

56. PRE-COMMERCIAL PROCUREMENT METHODS FOR PROCURING R&D SERVICES

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BACKGROUND:

The RELIEF project – recovering life wellbeing through pain self-management techniques involving information and communication technologies (ICTs) – is a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) project funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 program. Launched in February 2016 and running for 36 months, it searches for new technologies to assist chronic patients in self-managing their pain and also helps healthcare professionals (HCPs) better monitor their patient using ICTs.

OBJECTIVES:

- Link European healthcare procurers – in the RELIEF project, hospitals from Córdoba (Spain), Uppsala (Sweden) and Paris (France) are collaborating together
- Establish and execute an agreed Pre-Commercial Public Procurement process and run a cross-border co-creation R&D project (public/private)
- Develop innovative digital solutions addressing unmet needs of the chronic pain patient and HCPs

METHODS:

PCP is a method for procuring R&D services, with the purpose of developing a new product or solution based on unmet needs defined by HCPs. A PCP project has four phases:

(NB: the timings and budgets indicated below are those for the RELIEF project and not PCP standards)

- **Phase 0: Open Market Consultation** – Concrete definition of the unmet needs, followed by a PCP tender to select the best companies.
- **Phase 1: Solution Design** – 8 companies / 4 months / EUR 26,250 (max) received per company. The selected companies undertake a feasibility study of their initial proposal to verify its technical, economic and organizational feasibility.
- **Phase 2: Prototype** – 4 companies / 10 months / EUR 210,000 (max) received per company. The selected companies develop a prototype of their proposed solutions for testing.
- **Phase 3: Field Testing** – 2 companies / 10 months / EUR 262,500 (max) received per company. The innovative solutions selected are tested in real conditions in three pilot hospitals before the final assessment and result

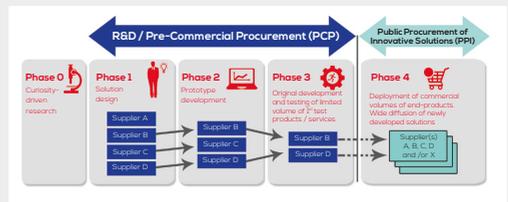


Diagram illustrating PCP and PPI process. Source: Resah

RESULTS:

What has been learned?

The PCP is still ongoing and the contractors have just started Phase 2; they now have 10 months to develop a prototype addressing the 9 RELIEF Challenges defined in Phase 0:

1. Improve knowledge of the patient base data before first visit (Efficiency)
2. Ensuring open communication prior to launching the PCP tender to obtain enough submissions and leave the companies enough time to understand this complex R&D process (PCP)
3. Provide effective communication channels between patients and clinicians
4. Guarantee access to social networks – to put patients in contact with other chronic pain patients and patient organisations
5. Ensure data for research purposes
6. Validate information clinically
7. Improve monitoring of the patient and the treatment
8. Increase effectiveness of adherence to treatment
9. Improve patients' education related to their condition

TAKE-AWAYS:

What went well?

- ✓ Undertaking in-depth research and analysis of the actual needs, as a first step
- ✓ Ensuring open communication prior to launch to obtain enough submissions
- ✓ Being active and communicating in countries other than the ones involved in the PCP consortium
- ✓ Providing guidelines attached to the PCP tender documents, since the electronic signature process is not always well understood by start-ups or SMEs
- ✓ Allocating two months of public consultation as a minimum for a PCP request for tender, as this process is quite complicated and new for European organisations

