



equicares

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE,
MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACCESS

EQUICARES Network of Interest terms of reference and composition

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Executive Summary

The present document constitutes the “**EQUICARES Network of Interest terms of reference and composition**” (Deliverable D.6.2), developed by the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). The deliverable falls under World Package 6 Dissemination and Communication and Task 6.2 of the Grant Agreement (GA).

The EQUICARES Network of Interest (NoI) was created as part of the project’s sustainability and exploitation activities. It is a multi-actor body of relevant stakeholders, including experts in mental health, care and support services, the social economy, patient centric technologies, health economics, and representatives of and advocates of vulnerable groups among others, providing strategic guidance in key stages of the project and extending its reach to target audiences. The Network provides **strategic guidance at key stages of the project** and plays a central role in **extending the project’s reach to relevant target audiences**. Its members contribute to the replication and uptake of activities, by acting as project ambassadors who disseminate information and actively engage their professional and organisational networks.

The NoI is composed of **27 members** in its initial setting (M12). This deliverable provides a comprehensive overview of the setting-up process, composition, and future activities planned. Additionally, it presents the foundational materials that were developed to establish and formalise the NoI including the i) Terms of Reference (ToR), which outlines the purpose, goals, and objectives of the NoI, as well as its governance structure and operational framework, and ii) the Activity Plan, which details the specific activities, timelines, and expected outcomes of the NoI. Finally this deliverable presents the composition of the NoI and the profiles of its members.

EQUICARES project in a nutshell

EQUICARES is a Horizon Europe project aiming to support access to innovative and sustainable mental health and care services to people in vulnerable situations through a mix of research, co-creation and policy solutions. It uses innovative methods, including an advanced application of the Levesque framework to evaluate mental health services, Computational Social Sciences to improve access for hard-to-reach populations in socially vulnerable situations and gather precise data on healthcare inequalities, and a combination of cost-analysis techniques. It also uses digital ethnography to map existing innovative solutions, access to mental health services, and connect them to different parts of the mental health system to support new solutions. The results from these activities are translated into policymaking through a dedicated Atlas.

Furthermore, EQUICARES tests innovative solutions in eight pilot areas across seven countries, representing diverse socioeconomic settings and addressing diverse populations in vulnerable situations, while contributing to various strategic frameworks of the EU. Through “Smart Health Labs,” the project involves people in vulnerable situations at the community level in co-designing, implementing, and evaluating solutions based on social economy principles and user innovation.

At the individual level, the project provides awareness, capacity-building, and pilots a novel AI-based Assistant to enhance mental health access and digital literacy.

EQUICARES also evaluates the impact of its innovative solutions using advanced cost-analysis techniques, providing strong evidence of the consequences of inaction. The project then replicates its outcomes in four additional cases and develops the Inclusive “Mental Health and Care Policy Dashboard” to support the long-term sustainability and policy adoption of its results.

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List of Terms and Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
NoI	Network of Interest
ToR	Term of References and Composition
DoA	Declaration of Acceptance
GA	Grant Agreement

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1. Defining the Network of Interest

1.1. Purpose and Objectives

The Nol is defined in the GA as a **multi-actor body of relevant experts** providing strategic guidance at key stages of the project and extending the project's reach to target audiences. Through their role as project ambassadors, its members support the replication and uptake of project activities and results by informing and engaging their own networks so they can benefit from EQUICARES results.

The Nol is designed as a **flexible and inclusive network** that connects expertise from policy, practice, research, civil society, and service provision across Europe with a shared focus on equitable access to mental health services for people in vulnerable situations. Its overarching objective is to strengthen the relevance, visibility, dissemination, and potential uptake of EQUICARES outputs.

To support the establishment and functioning of the Nol, the Terms of Reference and Composition (ToR) was developed by EASPD with the support of the consortium. This document presents the purpose, scope, roles, responsibilities, governance, and engagement modalities of the Nol. The ToR follows a structure commonly used in multi-actor networks, offering a clear operational framework that supports transparency, accountability, and consistent implementation over time. It also ensures that the Nol remains understandable and accessible to new members and external stakeholders who may join during the project. The ToR also defines the criteria and process for identifying and selecting members, while also outlining the strategic objectives and expected modes of operation of the Nol. As such, it serves as a reference framework for all members, supporting shared understanding and alignment with the ambitions of the EQUICARES project.

The Nol will support the sustainability and exploitation efforts of the project. It will provide strategic guidance in the key stages of the project and contribute to extending the reach to target audiences. According to the GA, the main goals of the Nol are to:

- Provide strategic knowledge, expertise and input at key stages of the EQUICARES project;
- Extend the reach of the project to target audiences such as groups in vulnerable situations, policymakers, mental healthcare professionals, etc.
- Support the replication and uptake of project activities and outcomes;
- Disseminate information about the project and its outcomes;
- Promote key project outputs, including the project's Policy Dashboard and policy briefs, and other key deliverables.

To operationalize and expand upon these objectives, EASPD designed an **Activity Plan** (see Annex 2) presenting an overview of the core activities envisaged until the end of the project in December 2028. It identifies key milestones and activities planned to ensure that experts are not merely recipients of project outcomes but active contributors and co-creators. The Activity Plan further outlines additional indicative opportunities for Nol members to engage across the project.

The Nol will start its activities no later than January 1st, 2026. Membership is voluntary, non-remunerated, and open for the duration of the EQUICARES project, until its conclusion. Members may join or withdraw from the Nol at any time, ensuring openness, flexibility and adaptability throughout the project lifecycle.

Beyond the project lifetime, the Nol is designed to lay the foundations for a lasting exchange and collaboration between members after the duration of the project, and facilitate joint engagement in future initiatives related to inclusive mental health and care. This long-term perspective contributes to the effective exploitation of EQUICARES outcomes and enhances their impact beyond the project duration.

1.2. Benefits of membership and opportunities

Membership entails a light yet meaningful commitment to act as a multiplier for EQUICARES results. By joining the Nol, members position themselves within a European-level community of experts dedicated to advancing equitable access to mental healthcare. Membership offers enhanced visibility, access to emerging knowledge, and opportunities to contribute to lasting impact in policy, practice and research.

