



**CHERRIES**  
RESPONSIBLE HEALTHCARE ECOSYSTEMS

# D8.4 CHERRIES

## Community report

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## Introduction

CHERRIES project is focused on the development of an innovative methodology that can help to create positive regional policy environments that promote innovation in the healthcare sector. The methodology considers the values of Responsible Research and Innovation, ensuring that the actions taken are not only effective but also ethical. This approach is based on the idea that innovation should not only create new products and services but should also prioritise the well-being of society and the environment.

Among the actions aimed at promoting project's sustainability, CHERRIES developed a community of stakeholders composed of Ambassadors, sister projects dealing with similar issues, and Mirror Regions. CHERRIES identified four Mirror Regions to replicate its methodology (Centro, Portugal; Burgos, Spain; West of Ireland, Ireland; and Nord Est, Romania) and assess its impact on the healthcare sector and beyond. Through the replication of the methodology in these regions, the project will be provided with valuable insights into how the model can be applied in different contexts and how it can be adapted to meet the specific needs of each region.

The ultimate goal of the project is to provide a replicable model that can be used to foster innovation in the healthcare sector –and other innovative fields-- in other regions and countries. By demonstrating the effectiveness of the methodology in different regions, the project will provide a valuable tool for policymakers, stakeholders, and practitioners who are interested in promoting innovation under a demand-driven approach that takes also into consideration the necessities of citizens and end users.

This document provides information on the CHERRIES Community. A group of different actors that helped CHERRIES project to better disseminate its results either using their own professional network or replicating project model. The Community is composed of a group of ambassadors, who as individuals with relevant weight in their fields have helped to promote CHERRIES project and its objectives; four Mirror Regions, that have replicated the model within their territories in the healthcare sector and beyond it; and other RRI-related project that share synergies with the project and helped to reach greater audiences through common results dissemination.

Especially remarkable for this document is the process carried out with the Mirror Regions. As it includes the process of preparation of the call for Mirror Regions and the Selection Committee, the process of selection of the four regions that have received tailored support from the Consortium, and the activities carried out with them: training workshops, one-on-one coaching support, face-to-face meetings, and dissemination and visibility of the regions.

The Deliverable also includes a set of conclusions of the process, and a reflection on how to improve such process from the Mirror Regions perspective and the Consortium perspective. Besides, the lessons learnt throughout the process have also been included in.



## 1. Community members

The CHERRIES Community is composed of different members that have been identified and involved to enhance project's reach. The members can be divided into three different categories: Mirror Regions that replicate the methodology either in healthcare or other sectors; Ambassadors that promote CHERRIES initiatives within their network; and other RRI initiatives that due to their nature are dealing with similar challenges.

### Mirror Regions

The CHERRIES project aims to promote responsible research and innovation in the healthcare sector, and to that end, the project has established a group of four mirror regions as part of the CHERRIES community. The goal of this initiative is to test the validity of the CHERRIES model beyond the project and to transfer the knowledge gathered throughout the 3-year experimentation process to these new regions. The four mirror regions selected are Burgos in Spain, Centro in Portugal, Nord Est in Romania, and West of Ireland in the Republic of Ireland. These territories were selected through a rigorous selection process that considered their suitability for the experiment and began their participation in the CHERRIES community at the beginning of 2022.

Since then, the CHERRIES Consortium has provided a wide range of services and support to the mirror regions to help them integrate the CHERRIES model into their local healthcare innovation ecosystems. This has included organising and hosting various events, such as methodology workshops, one-on-one sessions, and face-to-face meetings, to provide training and support to the mirror regions. Additionally, the CHERRIES Consortium has also provided visibility and social media support to help raise awareness about the project and its activities in the Mirror Regions territories.

The establishment of the Mirror Regions is a key component of the CHERRIES project, and its success is a testament to the impact that responsible research and innovation can have on healthcare innovation in local environments. Through its work with the mirror regions, the CHERRIES Consortium is demonstrating the effectiveness of its approach and helping to establish the CHERRIES model as a best practice for promoting responsible research and innovation in the healthcare sector.

Region	Burgos (ES)	Centro (PT)	Nord Est (RO)	West of Ireland (IE)
Methodology stage at M38	<i>Call for needs</i>	<i>Call for needs</i>	<i>Call for solutions</i>	<i>Co-creation</i>

Table 1 - Mirror Regions methodology stage.

The four selected Mirror Regions in the CHERRIES Community are at different stages of development in their journey with the project. Although, unfortunately, the region of Centro had to drop out of the project, the remaining regions of Burgos, Nord Est, and West of Ireland have all been actively participating and making progress. Due to the different idiosyncrasy of the need identified, they have reached different stages of project's methodology. Hence, Burgos, which was the only region dealing with a sector different from the healthcare –rural housing— is currently completing the preparation phase for the first call for needs and is preparing to move on to the next phase. Meanwhile, Nord Est has already initiated phase two, a call for solutions, and has successfully identified a need that it is working to address. West of Ireland has moved until the last stage of co-creation and is preparing to move forward in their journey with





CHERRIES. Overall, these Mirror Regions are representative of the diverse range of healthcare environments that the CHERRIES project aims to support and provide guidance for.

