



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

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Sustainable Trynwalden

*A local experiment on inverse focused services in
Friesland, The Netherlands.*

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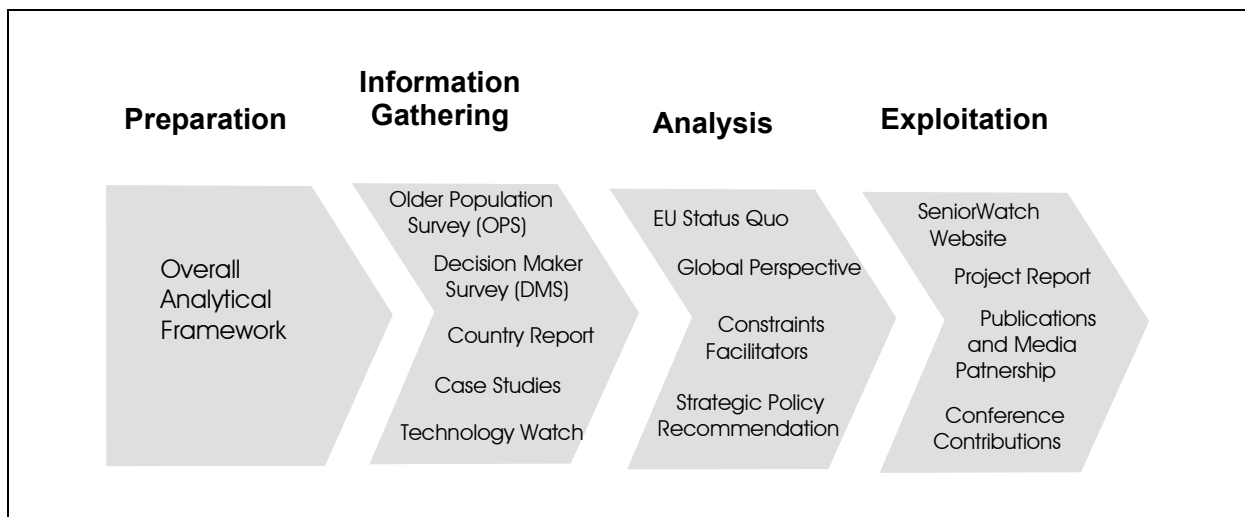
1 Introduction

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



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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.20 is described.

2 Sustainable Trynwalden. A local experiment on inverse focused services in Friesland, the Netherlands.

2.1 Description

Offering infrastructure and facilities for self management

The aim of the experiment is, to integrate elderly people into the (local) community by offering them infrastructure and facilities for self management, independent living and by using local resources (commercial services, local carers, social welfare, volunteers), that by itself means a vitalisation of this community and thus the strengthening of it for all its members.

The core element is to provide elderly people with the infrastructure (housing, domotica, service centre) and facilities (information, budget, communication etc.) to stay within the local community and help to vitalise this community of which they are part of. The project therefore has a lot and variety of 'products': housing (incl. domotica), new services such as digital information, digital shopping, but also new form of volunteer support, organisational and financial novelties (combining of budgets of institutions to offer integrated health care etc). It is foreseen that in the course of the project all kind of services will be provided for: catering, laundry, transport, 'pet service', gardening all presented at the screen at home and delivered preferably by local companies, shops etc.

In a rural community of around 10.000 people, spread over around 10 villages, trends towards dwindling facilities, lesser employment possibilities and other negative developments are reversed. The initial results will be on a small scale but in the longer run these will have a positive feed back on a wider scale. One of the targets is getting a more balanced population mix, going from around 10 % to 25 % elderly people, living within the community.

Context

Participant are:

- health insurance company
- advisory council of elderly people
- municipality
- care & health institutions such as a hospital, a home for elderly people
- home care organisation
- social welfare institutions for the elderly
- housing institutions

Financial support is organised, essentially by putting together the different budgets of the participants involved, which is also a novelty by which many things become possible. Things than normally cannot be realised within the budgets and especially the rules and regulations that come with these budgets. For the project permission was arranged to make 'exceptions'. There is also funding out of budgets for experiments in housing etc.

2.2 Analysis

Impact

The Trynwalden experiment shows how to overcome the obstacles for concert cooperation where so many parties and organisations are involved, with their different funding and different regulations. It is a major project that has relevance for many regions, where because of economic and geographic concentration, diminishing public budgets etc. local facilities for (community) care are rapidly disappearing. And where elderly people have to follow the care to the bigger cities and central facilities, not only depriving them of their familiar 'habitat' but also adding to a vicious circle that marginalises the still existing commercial and social activities in the smaller villages. At the same time the combination of domotica, telematica (information, communication and services 'at a distance') with a local service centre and personal assistants (every client has its permanent assistant) is a strong model for self management and autonomy of elderly people and saving costs on expensive and unflexibel central institutions for elderly care.

Perspectives

The separation between care and living, keeping the elderly people in their own habitat and moving the facilities (care, daily necessities etc.) instead of the people fits perfectly in the trend towards self management, autonomy and independence in the society in general. ICT will play an important role in creating the conditions and facilities for that. As it is proven that elderly people can work with ICT if they see the benefit of it and since the coming generation of elderly people is more used to ICT, the demand for these ICT-bases services will grow in the coming years. Pilots and experiments in this field like Trynwalden help to develop these services.

2.3 Acknowledgements and links

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Link

www.skewiel-trynwalden.nl