Engagement with project activities and outputs

Membership in the Nol offers opportunities to engage with EQUICARES activities and outputs, contributing expert perspectives to reflections, discussions, and strategic considerations. While decision-making authority remains with the consortium, Nol members may support the relevance, clarity, and potential usability of project results, particularly in relation to policy development, service delivery, and practice.

In the context of the different activities, feedback can also be collected to capture members' input. Where relevant, this feedback will be shared with the appropriate Work Package leaders to inform deliverables, policy briefs, and pilot-related activities.

Access to knowledge exchange and learning opportunities

Nol members may be invited to participate in thematic workshops, online knowledge-exchange sessions, and other networking opportunities organised within the Nol and the broader EQUICARES framework. These activities aim to foster learning, structured dialogue and mutual understanding across disciplines and sectors.

Expanded professional networks

Participation in the NoI enables members to connect with a diverse, pan-European, multi-sectoral community of experts. This environment supports the development of long-term professional relationships and collaborations across countries and sectors.

Cross-project synergies and sustainability

The NoI also aims to foster synergies with related and sister projects, strengthening its collective knowledge base and impact. Engagement with other initiatives can enhance expertise, broaden thematic and geographic coverage and support the long-term relevance, adaptability and sustainability of the network.

1.3. Engaging in the Network of Interest

The activities presented below are grounded in the provisions of the GA, notably those implemented at pilot-site level, and are complemented by additional, indicative engagement activities proposed by EASPD in its role as NoI manager, with the aim of supporting expert involvement, knowledge exchange and the dissemination and uptake of EQUICARES results.

Dissemination webinars

To support the engagement of experts throughout the project, the NoI manager, with the support of the EQUICARES consortium, will explore the organisation of online webinar sessions during the project's lifetime. Where relevant and feasible, such sessions will be aligned with the delivery of key project outputs/results and milestones.

These exchanges would aim to **present key project results** to NoI members, facilitate discussion on their relevance and support reflection on potential uptake, transferability and use in practice. The format, timing and modality of these activities would be determined in line with project needs, available resources and the added value for both the consortium and the NoI.

A selection of project results have been provisionally identified by the consortium as potentially suitable for such online exchanges. These topics are indicative and may be adapted, replaced or prioritised differently in line with project progress, emerging findings, stakeholder interest and overall project priorities. The timing of these exchanges is likewise indicative and subject to change.

Webinars on EQUICARES Milestones	Date
Atlas on Mental Health and Care Innovative Solutions (M18)	September 2026 (M21)
Piloting of innovative solutions in Smart Health Labs (M36)	February 2028 (M38)
Delivering the AI-based Assistant (final version) (M36)	July 2028 (M43)

Table 1: Proposed Nol Webinars on EQUICARES key Milestones

Nol members will be invited to attend these online exchanges primarily as recipients of project knowledge and results. As these sessions would focus on presenting completed or advanced project outputs, they would not aim to jointly shape the content of such outputs, but rather to support understanding, reflection and learning.

The purpose of these exchanges will be to enable Nol members to familiarise themselves with key project results, explore their potential relevance for policy, practice or service design and assess opportunities for uptake or adaptation in their own professional contexts.

Beyond participation, Nol members would be encouraged to disseminate project insights, tools and outcomes presented during these webinars within their own organisations, professional networks and wider communities, thereby contributing to the broader visibility, outreach and potential impact of the project.

Communication & knowledge transfer activities

All key dissemination materials (e.g. policy briefs, newsletters, press releases) will be shared by EASPD to Nol members via email. Members will be invited to share these materials through their own channels (e.g. websites, mailing lists, internal updates, organisation's newsletter). By leveraging the diverse outreach capacities of each member, the activity will benefit from increased visibility across different audiences and sectors.

Campaign activities including on social media

When public campaigns or awareness-raising initiatives are launched as part of the project, Nol members will receive pre-prepared communication content to help boost visibility (e.g. LinkedIn posts, visuals). Members will be encouraged to share these on LinkedIn, particularly with audiences interested in mental health, social services, and innovation.

In addition, **at the pilot-site level, awareness-raising initiatives linked to replication and uptake activities will be implemented.** In this context, the EQUICARES Replication Handbook, which will be developed by EHTEL, will support understanding of local mental health ecosystems, the set-up of bottom-up Labs and the co-creation of innovative solutions. Nol members, notably those from pilot countries, will be encouraged to contribute to increasing the visibility of this resource by relaying key messages, highlighting its relevance for their contexts, and sharing it within their organisations and networks.

Through these actions, Nol members can act as multipliers, supporting the outreach, dissemination and potential uptake of EQUICARES results across diverse professional communities, while aligning their level of engagement with their interests and capacities.

Participation in partner events & pilot sites

Throughout the duration of the project, various events and workshops will be organised by project partners, and particularly at the local level, by the pilot partners based in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Türkiye.

These events represent an opportunity to:

- showcase the progress of pilot activities;
- gather insights from stakeholders and local communities to enrich the project;
- foster cross-regional learning and exchange between project partners and Nol members,
- support the replication and scalability of successful practices beyond the pilot sites.

Members of the Nol will be invited to contribute to selected project events, either as participants, speakers or resource/facilitator persons. The identification and proposal of relevant Nol experts for specific events, including local ones, may be facilitated at consortium level, in order to ensure coherence with the project's overall objectives and thematic priorities. However, the final decision on inviting experts to participate in a given event will remain at the discretion of the organising partner(s). Such decisions will be guided by several factors, including:

- the type, format and objectives of the event or activity;
- the relevance of the expert's profile, expertise and thematic specialisation;
- geographical, linguistic, and logistical considerations, including budgetary constraints
- the potential added value of the contribution in terms of knowledge exchange, capacity-building and impact.

This flexible approach aims to ensure that the involvement of Noi experts is both targeted and meaningful, while respecting the autonomy of partners to design and deliver events that respond to local needs and priorities.