## Ambassadors

The CHERRIES project also involved a group of experts in the field of healthcare research and innovation on board as *Ambassadors*. These experts brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the project and helped to disseminate the results of CHERRIES project through their professional networks. The six ambassadors played a key role in ensuring the impact and sustainability of the project, they not only made the project reach organisations and actors beyond their scope, but also boosted project's credibility.

The first, Esteban Pelayo, the Director of EURADA (the Association of European Development Agencies). A graduated in engineering that holds a postgraduate degree in innovation management and is a certified patent and trademark attorney. He started his professional career in the Enterprise Europe Network helping companies to establish transnational technology transfer agreements; he has worked in the liaison office of the University of Alicante (ES), in the innovation department of the Regional Development Agency of Murcia (ES) and in its office in Brussels helping companies to participate in EU programs. His deep expertise and knowledge on European regional innovation ecosystems, together with his wide network of practitioners in the field, had been invaluable for dissemination purposes.

The second, Etienne Verhelle, a Project and Policy Manager at ERRIN, a Brussels-based platform that gathers around 120 regional organisations from more than 20 European countries. Established in 2001, ERRIN supports members to enhance their regional and local research and innovation capacities and further develop their R&I ecosystems. Etienne is leading the work of ERRIN in the H2020-project RIPEET, which supports the experimentation of RRI tools and methodologies in energy transition processes at the regional level. In his policy work, Etienne is frequently promoting the importance of quadruple-helix approaches in policy development and implementation. In prior experiences, Etienne monitored interregional cooperation projects dealing with research and innovation. Several of these are promoting the inclusion of RRI elements in regional strategies and ERDF regional operational programmes, focus on a better identification and work with local stakeholders in policymaking, or address challenges facing innovation in the health sector.

The third, Ingeborg Meijer, a senior researcher and research policy analyst with more than 20 years of experience in the public (Advisory Council on Health Research in the Netherlands) and private (Technopolis Group, Celltech UK) sector. She joined CWTS 10 years ago and was central to setting up all RRI-related activities with the institute, participating in a number of H2020 funded projects such as SUPER MoRRI, NewHoRRizon, CHERRIES and RIPEET. She has broad knowledge of demand articulation and stakeholder involvement (government, professionals, university, citizens and industry), especially in the life sciences and health, always working at the science-society interface. Recently, she was involved in co-creating the research agenda for Q-fever, the long-term effects of which resemble long-covid. She is an executive board member of the European Neuromuscular centre (ENMC) and the Dutch muscular dystrophy patient organisation. She works closely with the Dutch Heart Foundation to assess the societal impact their research funded and does so through various research activities.

The fourth, Lukas Macenauer, a former startup founder in HR Tech (game-based behavioural psychometrics) and digital education consultant (VR-based training). Lukas is now supporting innovators



and researchers in applying RRI through his work as a methodologist and HE Award manager at The Technology Agency of Czech Republic.

The fifth, Dr Nick Guldemon, a professor in Integrated care and technology at Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University and senior researcher at the National eHealth Living Lab of Leiden University Medical Center, Dept of Public Health and Primary Care. He holds a degree in medicine and electric engineering. During his career, he worked as a clinical researcher in numerous health innovation programs for pharma, MedTech and health IT. He is a key expert on Digital Health and integrated care for various governments on different continents, NGO's, multi-nationals and start-ups.

The sixth, Julia Palma, who has been supporting research and innovation projects for over 15 years. She is specialised in digital health and big data/AI initiatives to improve the quality of life of citizens and the efficiency of the healthcare services. Julia is a firm believer of the relevance of fairness and equity principles to achieve the best outcomes for all.



**Esteban Pelayo**

- Director of EURADA (European Association of Development Agencies.).



**Etienne Verhelle**

- Project and Policy Manager at ERRIN (European Regions Research and Innovation Network).



**Ingeborg Meijer**

- Senior Researcher at Centre for Science and Technology Studies (University of Leiden)



**Lukas Macenauer**

- RRI Expert at Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.



**Nick Guldemon**

- Professor of Healthcare & Public Health.



**Julia Palma**

- Innovation Manager at EIT Health.

*Figure 1 - CHERRIES Ambassadors*



## Sister projects

Since CHERRIES is not the only project that addresses the topic of responsible research and innovation (RRI), other several related projects have also been identified. In the list below have been included the projects funded by the European Commission that focus on RRI or related aspects such as citizen science, open science, and science communication. In this section, we present the ten projects selection that we have been working closely with. For each project, we provide a brief description and a link to the project's website.

Logo	Initiative	Information
	<a href="#"><u>SeeRRI</u></a>	<p><i>SeeRRI</i> is a Horizon 2020 SwafS project establishing self-sustaining Research &amp; Innovation ecosystems at 3 territories by integrating Smart Specialisation Strategy and RRI.</p>
	<a href="#"><u>TeRRItoria</u></a>	<p>TeRRItoria is a Horizon 2020 project which aims to position regions and local authorities as places for science governance, education, public engagement, ethics, and open access.</p>
	<a href="#"><u>TeRRIfica</u></a>	<p>TeRRIFICA (Territorial Responsible Research and Innovation Fostering Innovative Climate Action) is a Horizon 2020 project that seeks for best practices and identifies the approaches that are already in place to adapt to climate change effects.</p>
	<a href="#"><u>DigiTeRRI</u></a>	<p>DigiTeRRI is a Horizon 2020 project that aims to develop a framework and to co-create a roadmap for responsible transitions to self-sustaining digitalised industrial R&amp;I ecosystems in the territories of Grand Est, Värmland and Styria.</p>
	<a href="#"><u>RRI2SCALE</u></a>	<p>RRI2SCALE is a EU-funded project that addresses the Dilemma of four pilot European participating territories by empowering the regional ecosystems and boosting their future development trajectories</p>



