and developing concepts on how to respect the individuality of any kind of policy decision process or business process to assure the sustainable implementation according to public needs and patient focused outcome improvement.

The IG should combine the different groups and is focused directly on the following effects:

- Bringing together the different scientific groups, customers and decision makers to achieve the basis for a common understanding (basis is the curriculum by HTAi and EuroScan/i-HTS)
- Agreeing on different tasks as part of the IG to reflect on evidence and policy aspects for priority settings reflecting needs and different stakeholders to gain acceptance
- Structures and processes to announce priorities to all related health policies (beyond the healthcare decision makers)
- Forming common frameworks to enable decision supports to transfer global knowledge into local decision context to support successful implementation of health-related technologies using implementation research methodologies to add the clinical research topics on health technologies

The IG should be in touch with other IGs to avoid duplications and by this to gain benefits from the knowledge exchange between the different IGs. Especially also with the IG DEA, the technology related IGs, the hospital IG.

The IG will act within the given strategy and goals of HTAi and will have a focus on the following topics,

- **Adaptability to Local Contexts**
  - **Aligning Technology with Public Health Goals**
  - **Regulatory Approval and Reimbursement**
  - **Equity in Healthcare Access and benefit in outcome**
- **Continuous Monitoring and Post-Implementation Evaluation**
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Training**

This will include the standard goals as:

- **Foster Scientific Dialogue:** Encourage discussions on implementation science frameworks, methods, and findings relevant to HTA.
- **Develop Knowledge based Resources:** Create knowledge products such as publications, webinars, workshops, and guidelines that support implementation strategies.
- **Build Capacity:** Strengthen skills and understanding of IR principles within the HTA community through targeted events.
- **Support Policy Integration:** Assist policymakers and practitioners in adapting HTA evidence into actionable, region-specific health policies.

Within the first phase the Key Activities (12-18 Months) will be:

- Workshops/Webinars: Host two events annually (virtual or pre-conference) on HTA implementation strategies, challenges, and success stories.
- Publications and Reports: Generate at least one publication or report addressing key IR issues in HTA to be considered for submission to The International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care (IJTAHC).
- Networking and Collaboration: Facilitate networking opportunities for HTAi members interested in IR, creating a community of practice to share insights and experiences.

Expected Outcomes:

- A sustainable community within HTAi dedicated to advancing the practical application of HTA within the implementation support of health technologies.
- Enhanced understanding and dissemination of implementation research methodologies and evidence for HTA practitioners and policymakers.
- Increased collaboration with other HTAi Interest Groups to ensure comprehensive support for HTA implementation across settings to raise HTAi and EuroScan as the scientific organizations supporting the implementation of technologies improving outcome and sustainability.

Needed action:

Register for the introduction session

Sign our petition to support the establishement of the group at openpetition.de/!dlmxr.