The following activities and events, identified from the Grant Agreement, are indicative and non-exhaustive. They offer potential opportunities for the involvement of Noi members:

Name of the activity	Location of the event	Responsible partners	Planned date according to the GA
Co-creation workshop to design new innovative solutions for enhancing mental health accessibility	Pilot sites: Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Türkiye.	Pilot partners: AMALIPE, L'ADAPT, ZI, SERC and GIVMED, LGBT Ireland, FISEVI, KOC University	M18 - M22 June 2026 - October 2026
Small-scale citizens project on mental health care	Pilot sites: Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Türkiye.	Pilot partners: AMALIPE, L'ADAPT, ZI, SERC and GIVMED, LGBT Ireland, FISEVI, KOC University	M14 - M36 February 2025 - December 2027
Development of MOOCs	Online	GIVMED	M14 - M36 February 2026 - December 2027
Hackathon	Brussels, Belgium	KOC University	March - April 2025
Final Conference	TBC	Q-PLAN	M37 - M48 January 2027- December 2028

Table 2: EQUICARES planned events and activities - opportunities for the involvement of Noi members

2. Recruiting the Members

2.1. Criteria guiding identification and selection

Under the leadership of EASPD and with the active involvement of all EQUICARES partners, a set of guiding criteria was developed to serve a **dual purpose**: i) to **guide partners in identifying potential experts** and ii) to **ensure a balanced initial set up process** of the Nol.

This approach **ensures a Nol that is inclusive, relevant and aligned with the project's objectives**. Instead of acting as rigid or exclusionary benchmarks, the guidelines were designed to **maintain the Nol's diversity and balance**, ensuring it reflects a broad range of expertise and perspectives.

In detail, the following guiding criteria were set-up:

- **Relevant expertise:** Members come from diverse backgrounds and professional disciplines. Members demonstrate relevant expertise and experience in mental health (psychology, psychiatry, etc), care and support services (disability services, services to vulnerable populations), social economy, patient-centric technologies, health economics, but also policy-making and advocacy.
- **Leveraging experience:** Members' expertise is backed by relevant experience, research, or active engagement in initiatives aimed at improving access to mental healthcare.
- **Network and outreach capabilities:** Members have established networks (formal or informal) within their fields and are able to act as ambassadors for the project. They can reach different audiences. They have the ability to disseminate project information and outcomes within their networks.
- **Gender equality:** The selection of experts within the Nol prioritises the equitable representation of people of all genders.
- **Vulnerable populations:** The composition of the Nol ensures a representation of professionals that support the different groups of people in vulnerable situations and/or persons in vulnerable situations themselves, or their representatives, as they have been identified within EQUICARES: people with intellectual and physical disability, people with lived experience, people with a migrant/refugee background, LGBTQIA+ people, survivors of natural disasters, Roma communities, youth populations, and older adults. In addition to the groups of people in vulnerable situations identified within the project, experts may also support, represent, or themselves belong to other groups of people in vulnerable situations.
- **Geographical balance:** The experts represent different geographical regions and cultural contexts and operate at different levels - international, European, national and local.

2.2. Recruitment and selection process

2.2.1. Identification of members by partners

The process of identifying and engaging experts for the NoI was designed to be **flexible and collaborative**, ensuring that all potential members, regardless of how they were identified, received the same information and supporting documents. Rather than a rigid selection process with exclusionary criteria, the focus was on **verifying that each expert's background and experience aligned with the NoI's objectives**.

Leveraging their expertise in supporting people in vulnerable situations, mental health services, and technology development - among others - partners played a crucial role in identifying relevant stakeholders to join the NoI. **Each of the 18 consortium partners, including EASPD, proposed members within their own network's organisations, based on the above guiding criteria.** This approach ensures a broad representation of NoI members, covering diverse fields of expertise, groups of people in vulnerable situations, and a wide geographic distribution across.

The identification and engagement process was carried out in two complementary waves, each offering a distinct but equally rigorous pathway for experts to join:

Submission by partners

In the first wave, partners **proactively identified and proposed experts** by completing and submitting an **online Google Form** (Annex 3) for each candidate. Through this process, **61 experts** were proposed.

EASPD then **reviewed each submission** to ensure that all proposed experts met the **basic requirements** for membership. This review was not a formal exclusionary process but rather a **check to confirm that each expert possessed relevant expertise in one of the identified fields** and had **experience working with or supporting vulnerable groups**.

Once validated, EASPD took the lead in **notifying the selected experts**, informing them of their identification as valuable contributors to the NoI. To ensure transparency and clarity, EASPD provided each expert with the **same set of key documents**:

- Terms of Reference (ToR) - Annex 1
- Activity Plan - Annex 2
- Declaration of Acceptance (DoA) - Annex 4

Experts who wished to join the NoI were asked to **complete, sign and return their DoA** to EASPD, formalising their membership. Partners also actively supported this phase by reaching out to experts again via email, helping to collect the signed DoAs.

Direct partner outreach

Recognising the challenges associated with identifying experts who were both **qualified and willing to join**, partners took a more **direct and personalised approach** in the second wave. They **contacted experts individually via email** to gauge their interest in joining the NoI.

In this wave, experts received the same comprehensive set of documents, the ToR, Activity Plan, and DoA, along with a link to the Google Form for formal application. This ensured that all experts, regardless of how they were identified, had equal access to information about the NoI's goals, expectations, and commitments.

Experts who expressed interest were required to return their signed DoA to EASPD, confirming their commitment to participate in the network and uphold its principles.

To further enrich the NoI, partners extended invitations to **EQUICARES' sister projects**, all of which expressed interest in joining. This open and collaborative approach will continue beyond the initial 12 months, allowing additional members from sister projects to join the NoI. By fostering these connections, the network benefits from **cross-project synergies**, enhancing its collective expertise and impact. This approach underscores the NoI's commitment to **remaining a vibrant, inclusive, and impactful community**, where collective expertise drives meaningful progress and lasting change.