		in the R&I domain. The project seeks to embed Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) processes into the current R&I ecosystems.
	<p><u><a href="#">TRANSFORM</a></u></p>	<p>TRANSFORM is a Horizon 2020 project putting RRI principles into practice through new forms of local participatory decision-making within their Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3). Three regional clusters invite citizens, local communities and stakeholders to participate in the research and innovation activities, reflecting their views, needs and aspirations.</p>
	<p><u><a href="#">RIPEET</a></u></p>	<p>Responsible research and Innovation Policy Experimentations for Energy Transition (RIPEET) is a Horizon 2020 project aiming to support Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) policy experimentations for energy transition in three European territories - Extremadura (ES), Highlands and Islands of Scotland (UK) and Ostrobothnia (FI).</p>
	<p><u><a href="#">WBC-RRI.NET</a></u></p>	<p>Embedding Responsible Research and Innovation in Western Balkan Countries is a Horizon 2020 project that aims to foster the application of RRI principles in five Western Balkan R&amp;I ecosystems and promote a multi-level steering R&amp;I governance framework in the WBCs.</p>
	<p><u><a href="#">RRI-Leaders</a></u></p>	<p>RRI-LEADERS is a Horizon 2020 project that adopts a meso-level approach and explores the application and sustainability of the RRI paradigm within</p>





		territorial innovation systems.
		<p>tetRRIS is a Horizon 2020 project aiming to bring Responsible Research and Innovation in alignment with the Smart Specialisation paradigm and governance within 4 pilot experiment regions from the European Union.</p>

Table 2 - CHERRIES sister projects



## 2. Mirror Regions selection process

In September 2021, the process to select three mirror regions to replicate the CHERRIES model started off. Hence, a planning was set up to schedule the activities needed to identify suitable actors, prepare requirements, launch a call, and collect its results. Building on previous experiences, it was requested the commitment of regional consortiums to involve entities interested in embedding RRI practices in territorial innovation policies and instruments, that were capable of prepare and launch a call and mobilise both private and public funding and actors. On the other hand, CHERRIES project offered personalised support and tailored training to enhance regional innovation policies to the selected regions.

### Call preparation

The call process for the CHERRIES project had a deadline of October 31st, 2021, although an extension was given to regions that having already expressed their interest to apply, were running out of time to prepare their applications. It was open to regional consortiums that were integrated by territorial stakeholders involved or interested in embedding RRI practices in territorial innovation policies and instruments. The community was also open to R&I actors from outside Europe, to facilitate a global exchange of practices. The application forms were required to be filled in English, and the evaluation criteria included commitment, motivation, representation, and regional impact. The economic support for the three selected mirror regions included a session of coaching to be held in Brussels, and all travel expenses would be covered by the CHERRIES project. To participate in the CHERRIES community, candidates were required to follow three simple steps: build the consortium, fill in the form provided in the call, and submit the proposal on time.

### Open call at a glance

- Economic support: 3 selected Mirror Regions chosen will receive a session of coaching to be held in Brussels if the pandemic allows physical meetings. All travel expenses would be covered by the CHERRIES project.
- Application deadline: October 31st, 2021

### Who can apply?

- Regional consortiums integrated by territorial stakeholders involved or interested in embedding the RRI practices in territorial innovation policies and instruments – not necessarily in the health sector only. The Community will be open for R&I actors from outside Europe, so to facilitate a global exchange of practises
- Language: Application forms can only be filled in English.
- Evaluation criteria: commitment, motivation, representation and regional impact

### How to be part of the CHERRIES community? Follow the steps below:

Candidate regions are to submit the proposal in a Consortium that replicates the same constellation of stakeholders defined in the CHERRIES model, this is stakeholder dealing with business support, regional development, public bodies with a sectorial approach, among others.

- STEP 1: Build the Consortium.
- STEP 2: Fill in the form provided in the call.
- STEP 3: Submit your proposal in time

### Get in touch with us!

Visit our official website for more information about the call at [www.cherries2020.eu](http://www.cherries2020.eu)



Figure 2 - Leaflet used to disseminate the call.



To be in position to choose the best applicants, a set of benefits of implementing CHERRIES methodology were identified and then matched with desired qualities for the applicants. Hence, the following table outlines the evaluation criteria for the selection of the Mirror Regions within the CHERRIES Community. These criteria were carefully crafted to ensure that the selected regions had the necessary capacity, motivation, and commitment to implement the CHERRIES model within their territories. Additionally, the table includes criteria that reflect the core principles of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), such as the need for a bottom-up process for identifying challenges and the co-creation of solutions. By adhering to these criteria, CHERRIES aimed to select regions that are best suited to benefit from the project's services and support.

