



REGION.innovativ - Working Environments of the Future in Structurally Weak Regions

Digital transformation, demographic change and changed economic structures - they present small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in structurally weak regions in particular with new challenges. The experimental funding programme REGION.innovativ supports regional alliances to address new research and innovation topics in companies and combine them with relevant cross-sectional issues.

In the first round of call for tenders, which will be implemented together with the “Future of Work” programme line under the umbrella programme “Innovations for the Production, Service and Work of Tomorrow”, the alliances will develop new tools and models for work design and test them in the participating companies. The REGION.innovativ networks are based on existing regional alliances and networks and are mainly supported by SMEs. In addition, regional universities and research institutions active in the field of labour research, are involved in the alliances.

The aim of the programme is to strengthen the actors in labour research in structurally weak regions and to ensure the long-term attractiveness of the respective location, by developing innovative and sustainable approaches to the work of the future and swiftly applying them in practice.

Using application-specific technologies to deliver good work in home care

Strengthening the home care sector is one of the main challenges in the future. In particular, the requirements in day-to-day care, e.g. due to more complex diseases, are increasing. The coronavirus pandemic, too, illustrates the need to support the care work. Another issue applies to the demographic developments which are particularly evident in the district of Plön in the state of Schleswig-Holstein: here, the old-age dependency ratio rises, i.e. the ratio of older, inactive persons to younger people will increase at a faster rate compared to the national average in the coming years. Hence, there will be rising numbers of persons in need of care, as a result of which there is an urgent need for sustainable solutions to improve the healthcare and nursing practice.

The goal of the VAPiAR project is, on the one hand, to support and improve work processes for nursing staff by using application-specific technologies and, on the other hand, to maintain the independence, self-determination and quality of life of individuals in need of care. As a result, demographically sensitive analysis tools, concepts for a participatory introduction of technical aids and professional training concepts are produced. The living lab to be designed in the project shall not only make the results tangible, but also serve as a networking platform for various actors in the regional care sector.



Good work in home care
Source: Fotolia/Afrika Studio

As a first step, qualitative surveys will be carried out to analyse concrete needs for action to support the nursing staff. In addition to the nursing services, further relevant care actors, such as physicians, pharmacies and hospitals, will be involved. In this way, potential interface gaps may be identified at an early stage and taken into account when selecting and adapting the technical aids. In the living lab to be designed, various smart home solutions, such as fall detection systems, will be tested and their useful integration into home care will be examined. Based on the results, new work processes will be designed together with the project partners and introduced as a prototype in the participating nursing services.

The living lab shall then serve as a learning centre and, subsequently, as a platform for the qualification of care personnel. In parallel to the project, a critical examination of ethical, legal and social issues will take place, which is necessary for the integration of nursing technologies into the professional life of home care.

Thus, VAPiAR contributes to improving the quality of life and work for the nursing staff as well as for the persons in need of care and their relatives in the region. Furthermore, the project supports the digital networking of local and/or regional facilities and services, and provides the basis for sustainable cooperation. After the project has ended, the established living lab will be developed from a learning centre for home care services to a centre for competencies in the district of Plön.

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Project: **VAPiAR - Verbesserung der Arbeitsbedingungen in der ambulanten Pflege durch innovative Arbeitskonzepte in der Region**
(Enhancing working conditions in home care through innovative working concepts in the region)

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Projekt partners and their tasks	Location
ILAG - Institut Leistung Arbeit Gesundheit GbR Shaping working processes in home care by means of holistic and networked approaches.	Plön
OFFIS e.V. Optimising care technologies for the home care sector.	Oldenburg
LAROMA GmbH Development and piloting of system and service solutions for a nursing bed in home care.	Schleswig
AWO-Pflegedienste Probstei Applying low-threshold technology options in the nursing practice.	Schönkirchen
Diakonisches Werk Kirchenkreis Plön Testing digital tools for cross-company networking	Preetz
Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe Kreis Plön Improving communication with persons in need of care with the support of technical aids.	Kiel