2.2.2. Direct application of experts through EQUICARES website

The EQUICARES consortium has decided to establish the NoI as an **open network**, allowing **external stakeholders to join** rather than limiting membership to experts proposed solely by consortium partners.

This decision aims to **broaden inclusivity and diversity**, ensuring the NoI reflects a wide range of voices, experiences, and perspectives from across Europe and beyond. This approach **strengthens the network's relevance and impact**, as it engages a broader range of stakeholders. Additionally, this open model **promotes transparency and accessibility**, aligning with the consortium's commitment to collaboration and participation. This aims to expand the project's reach and sustainability, fostering connections that will contribute to EQUICARES' long-term success and its mission to create meaningful change.

Q-Plan, asWork Package 6 Leader, integrated a [dedicated page](#) on the **EQUICARES website for interested individuals to express their intent to join the NoI**.

EASPD subsequently reached out to the 15 individuals who had expressed interest in joining the NoI through the EQUICARES website. All 15 experts were contacted by EASPD, providing them with the comprehensive materials, including the Terms of Reference, Activity Plan, and Declaration

of Acceptance, as well as the Google Form to formally invite them to join the NoI. None of the contacted experts have responded so far to confirm further interest.

The NoI remains open to new members throughout the duration of the project. Experts can continue to express their interest in joining via the EQUICARES website. To streamline this process, Q-Plan, the WP6 Leader, will inform EASPD every two months of new expressions of interest received through the website. EASPD will then contact these candidates by email, sharing the Google Form and the three key documents (Terms of Reference, Activity Plan, and Declaration of Acceptance). Membership will be finalised once the expert completes the Google Form and returns their signed Declaration of Acceptance.

3. Composition of the Network of Interest

The following section outlines the profiles and types of experts the Network of Interest aims to recruit, in line with its objectives and the needs of the EQUICARES project. It also presents the experts recruited during the initial set-up phase of the NoI, providing an overview of the network’s composition at the start of its activities, while also highlighting areas for further outreach, as not all targeted profiles have yet been secured as members.

3.1. Target experts profile

The table below illustrates the **strategic value of the diverse expertise** the project aims to represent within the NoI. At the time of the initial set-up, members of the NoI do not represent all of the following categories; however, these profiles reflect the **target composition** that project partners aim to achieve over the course of the project.

Each field of specialisation brings distinct strengths and perspectives, enabling the NoI to address the multifaceted challenges of equitable access to mental healthcare for vulnerable populations. By integrating professionals from mental health, care and support services to vulnerable populations, technology, policy, advocacy, and research, the NoI seeks to ensure a holistic, interdisciplinary and innovative approach to its mission.

Categories of stakeholders	Relevance
People with lived experience of mental health conditions	Involving people who have experience with mental health conditions to ensure that their voices and experiences are central to the NoI’s activities.
Mental health service providers	These providers can offer insights into practical challenges, service delivery models and solutions. Their involvement ensures that the NoI’s activities are grounded in real-world practice and operational realities .

Other care and support services (EU and national level)	These services complement mental health care services and can provide holistic support to people in vulnerable situations. Their participation can help in further integrating mental health within broader care and support services.
Social economy stakeholders	These stakeholders focus on social and economic inclusion and can contribute to innovative and sustainable community-based solutions supporting people in vulnerable situations, in line with key project objectives and outcomes.
Healthcare and support workers	Frontline workers have direct interactions with people in vulnerable situations and can provide valuable perspectives on the day-to-day challenges, implementation barriers and enabling factors in relation to innovative and digitally based solutions.
E-Health service providers and patient centric technologies	These providers offer digital and technological solutions that can enhance access to mental health services, particularly in remote or underserved areas and for people in vulnerable situations. Their expertise is essential for leveraging digital and user-focused innovations within the Nol.
Advocates and policymakers	These actors can support policy alignment, advocacy efforts and system-level change aimed at improving mental healthcare access. Policymakers and advocacy groups can influence mental health policies and funding. Their involvement can help align the Nol's objectives with broader policy goals and ensure that the recommendations that will be developed reach various political and policymaking levels.
Academic and research stakeholders	Researchers provide evidence-based insights and contribute to robust, research-informed recommendations. Their involvement ensures that the network's strategies are informed by the latest research and best practices. They can also contribute to the network's knowledge base and provide evidence-based recommendations.
Organised civil society: local community, networks, associations, NGOs	Civil society organisations bring grounded, community-based expertise and play a key role in connecting people in vulnerable situations with mental health and care services. Their involvement ensures that the Nol's activities are community-driven and responsive to the needs of people in vulnerable situations.

Table 3: Targeted experts profiles for the Nol and relevance to the EQUICARES project

3.2. Profile of the recruited experts - Initial set-up

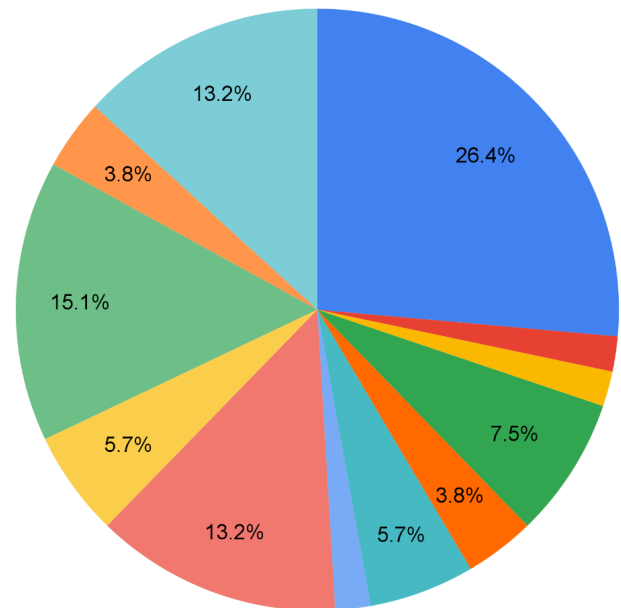
This section presents the experts who joined the Nol during its initial set up phase (M12). **The Nol is currently composed of 27 members.** Together, they represent diverse areas of **expertise, lived experiences and perspectives**, forming a dynamic group that is uniquely equipped to **advance meaningful and sustainable improvements in mental healthcare access** for people in vulnerable situations. This also ensures that the Nol is deeply connected to the realities and needs of the communities the EQUICARES project aims to support.