Proposal	Criteria
To more efficiently utilise your regional funds to foster innovation within your region within the framework of RRI policies.	Demonstrated commitment to embedding RRI practices in regional innovation policies and instruments.
To implement a new co-creation and demand-driven model in your region to facilitate the uptake of the innovation, ensuring the application of RRI principles.	Ability to collaborate with stakeholders from multiple sectors and disciplines in a co-creation process.
To foster the capacity of public entities to systematically identify and solve their needs while creating opportunities for private companies.	Evidence of strong public-private collaboration and engagement.
To replicate the CHERRIES model under the close, advise of the three CHERRIES regions. CHERRIES Mirror Regions will benefit from a one-to-one support on how to implement the validated CHERRIES model in their territories, saving time, energy, and efforts to avoid failure and risk.	Demonstrated commitment to implementing the CHERRIES model and proven ability to adapt and customize the model to local context.
To receive coaching in Brussels (if possible) to help build capacity and share knowledge with other regions.	Willingness to participate in cross-regional knowledge exchange and contribute to the CHERRIES community.
To participate in a global exchange of best practices in R&I.	Evidence of engagement in international R&I networks and willingness to share knowledge and expertise with peers.





To identify needs through a bottom-up process.	Demonstrated ability to engage with local stakeholders and identify needs in a participatory and inclusive manner.
To release a call for solutions aimed at solving the identified challenge.	Ability to effectively communicate the identified need and engage a diverse group of stakeholders in the solution development process.
To engage in a co-creation process of the final solution.	Demonstrated ability to collaborate with stakeholders from multiple sectors and disciplines in a co-creation process.
To foster innovation within your region.	Evidence of a strong innovation ecosystem and willingness to experiment with new approaches and models.

Table 3 - Benefits of CHERRIES methodology and criteria to assess applicants' capacity to leverage CHERRIES.

### Dissemination Campaign

For the preparation of the Mirror Regions call, partners Ticbiomed and EBN worked together to prepare a communication campaign to reach higher audiences interested in taking part in CHERRIES project as Mirror Region. The dissemination campaign was designed to generate interest in the CHERRIES project and attract regional consortiums who are interested in embedding Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices in their territorial innovation policies and instruments, regardless of their sector. Through the dissemination campaign, potential Mirror Regions were informed of the benefits of joining the



**Become a CHERRIES Mirror Region!**

Apply by **31st October** and become one of the regions that uses the **CHERRIES tested co-creation & design methodology.**

 This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 8772873.

Figure 4 - Twitter Mirror Regions call dissemination material.



Figure 3 – CHERRIES banner dissemination material.



**Become a CHERRIES Mirror Region!**

We are looking for regions interested to uptake the CHERRIES methodology.

*Apply by 31 October 2021.*







CHERRIES community and how they could utilise their regional funds more effectively to foster innovation. The communication campaign was also designed to inform potential candidates about the application process and the evaluation criteria. Thus, different actions on different channels were launched to increase the dissemination level of the campaign. Members of the community and CHERRIES consortium were given a package of communication with different materials to be disseminated through their own channels. Besides, a webinar was set to thoroughly explain the objectives of the process. Eight different applications were collected in the end.

Region	Country	Topic
<b>Burgos</b>	Spain	Rural housing
<b>Coimbra</b>	Portugal	Active and Healthy Ageing
<b>Extremadura</b>	Spain	Health
<b>Middle Black Sea</b>	Turkey	Health
<b>Northeast Region</b>	Romania	Health
<b>Sicily-Lombardy</b>	Italy	Health
<b>West of Ireland</b>	Ireland	Health
<b>Wielkopolska</b>	Poland	Health

Table 4 - Mirror Regions collected applications.

#### Dissemination materials

- *Call for Mirror Regions Communications Pack*: A document with images –as the ones that could be seen in figure 3 and 4— and already written key messages for social media was shared out among project partners, ambassadors, and sister projects. It can be found as annex.
- *Call for Mirror Regions Dissemination material (only use EBN and TBM)*: On the other <sup>1</sup>hand, an internal document only accessible for partners TBM and EBN was created by TBM with the following materials:
  1. Articles to be published on the website about the Mirror Regions and the call process.
  2. Piece of news carefully explaining the steps to be followed in order to successfully prepare an application, and other two pieces reminding applicants about the call.
  3. Piece of news promoting the CHERRIES Community webinar.
  4. An article to be published on CHERRIES newsletter explaining the project and the call.
  5. The content of a leaflet to be designed by EBN to get all the information at a glance.

<sup>1</sup> The information published can be found on this link: <https://www.cherries2020.eu/european-regions-wanted-to-join-the-cherries-community-for-innovation/>



6. A set of key messages to be distributed on social networks such as Twitter or LinkedIn.
- *Webinar*: On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, a webinar was streamed to explain the CHERRIES project and its goals, the three phases of the methodology, and the call to involve Mirror Regions and other regions in the CHERRIES Community. The webinar was also used later for dissemination purposes and was uploaded to [YouTube](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## Selection process

The selection process of the Mirror Regions for the CHERRIES project was a critical component of the project's success. The selection process was designed to identify regions that would be able to implement the CHERRIES model and benefit from its results. The process began with a call for expressions of interest, which allowed interested regions to submit proposals outlining their commitment and readiness to participate in the project. A thorough evaluation of these proposals was conducted by the CHERRIES consortium, using predefined criteria, to select the most suitable regions to participate in the project. The selected regions had to demonstrate their capacity to implement the CHERRIES model successfully, including their ability to identify needs through a bottom-up process, release a call for solutions to address those needs, and engage in a co-creation process to develop the final solution. The selection process was a rigorous and transparent process that ensured the regions best suited to implement the CHERRIES model were selected, ultimately leading to the success of the project.

