



**European SeniorWatch Observatory and Inventory -**  
*A market study about the specific IST needs of older and disabled people  
to guide industry, RTD and policy*

**www.seniorwatch.de**

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## ***Seculife***

*Service packages for senior citizens in The Netherlands.*

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## Short Title

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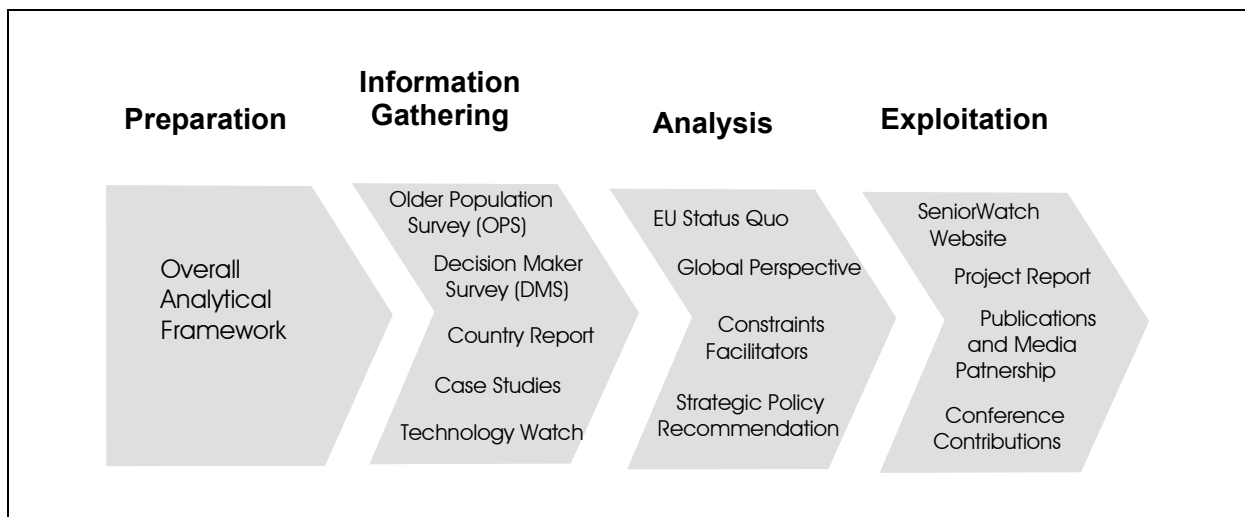
# 1 Introduction

The SeniorWatch project addresses the need to understand better and to monitor the market dynamics of Information Society Technologies (IST) applications and services targeted at older (and older disabled) citizens. Currently, there is insufficient empirical data about the needs of older citizens which could be met by IST-based applications and services, and a lack of awareness on the part of industry, users and politicians that hampers the rapid exploitation of new market opportunities arising from IST developments. In order to redress this state of affairs SeniorWatch will provide a European single source of empirical information on the market potential of IST-based products and services targeted at older people. The main objectives can be summarised as follows:

- to help and encourage European industry to address the market opportunities, and particularly challenge current competitive advantages of the US industries,
- to enable policy to really influence the current situation and to benchmark achievements between different European regions and countries and to make comparisons with competing world economies (Japan, US) most relevant to the field,
- to inform citizens about what is now possible with the support of IST and, thus, encourage them to demand IST products and services which meet their requirements.

As illustrated by Figure 1-1, these objectives require a comprehensive methodological approach to be applied. On the basis of an overall analytical framework, it integrates a set of complementary research methods such as European-wide surveys of older people and of decision makers in care services, best practice case studies, technology watch work shops and country reports. Synthesising the various types of empirical information gathered with help of these methods will finally enable the project to arrive at an holistic overview, to establish a technology and market observatory, and to derive policy recommendations to accelerate market development. Research results will be exploited by means of different measures.

**Figure 1-1: The Project Phases of SeniorWatch**



Source: © SeniorWatch, 2001

As part of the project's overall methodological approach the SeniorWatch case studies aim at providing a useful source of information on how the IST-related needs of the target groups in question can adequately be served. They are also intended to help to understand - in a qualitative manner - more deeply specific aspects of the market situation related to IST

products and services relevant for older citizens. To allow a comparative analysis of real-life examples, a common approach for selecting and describing suitable cases was developed. The main selection criteria applied in this context include:

- suitability of the case to provide input to the overall understanding and analysis of the market for IST among older people;
- suitability of the case to serve as an example of a success story (or failure) that can guide and motivate others to take actions that will support the diffusion and take-up of IST by or for older people.

In the following the SeniorWatch case study no.19 is described.

## 2 Seculife. Service packages for senior citizens in The Netherlands.

### 2.1 Description

Seculife offers service packages for senior people in The Netherlands. The aim is to give senior people the opportunity to stay in their own house and environment and to give them some 'instruments' to live easily and safe.