In detail, this section provides an overview of the Nol's composition, including:

- The **distribution of members by field of expertise**, highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of the network. Experts may belong to more than one field of expertise, and this is represented on the graph.
- The **categories of groups of people in vulnerable situations in which experts have expertise**, ensuring that the Nol addresses the unique needs of diverse groups of people.
- The **geographical location of experts**, illustrating the network's broad representation across countries and regions. This graph reflects the location of experts'; however, the geographical scope of their activities and missions may extend beyond these locations
- The **gender balance**, based on the information provided voluntarily by experts through the onboarding questionnaire and subject to their consent to share this data.

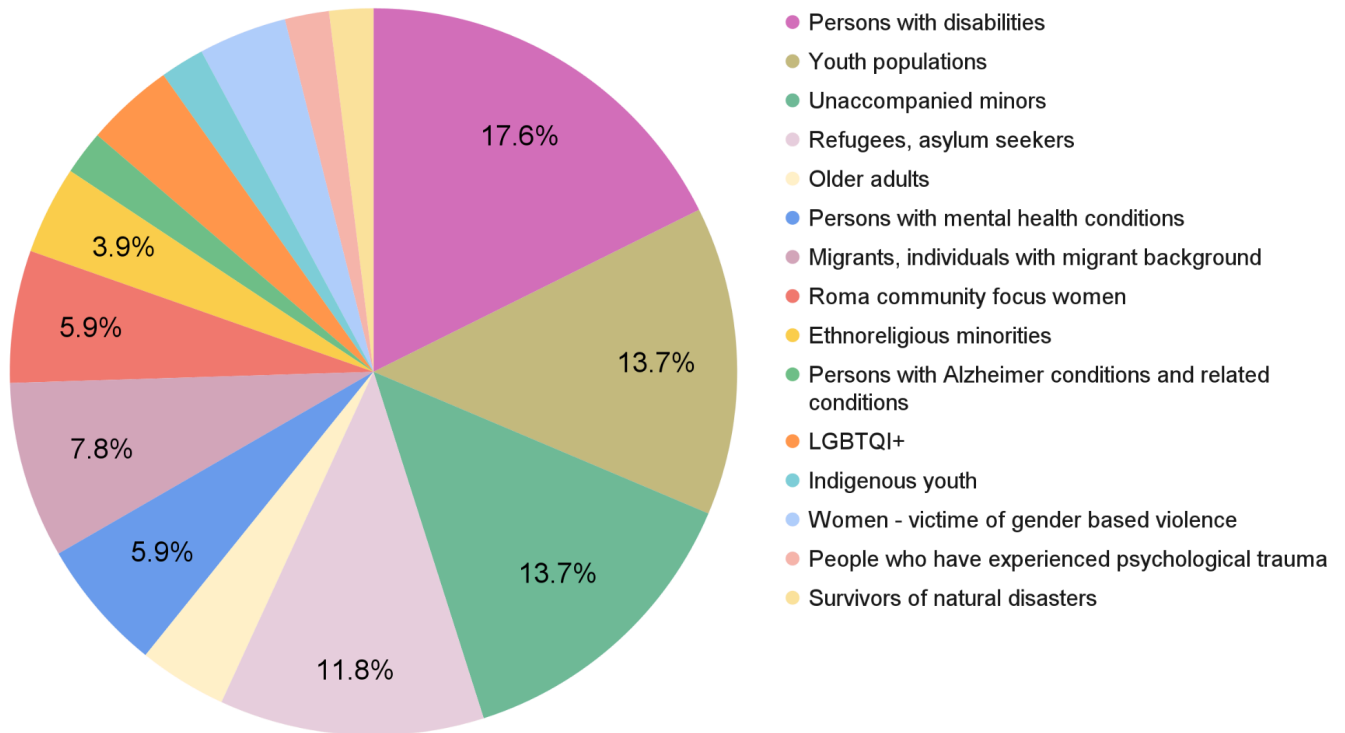
Figure 1: Distribution of experts per category of fields of expertise

- Mental health/other care support services
- Disability services
- Social economy stakeholders
- Healthcare and support workers
- Health economics
- Digital health
- Healthcare Informatics
- Civil society and Advocacy
- Child and youth services
- Academic and research
- Representative of people in vulnerable situations
- Human rights and social justice



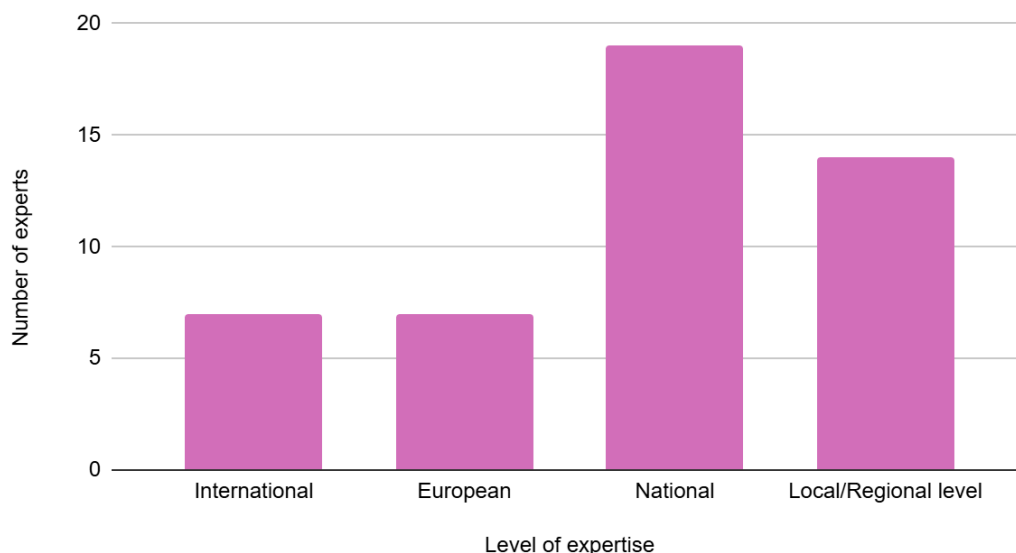
The above graphs illustrate the diversity of fields of expertise represented within the NoI, highlighting the **range of professional backgrounds currently contributing** to the project. While members have been successfully onboarded from several key areas, some fields remain underrepresented or are not yet represented. In the coming months, targeted outreach will aim to engage experts from these areas to further strengthen the balance and comprehensiveness of the NoI.