The process consisted of four different stages:

1. Eligibility Check. A first review performed by Ticbiomed, prior to send it to the Selection Committee for evaluation. Proposals that were not meeting the eligibility criteria were requested to provide required information. Those that were not able to meet the criteria after such requirement, were discarded.
2. Proposal evaluation: A Selection Committee composed of representatives from each one of the Pilot Regions (Murcia, Örebro, and Cyprus), the project coordinator, and other interested partners were responsible for evaluating all the eligible proposals. The Committee was provided with some guidance on how to score each of the different aspects evaluated in this stage (see annexes). The criteria followed to choose the Mirror Regions that were going to become part of CHERRIES project can be found in *Table 5 – Selection Committee guidelines to evaluate applications*.
3. Proposal selection: The CHERRIES team undertook all efforts to complete the call evaluation and selection process within the time of one month. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, the Committee selected the four Mirror Regions that would take part into CHERRIES project. Although, the original idea was to involve just three of them, due to the availability of enough resources not spent due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, and the possibility of involving an extra region dealing with a field different from healthcare, the Selection Committee opted for involving four Mirror Regions instead of three.
4. Communication of regions selected: Lastly, the four Mirror Regions selected were informed about the decision taken by the Selection Committee and requested to confirm their interest in participating in the CHERRIES project. Applicant regions not selected were also informed about the final decision and were informed that although they were not going to receive one-on-one coaching support, they would have access to all the materials developed during the process. An article was published on CHERRIES website informing about Selection process result ([link here](#)).

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<sup>2</sup> Link to the webinar on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgDAnzcLnGM>



CRITERIA	WEIGHT	EXPLANATION
<b>Commitment</b>	30%	<p>To evaluate the credibility of the applicant consortium to apply the CHERRIES methodology, the Selection Committee paid special attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance and hierarchical position within the regional administration of the public entities involved: capacity of decision making.</li> <li>• The size of the private partners involved and the interest in the implementation of the action.</li> <li>• Availability of fundings.</li> <li>• Feasibility to commit their own resources to replicate the CHERRIES' model.</li> </ul>
<b>Motivation</b>	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of the proposed ecosystem with the Smart Specialisation Strategies priorities.</li> <li>• Previous participation in RRI-based actions and/or initiatives.</li> <li>• Previous experience in need identification.</li> <li>• Previous experiences in demand-driven innovation and/or co-creation solutions processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Representativity</b>	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance within the ecosystem of the stakeholders involved in the consortium.</li> <li>• Capacity to mobilise relevant stakeholders within the ecosystem.</li> <li>• Previous experiences in cross-collaboration between public sector, private sector, and civil society.</li> <li>• Accomplishment of RRI representativity principles such as gender balance, context awareness or purpose orientation.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Impact</b>	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant impact on the region of the innovation ecosystem of the applicants.</li> <li>• Potential field of applications of the methodology in the region besides de proposal submitted.</li> </ul>

Table 5 - Selection Committee guidelines to evaluate applications.



## Selected Mirror Regions

### Burgos (Spain)

Burgos, a Mirror Region in the CHERRIES project, has identified housing rehabilitation as its main priority area in rural areas. SODEBUR, the Provincial Government of Burgos, along with CEEI Burgos are the main partners in this endeavour. The region is grappling with the issue of demographic decline, especially in rural areas, that has led to a shortage of available housing. However, with the adoption of the CHERRIES methodology, the region is confident of finding innovative solutions to this challenge.

One of the main reasons that SODEBUR joined the CHERRIES project was because of its belief that it would help to drive and formalize the process of identifying the needs of the province and developing appropriate solutions. By adopting a Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)-driven approach, the region is confident that it will be able to develop a sustainable and innovative solution to the problem of housing rehabilitation in rural areas.

To achieve this, the region plans to prioritize inter-institutional collaboration and incorporate RRI-driven dynamics into its new Strategic Plan for 2021-2025. This will involve conducting a thorough analysis of the current state of housing rehabilitation in rural areas and identifying the gaps that need to be addressed. Once the gaps have been identified, the region will collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that take into account the unique needs of each community.

The adoption of the CHERRIES methodology will help Burgos to achieve its goals by providing a concrete framework for identifying the needs of the region and developing solutions in a responsible and sustainable way. The region will focus on developing an ecosystem for innovation that encourages collaboration, fosters entrepreneurship and creativity, and enables the sharing of best practices.

Overall, the Burgos Mirror Region is confident that by adopting the CHERRIES methodology and incorporating RRI-driven dynamics into its Strategic Plan for 2021-2025, it will be able to develop innovative solutions to the challenge of housing rehabilitation in rural areas. The region remains committed to working in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to develop sustainable and long-lasting solutions that benefit the entire community.



