

## SMART·map

RoadMAPs to Societal Mobilisation for  
the Advancement of Responsible  
Industrial Technologies

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#euSMARTmap



### The experience of the Pilot

The SMART-map Precision Medicine pilot has represented a valuable and inspiring example of successful implementation of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in an industrial context, achieving concrete impact on a company's innovative product.

IMEGEN, a Spanish SME specialized in genetic studies and partner of SMART-map, has tested the introduction of an end-user advisory panel, involving patients and doctors, with the aim of experimenting a new approach to a new product they are launching on the market: IMEXOMA. The product is a genetic diagnostic service aimed at sequencing the coding part of the genome, an advanced practice in the context of precision medicine. IMEGEN provides this service mostly to public hospitals, where it is made available by the Spanish National Health System, but also to individuals who request it following a consultation with a physician.

The pilot has kicked off with a workshop involving doctors and representatives of patient associations in a participatory activity (focus group) aimed at collecting feedback on their perception of the product life cycle. Participants from each group provided information about their experience of prescribing or undergoing a genetic test, as well as expectations and suggestions for ameliorating the experience. Based on this information, the company has committed to implement a list of actions, which have been evaluated and commented by the members of the panel in the second phase of the pilot.

The 8 concrete actions proposed by IMEGEN address important needs and expectations in terms of awareness, training and communication which have emerged throughout the process. Their implementation will make the IMEXOMA product more responsive and inclusive to societal needs of key stakeholders to whom it is addressed. As it often happens when embracing RRI practices, the process of interaction with relevant stakeholders has also emphasised new opportunities which provide added value to the expected outcomes.

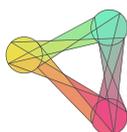
Overall, the pilot process has contributed to the strategic positioning of the company in the market. By interacting with external stakeholders, IMEGEN has now a better understanding of the network of relationships surrounding their product, and potential opportunities for future actions. In particular:



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- The pilot provided better understanding of elements which influence doctors' choices of genetic testing providers, which can be strengthened by providing better tailored supporting informative materials and guidelines on how to choose between tests options.
- Doctors have suggested that demands of re-analysis will rise in the future, therefore it is important that IMEGEN promptly adopts a plan for the management of this type of requests.
- Doctors need better resources and training opportunities and would make use of targeted community tools (online) to share and discuss information.
- All stakeholders involved in the pilot activity have shared positive feedback on the role of IMEGEN as initiator of this innovative process, supporting the company as a credible player, strengthening its relationships and creating new ones.
- The process has led the company to reflect on its broader role within the local and national contexts, suggesting that by advocating within its circles of influence (i.e. Medical Societies, etc.) for the introduction of Genetics Counsellors in hospitals, IMEGEN can contribute to providing better services to patients, relieve pressure from generic doctors, as well as extend its market.
- Ideas for improving the existing report template used to deliver test outcomes to doctors have emerged. Doctors also affirmed they would benefit from receiving guidebooks which include diagnostic algorithms for frequent diseases and clearer technical sheets.
- New business opportunities for services linked to the product have been highlighted, such as an on-line tracking system to allow the patients follow up the status of the analyses while waiting for the outcomes.
- Other important actions include the production of explanatory materials specifically targeted at patients, openly available on the company website, as well as clear indications to be included in the diagnostic report reserved to doctors.

All the above-mentioned suggestions will allow IMEGEN to play a crucial role in the creation, promotion and strengthening of the community surrounding their product, allowing for strong strategic positioning and a stronger relationship with key stakeholders involved in genomics medicine practices.