Seculife acts as an integrator or intermediate and offers a range of services. Part of these services are being delivered by Seculife itself, other services by partners who operate nation-wide and with whom Seculife has a contract. The service packages include the following services:

#### 'Safety and care'

- alarm service: Seculife is reachable 24 hours a day and 7 days a week in case of problems regarding body and health and in case of material calamities or damage.
- mediation in case of requests for care and nursing and in case of questions regarding care

#### 'Daily services'

- home concierge: an 'ideal son in law' who can help the clients with all kind of technical jobs. (This home concierge is detached on the spot but is in service of Seculife).
- meals
- flower service: clients can order flowers for themselves or others.
- gardening: help with the construction or maintenance of the garden
- information service: clients can call with any kind of questions and Seculife will try to find the answer
- reminder service: clients can give Seculife certain important dates they should not forget (e.g. birthday of grand children, date for hospital visit etc.)

#### 'Customer services'

- the clients receive a newsletter (6 x per year)
- the clients receive a free subscription of the magazine Uit&thuis
- special offers for clients
- permanent quality control and survey

The prices are per person in € per month:

Package 'Comfort': € 6,60 (Daily services + Customer services)

Package 'Safety': € 14,40 (Safety and care + Customer services)

Package 'Total': € 6,70 (= package Comfort + package Safety)

The focus of Seculife is on one hand on the business-to-business market (e.g. housing agencies and the care industry) on the other hand on the private market. The brochures of Seculife are being distributed via the 500 biggest post offices throughout The Netherlands. Apart from that, Seculife attends fairs and seminars, places advertisements and tries to get free publicity in magazines that are being read by the target groups.

Seculife supplies a so called 'service-intercom' to the client. One push on the knob of the intercom accomplishes a speak-listen connection between the client and the call centre. On that moment the client is recognised automatically. After the question of the client, the call centre arranges the service or, in case of emergency, the alarm service.

At random quality check take place. The call centre asks the client if the service was being on well.

### Context

Seculife is focused at the private market as well as the business to business market.

1. Private market:: senior people and people with a need for care. The package Comfort is meant for the 'younger' senior people who want to live at ease and the package Safety for people who want to feel safe and secure. The problem is that people don't want to feel old, even when they are 80 years old some people say they don't need the alarm service yet because they feel well. The older senior people of today are not used to spend a lot of money for themselves or to buy many luxurious things. They see the services of Seculife as a luxury.
2. Business to business market: housing agencies, developers, care industry, welfare organisations. Many of these organisations want to stimulate senior people to stay in their own house. The government also stimulates that, because in the future there will not be enough homes for the elderly. The group of senior people is growing and is the 'market of the future'. Many organisations release that offering extra services is necessary but they want to focus on their own core business. Therefore they are looking for a partner to arrange and offer services for their clients. One of the problems with these organisations is the fact that they are not really commercial and that the decision making process is very long. And of course, money for new projects is a problem. Many organisations try to receive subsidy.

Seculife International started in Israel in 1989. In the Netherlands, area 't Gooi, Seculife started in May 1999 with two shareholders: Seculife BV and ING Group (European Innovation Center). In June 2000 Seculife made a start in area Rijnmond. Distribution of brochures and co-operation in sales promotion activities take place in post offices.

In 2001 Seculife offers service nation wide. Woonzorg Nederland, the biggest organisation with housing for senior people, becomes share holder of Seculife BV.

The government stimulates projects that combines services and items within the areas 'Living', 'Well being' and 'Care' and is willing to pay a subsidy for new developments. Never the less, Seculife needs to become commercial profitable. The number of actual clients in the private market rises very slowly. The 'young' seniors are willing to pay for extra services and comfort and want to live independently.

A technical problem is, that the connection between client and the call centre has to be reliable. Therefore the connection happens by telephone cable, which is the most reliable way of communication on this moment. The problem of other systems, like DECT-system which is used in some homes for the elderly, is that they are more trouble-sensitive.

## 2.2 Analysis

### Impact

A lot of sowing has been done the last two years, now it is time for the harvest. There are many contacts and projects in a preparatory stage. The profit has to come from the b-t-b market. Seculife is being considered in the b-t-b market as a professional partner.

The share holders need to stay convinced of the fact that the harvest is really near. So far, the current clients are satisfied about our services, this is important and a condition for future activities.

Several kind of organisations/sectors in the b-t-b market started to contact Seculife because they were looking for a partner for arranging services for their clients. Other companies who offer services that might be interesting for older people get in touch with Seculife and want to become one of the suppliers of services, for example meals.

### Lessons to learn

Continuity and professionalism is very important and the only way to accomplish good concepts and to get good results (see also above success and failure). Local politicians should stimulate local organisations to work with a professional national organisation like Seculife. The integration of regional services is possible so the concept and service packages can be adapted to the local situation and needs.

Conditions for success are: continuity (sufficient financial resources), a professional marketing, a brand name, volume of clients, personal attention/treatment and a high quality level of services.

### Perspective

The market perspectives are very good. The difficulty is that the target group is still growing and will be at it's top in about 10 years time. So now we are preparing things and building a brand name in The Netherlands so that people know us when they become part of the target group.

In the near future an Internet connection will come into being. Also the service will be extended by a broader care package, such as a professional alarm service and a care consultant.

Also the registration of the care server will take place automatically (sort of service and time).

## 2.3 Acknowledgements and links

### Persons to contact

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**Short Title**

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POVES. How the EU-TIDE-Project "POVES" contributed to the