Figure 5 - Burgos consortium organisations

### Centro (Portugal)

The Centro region of Portugal has recognized the need for innovative solutions to address the challenges associated with ageing population. The region has established a consortium, called Ageing@Coimbra, to tackle this issue. One of the main concerns for the region is the decline in the working-age population



combined with an increasing number of elderly and retired individuals. As a result, there is a growing need to deliver healthcare services to the inhabitants of Centro in a way that meets their unique needs.

To achieve this goal, the consortium has included the Regional Development Agency (RDA) responsible for the Smart Specialisation Strategy. This inclusion is based on the understanding that the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) principles will align perfectly with the priority areas of the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3).

The Centro region has recognized that the challenges it faces are complex and multifaceted. Therefore, the region has decided to use the CHERRIES methodology to address these issues. The CHERRIES methodology is a demand-driven innovation model that aims to co-create solutions with stakeholders to address specific problems faced by different regions in Europe.

The CHERRIES methodology will allow the Centro region to identify and address the unique challenges associated with the ageing population. It will enable the region to work closely with different stakeholders to identify the specific needs of the population and develop innovative solutions that meet those needs. The approach will help to promote inter-institutional collaboration and will also enable the region to incorporate RRI-driven dynamics into their new Strategic Plan for 2021-2025.

Through the CHERRIES methodology, the Centro region aims to create a collaborative environment where different stakeholders can work together to develop innovative solutions that address the specific challenges faced by the ageing population. The methodology will enable the region to leverage its existing resources while also encouraging innovation and creativity. The goal is to create a sustainable and resilient healthcare system that meets the needs of the ageing population in the Centro region of Portugal.

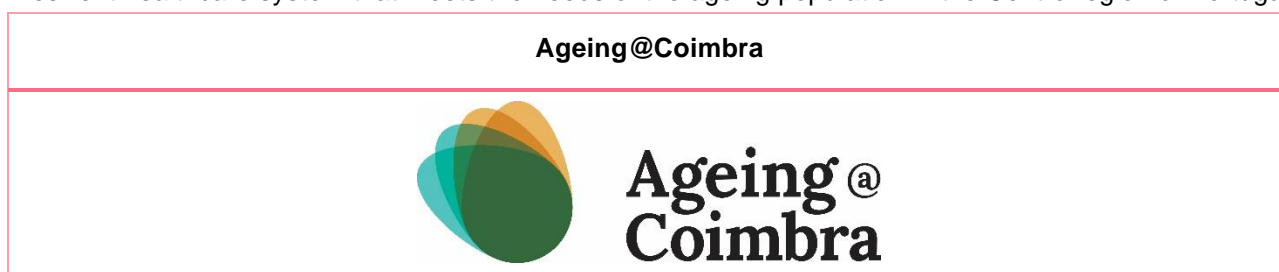


Figure 6 - Centro consortium organisations

#### Nord Est (Romania)

The Northeast region of Romania is working with Imago-Mol Cluster and the St Spiridon Emergency Clinical Hospital to apply CHERRIES methodology for developing a telemedicine solution for remote monitoring of chronic patients. The main challenges include overcoming reluctance, bureaucracy, and lack of resources, and securing funding, which may be available through the PNRR. The next steps for the region are to launch a call for solutions, continue their search for funding, and promote CHERRIES methodology among Imago-Mol members. The aim is to improve the quality of healthcare services and address the needs of the medical community in the Northeast region.

The project implementation team is optimistic about the results that CHERRIES methodology can deliver, particularly in fostering a culture of innovation and driving RRI principles within the region's healthcare sector. In this regard, the region is committed to working with all stakeholders involved in the project to



ensure the success of the initiative. The Nord Est region of Romania is keen to showcase how the CHERRIES methodology can be applied to solve the complex challenges facing the healthcare sector, and how it can support the development of innovative and sustainable solutions in the region.

Imago-Mol	Nord Est RDA	Providentia Hospital
		

Figure 7 - Nord Est consortium organisations

### West of Ireland (Republic of Ireland)

In the West of Ireland, providing remote healthcare to isolated and rural communities is a top priority due to natural terrain constraints. Collaborating with key partners, such as the Western Development Commission (WDC), HSE Digital Transformation, Mayo County Council, National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), and Cisco, the region was working diligently to provide an integrated digital health solution to the people of Clare Island. However, there were many challenges that must be overcome to make this a reality.

Applying the CHERRIES methodology, West of Ireland laid out a comprehensive plan that will be executed in a participatory and responsible way. The region's first priority was to complete a thorough clinical needs assessment, as well as a tech and infrastructure assessment, to identify the necessary resources needed to make the project a success. Secondly, the region engaged with public patient associations and hospital services to select appropriate identified end users and establish tech requirements. This ensured that the project met the needs of the community and was implemented with the highest level of patient care in mind.

The next stage will be to develop, during the co-creation phase, a connectivity architecture for virtual consulting and create training materials to support the initiative. Real-world testing will also be conducted to ensure that the system operates as expected, and any issues can be resolved before launch. Finally, the West of Ireland region will promote the project to the wider community, providing information on the benefits and how to access the service.

It is important to note that all of these steps will be conducted in co-creation with the community, ensuring that their voices are heard throughout the project's development. The West of Ireland recognises that there are many demographic challenges that must be addressed to provide quality healthcare to rural and isolated communities. By providing an integrated digital health solution, the region is taking a proactive approach to address these challenges and improve the health outcomes of the community.