Figure 2: Distribution of experts per expertise on groups of people in vulnerable situations



This graph highlights the diversity of expertise within the NoI regarding groups of people in vulnerable situations. The range of profiles shows that members collectively **cover all target groups addressed by the project, ensuring that multiple lived realities and support needs are taken into account**. In addition, several experts bring additional experience beyond the project's core target groups, further enriching discussions and strengthening the network's capacity to address intersecting and emerging vulnerabilities.

Figure 3: Distribution of expert per level of expertise: European, National, Regional/Local



This graph highlights the **diversity of** levels at which NOI members operate, that includes **regional/local, national, European, and international contexts**. This multi-level representation strengthens the network by bringing together strategic, policy-oriented perspectives with practical, on-the-ground experience. It enables richer exchanges, supports the translation of European-level initiatives into local practice, and enhances the relevance and applicability of project outcomes across different governance and implementation levels.

Figure 4: Distribution of experts per country of operation

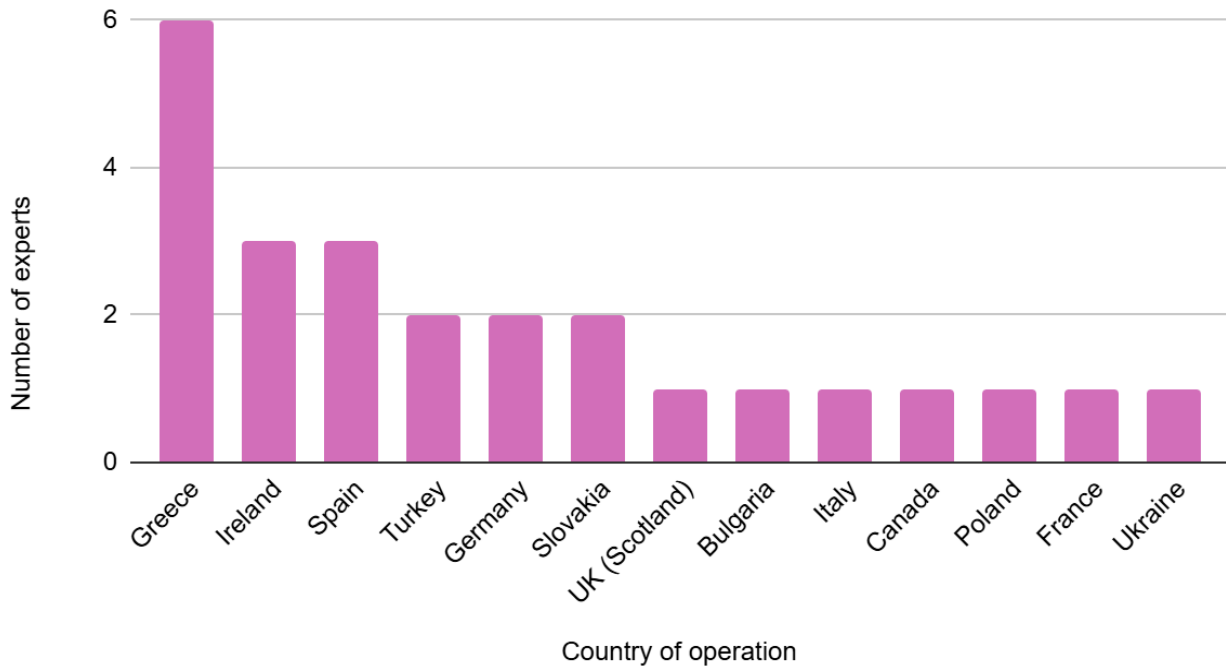
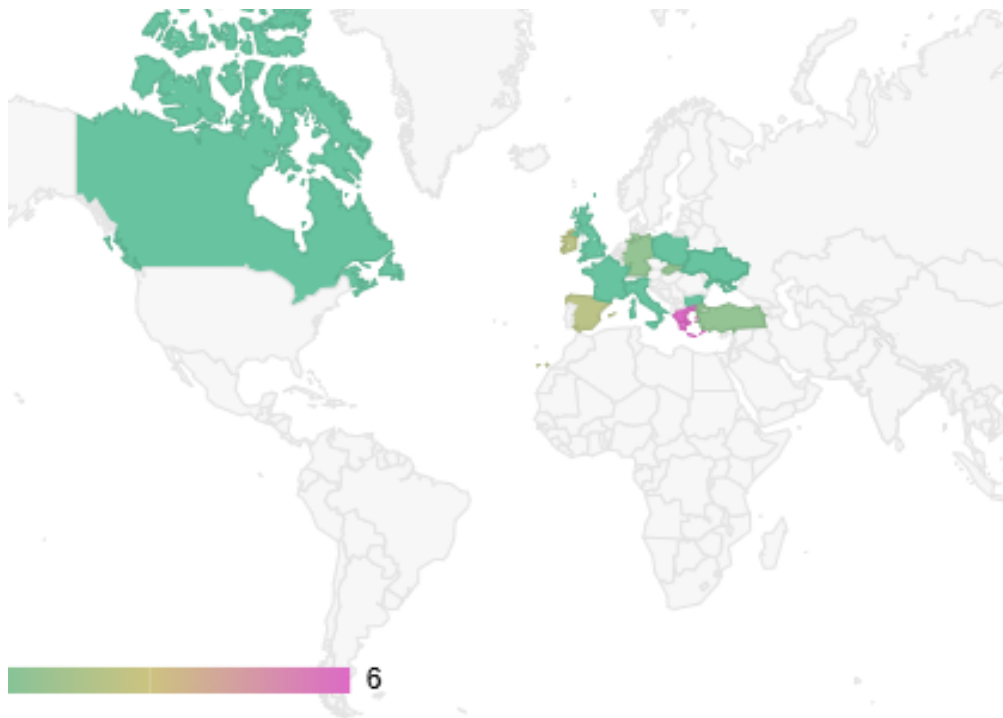
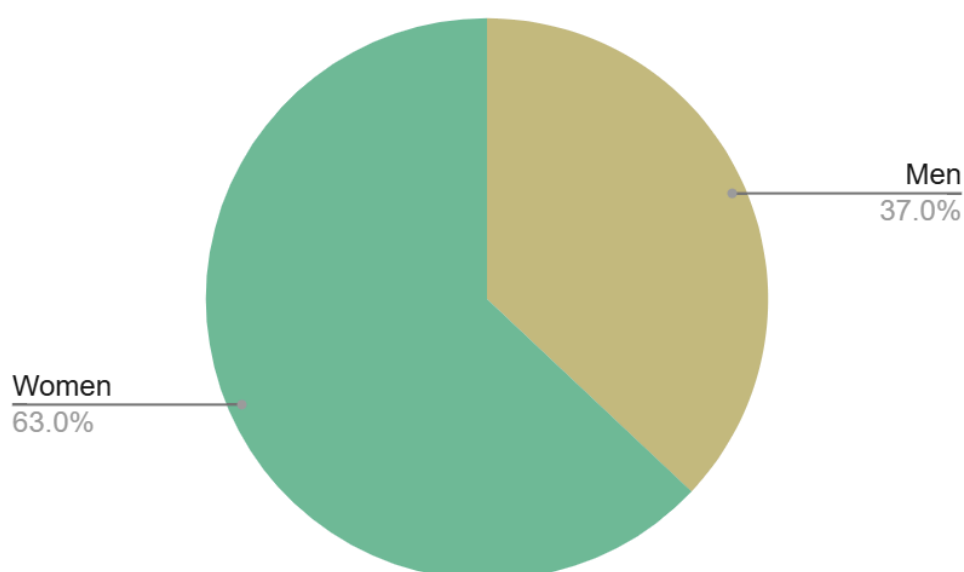