CISCO	HSE Digital Transformation	NUI Galway	Western Development Commission
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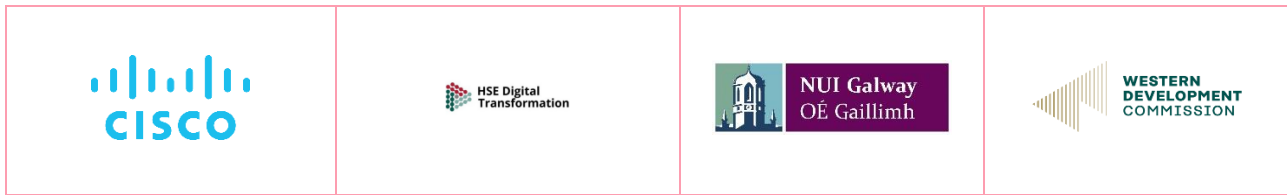


Figure 8 - West of Ireland consortium organisations



## 5. Mirror Regions activities

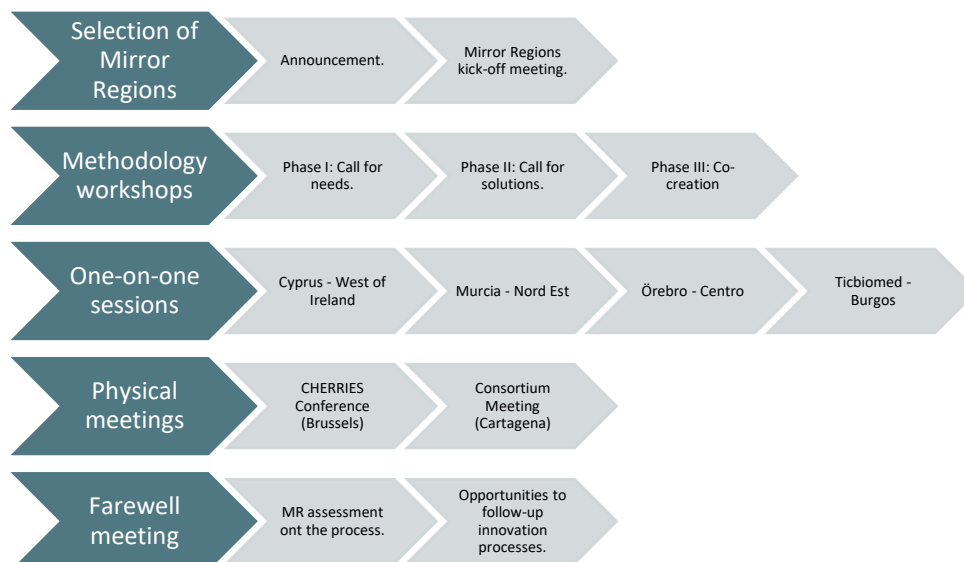


Figure 9 - Mirror Region activities.

### Kick-off meeting

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, the four Mirror Regions together with the CHERRIES Pilot Regions participated in an online conference dedicated to the presentation of their innovation ecosystems. Pilot Regions took advantage of the opportunity to thoroughly explain their experience implementing the CHERRIES methodology, main challenges faced when going through the three different methodological stages, and other aspects related to the CHERRIES methodology. Mirror Regions, on the other hand, presented their regions and the expectations they had about their participation in the project. Ticbiomed presented the calendar of activities to be followed by the Mirror Regions in the upcoming months (as seen in *Table 6 – Calendar of Mirror Regions activities*).<sup>3</sup>

Month	January	February	March	April	May	November	February	
Activity	Kick-off meeting	Workshop I: Call for needs	Workshop II: Call for solutions	Workshop III: Co-creation	Launch of one-on-one sessions	CHERRIES Conference (Brussels)	Consortium Meeting (Cartagena)	Farewell meeting

Table 6 - Calendar of Mirror Region activities

### Methodology workshops

The CHERRIES initiative launched three training modules that were specifically tailored to the needs of the Mirror Regions. The training modules were designed to equip these regions with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully implement the CHERRIES model in their own contexts. By doing so, these regions could benefit from the learnings and experiences of the CHERRIES project and contribute to the wider goal of fostering demand-driven innovation in Europe. Along with the modules, Mirror Regions and

<sup>3</sup> The video of the session can be found here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSrFILhOVM&list=PLmPBxQF-AXh1Z8oAq9OdKc\\_kt8f3106h](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSrFILhOVM&list=PLmPBxQF-AXh1Z8oAq9OdKc_kt8f3106h)





the regions that applied but were not selected, were provided with training materials for each one of the phases (see annexes).

Module	Webinar	Training materials	Month
Phase I: Call for needs	<a href="#">Workshop I</a>	<p><b>Phase I: Need identification methodology:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the CHERRIES need identification.</li> <li>• Definition of the selection process.</li> <li>• Experimentation cases in the Pilot Regions.</li> </ul>	January
Phase II: Call for solutions	<a href="#">Workshop II</a>	<p><b>Phase II: Call for solutions methodology:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The call for solutions: preparation, publication, evaluation, and notification.</li> <li>• Experimentation cases in Pilot Regions: need to tackle, technical implementation, regional dissemination of the call, and evaluation process.</li> </ul>	February
Phase III: Co-creation	<a href="#">Workshop III</a>	<p><b>Phase III: Co-creation methodology:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up the experimentation in the territories</li> <li>• Contractual aspects: contract management, cascade funding, co-creation contract.</li> </ul>	March

Table 7 - Methodology workshops.

## One-on-one sessions

As part of the process of knowledge-transfer and mentoring, a model of coaching was established between Pilot Regions and Mirror Regions. Each Mirror Regions was paired with a Pilot Region. For doing so, commonalities were taken into consideration to ensure that the knowledge transfer process as well as other aspects related to possible barriers, challenges and so on, were as most tailored as possible. These coupled regions have been meeting periodically on a monthly basis on one-on-one meeting sessions to provide support to the Mirror Regions during their CHERRIES methodology implementation.

Pilot regions coaching Mirror Regions were provided with some instructions on how to conduct the mentioned one-on-one sessions, besides they were requested to fill out an Excel file with the progress made after each session, as a way to track the whole process (see annex to see template). Hence, during these sessions, participants followed the following structure:

1. Starting the session: Mirror Regions presented current status update on the Action Points decided in previous meetings, including a description of the action, and the current status up to the meeting's date. Pilot Regions checked if the action points on which Mirror Regions had committed had been accomplished, and marked their status as *accomplished*, *ongoing*, or *pendent*. Besides, an explanation of the status was added.
2. Action Points: During the second part of the meeting, paired regions went through the innovation process and established a set of action points to be reached before next meeting. The action points had to be granular enough to be accomplished in the meantime between the actual meeting and the next one and should be achievable through the establishment of KPI measures. A deadline was also included for those that could not be accomplished before next meeting.



3. Final part: As a final part, Pilot regions presented to Mirror Regions about interesting upcoming activities relevant for them such as CHERRIES milestones, RRI or innovation events or conferences.

At an initial stage, Mirror Regions were asked about the possibility of recording their sessions and share their follow-up Excel files. Nevertheless, due to some reluctancies related to privacy management, the possibility of recording the sessions or distributing their follow-up documents was ruled out.

Once the process had finished, participant regions were asked to fill out a questionnaire to gather their insights and feedback into the whole process, some of the learnings taken out the process are:

- All regions pointed out in the evaluation questionnaire the lack of available direct funding as the main constraint to properly going through all the stages of CHERRIES methodology. Although one of the evaluation criteria was the capacity to find external funding sources, most of them struggled to find sources fitted for such a type of innovation process.
- Success on the implementation greatly rests on the commitment from a leading person/organisation. When such leading organisation/person drop out of the process or cannot devote as much time as needed, the success chances sharply decreased.
- Most of the regions have expressed that they will continue with their CHERRIES innovation process after project's lifespan by their own.
- Although none all of them are expecting to fully complete the process of innovation that started when joining the Mirror Regions group, they are all expecting to include CHERRIES methodology into their innovation ecosystem dynamics in different degrees –i.e., Centro Region show its willingness to embed their Smart Specialisation Strategy with the inclusion of RRI principles and other knowledge based on CHERRIES experiences.
- Sharing experiences when dealing with similar scenarios has been considered by most of the regions as extremely valuable. The individual support given by the pilot regions helped them to shape quite precisely their needs.
- All of them evaluated positively the support given by CHERRIES Consortium and its pilot regions in all the activities planned: workshops, one-on-one sessions, and face-to-face meetings.



## 6. Conclusions

Over the course of a year, the CHERRIES project has been working with its Mirror Regions and has successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of its demand-driven innovation model. The CHERRIES model has gained widespread interest across Europe due to its ability to adapt to the diverse needs of each region while providing a valuable methodology. The participating regions have shown a significant level of commitment and dedication to the project, despite having to leverage their own resources. This highlights the necessity of developing new innovation models that can help regions meet their needs while leveraging their resources effectively.

However, while the CHERRIES model has provided a valuable methodology, several obstacles have been identified that must be addressed to ensure its success. Boosting regional ecosystems for innovation has proved challenging due to the diversity of regions and their individual needs. Additionally, lack of resources in some regions to implement new initiatives and related issues have also presented significant challenges. In order to improve the model, future initiatives will require more budget to support innovation processes, clearer incentives for healthcare professionals to engage, and a scalable formula for co-created solutions –as the CHERRIES one—.

To further improve the model, the project also requires a more focused approach to ensure the adoption of solutions. The last and most important part of the innovation cycle is ensuring that the solutions created are adopted and implemented effectively. Therefore, future initiatives should focus on developing strategies that promote the adoption of co-created solutions in different regions. These strategies would be designed to ensure that the solutions created can be easily adapted to different regions while promoting collaboration between healthcare professionals and private entities. Co-creating such solutions is a step, but not an end itself.

Overall, the CHERRIES project has been successful in demonstrating the value of its demand-driven innovation model. However, to ensure that the model remains successful in the long term, it must continue to develop and improve strategies to address the obstacles that have been identified while promoting the adoption of co-created solutions across different regions. With these strategies in place, future models will be better equipped to promote innovation across Europe while improving healthcare outcomes for all.

## CHERRIES Partners

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