Figure 5: Distribution of experts per country of operation - world map



This graph illustrates the geographical diversity of the NoI, showing where members operate, including representation from EU Member States, non-EU-Members as well other regions worldwide. This broad geographic coverage supports a wide range of perspectives and contexts relevant to the project. Notably, all pilot countries are represented, with at least one expert engaged in each, ensuring alignment with local realities across the pilot sites.

Figure 6: Gender balance representation of experts



The above graph is based on the information provided by experts through the Google Form. The form included the following options for gender self-identification: women, men, non-binary, other, and prefer not to say (see Annex 3). While the consortium sought to promote gender balance when proposing experts, the final composition of the NoI includes a higher proportion of members who identified as women. This distribution reflects the broader gender composition of the mental healthcare sector and of professions supporting people in vulnerable situations.

This presentation of the composition of the NoI demonstrates that the NoI is **not only rich in expertise but also balanced in representation**, making it a powerful platform for collaboration, innovation, and advocacy in the field of mental healthcare. The diversity within the network ensures that the solutions and initiatives developed are **inclusive, culturally sensitive, and responsive** to the complex challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Through this collective effort, the NoI is poised to make a **lasting impact** on mental health equity and access.

Selected members who confirmed their participation by submitting the DoA will be invited to the **launch event scheduled for Q1 of 2026**. This online event, exclusive to Nol experts and project partners, will introduce the network's **objectives, expectations and operational framework**, ensuring a seamless integration for all members. It will also provide experts with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the **EQUICARES project** and explore how their involvement in the Nol can shape its future direction.

4. Management of the Network of Interest

4.1. Personnel data and confidentiality

All personal data submitted via the registration form by individuals wishing to join the Nol will be processed in full compliance with the **EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2016/679)**. Personal data is collected and processed on the basis of **consent (Article 6(1)(a) GDPR)**, which is voluntarily provided by applicants through the Google Form and Declaration of Acceptance.

Upon confirmation of membership, access to the personal information of the member, as provided in the application form, will be strictly limited to:

- The Nol Manager: The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD).
- The EQUICARES project consortium partners.

This restricted access enables consortium members to communicate with experts directly to take part in various key moments of the project, notably local events.

Personal data will not be shared with third parties without explicit consent. During the application process, applicants also have the option to withhold permission for sharing their contact details even within the consortium.

Personal data will be retained for a period of **five years after the project's conclusion**, after which it will be securely deleted.

Applicants retain all **GDPR rights as data subjects**, including the right to access, rectify, erase, restrict processing, object to processing, and data portability. For any inquiries regarding personal data, please contact the Nol Manager.

4.2. NoI Manager and contact point

The NoI is managed by the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). A dedicated email address, managed by EASPD, has been created for the purpose of the project: equicares@easpd.eu.

Withdraw from the NoI can be done at any time by notifying EASPD via the contact email below.

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EQUICARES Network of Interest terms of reference and composition - Annexes



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EQUICARES Network of Interest
Terms of Reference



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1. Introduction

Established as part of the EQUICARES project, the Network of Interest (NoI) plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the project's core activities, promoting the dissemination of its findings and outcomes, contributing to its long-term impact and sustainability.

The current document - Terms of Reference (ToR) - outlines the scope of your potential involvement - before you formally express interest - and provides a clear framework for participation. We encourage you to take the time to read this document thoroughly. Within the document, you will find:

- The key principles and operational guidelines that govern the functioning of the NoI.
- The clear expectations regarding roles and responsibilities, expectations for members' contributions, including time commitment and collaboration standards.
- The range of activities and modes of engagement suited to different expertise and interests.
- The benefits of participation within the NoI.

By defining these elements, the ToR ensures a transparent and accountable framework that facilitates meaningful participation and effective collaboration among members of the NoI, ensuring also that the contributions of its members are well integrated into the broader activities and strategic objectives of the EQUICARES project.

2. EQUICARES Project

EQUICARES is a 4 year Horizon Europe project aiming to support access to innovative and sustainable mental health and care services to diverse groups of people in vulnerable situations. The project builds on innovative methods to evaluate the accessibility of mental healthcare services, identify gaps in their provision, and gather precise data on healthcare inequalities.

Furthermore, EQUICARES uses digital ethnography to map existing innovative solutions, access to mental health services, and connect them to different parts of the mental health system to support new solutions. The results from these activities are translated into policymaking through for instance a dedicated Atlas.

The project also tests innovative solutions in eight pilot areas across seven countries, representing diverse socioeconomic settings and addressing diverse populations in vulnerable situations, while contributing to various strategic frameworks of the EU. Through "Smart Health Labs," the project involves people in vulnerable situations at the community

level in co-designing, implementing, and evaluating solutions based on social economy principles and user innovation.

At the individual level, the project provides awareness, capacity-building, and pilots a novel AI-based Assistant to enhance mental health access and digital literacy.

EQUICARES also evaluates the impact of its innovative solutions using advanced cost-analysis techniques, providing strong evidence of the consequences of inaction. The project then replicates its outcomes in four additional cases and develops the Inclusive “Mental Health and Care Policy Dashboard” to support the long-term sustainability and policy adoption of its results.

3. Network of Interest (NoI)

The NoI is a multi-actor body of stakeholders, comprising experts in the fields of mental health, care services, social economy, patient centric technologies, health economics, and related fields. Its members play a pivotal role in:

- Providing **strategic guidance** in key stages of the project.
- Contributing to **target audience outreach** by leveraging their professional networks.
- **Disseminating information** about the project and its outcomes.
- Supporting the **replication and uptake** of activities and key deliverables, such as the Policy Dashboard, by acting as project ambassadors who inform and invite their networks to benefit from them.

The main goals of the NoI are further translated into concrete forms of participation and activities which are outlined in detail in Section 5: *Key Activities of the NoI*. This section describes how you will actively participate in achieving the network’s objectives through engagement in core activities.

4. Becoming a member of the NoI

As a member, you will serve the NoI in your individual capacity, representing the interests and views of your organisation and community.

Membership is voluntary, non-remunerated, and runs until the conclusion of the EQUICARES project. You may withdraw at any time, without penalty, by notifying us via the contact email below.

You cannot delegate your role to another person for the duration of your appointment.

Application process

To apply to join the NoI you must:

1. Visit the EQUICARES website and locate the “[Network of Interest](#)” page.
2. Fill out the Google application form with your personal and professional details.

Your application to join the NoI will be evaluated by the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) based on the following specific criteria:

- **Expertise & Relevance:** Alignment of your field and specialisation with EQUICARES objectives.
- **Professional Experience:** Number of years and depth of relevant work.
- **Outreach Capacity:** Ability to engage and mobilise your networks.

Attention will be paid to ensure a balanced representation in terms of gender, geographical diversity, types of experience, and vulnerable groups.

Once your application is accepted, EASPD will inform you and request to sign a Declaration of Acceptance (DoA). Upon receipt of the signed DoA, you will formally become a member of the NoI and receive a confirmation and welcome email containing all the necessary onboarding information.

5. The benefits of joining the NoI

By becoming a member of the NoI, you have the opportunity to benefit from a range of professional and strategic advantages, including:

- **Contributing to policy development and strategic outputs** - You can actively shape and contribute to the development of policy recommendations and strategic guidance aimed at improving mental health services accessibility. As a member of the NoI, you will have the chance to influence the project's outcomes and its impact at both local, national and EU levels.
- **Participating in key events and activities** - You can take part in workshops, webinars and other events organised as part of this network but also under other EQUICARES project activities. These events provide valuable opportunities for visibility, capacity building, and networking with leading voices in mental health and social inclusion.

- **Expanding your professional network** - You can connect with a broad community of professionals, researchers, policymakers, service providers, and advocates working at national and European levels in the field of mental health and support for vulnerable populations.
- **Gaining insights and sharing expertise:** You can exchange knowledge, experiences, and good practices with other experts across different countries and sectors. Learn from innovative approaches, case studies, and successful interventions to improve access to mental health services.

Joining the Nol not only positions you at the forefront of transformational change but also empowers you with the tools, connections, and recognition to drive sustainable impact in your field.

6. Key activities of the Nol

Throughout the duration of the project, Nol members will have multiple opportunities to contribute to the project's outcomes, participate in diverse activities and events, and help disseminate the project's results.

Participation in online meetings and events:

- You will be invited to attend key meetings and events, such as biannual online meetings, and the final project conference, where the main findings of EQUICARES will be presented. You might be asked to provide feedback based on your expertise.
- You will be able to take part in local events organised during the project's lifecycle; such as consultation workshop (1 per pilot area), training workshop (3 per pilot area), or co-creation workshop (1 per pilot area).

Participation in the dissemination of the results of the project:

- You will be invited to support the dissemination of key deliverables and milestones of the project, such as the Atlas on Mental Health and Care Innovation Solutions; the Inclusive Mental Health and Care Policy Dashboard; Policy Recommendations; and the AI-based Assistant.

Participation in social media campaign:

- You will be invited to participate in awareness raising activities; such as campaigns at the pilot level (1 per pilot) to address knowledge gaps and connect service users and providers with care workers and policy makers to build community-centred innovation solutions.

- You will be invited to contribute to social media campaigns and other communication activities of the project.

Furthermore, as a member of the Network, you may also have the opportunity to take part in various events organised by the EQUICARES project partners. Your membership will enable partners to invite you to contribute to activities and events relevant to your area of expertise.

7. Personnel data and confidentiality

All personal data submitted via the registration form will be processed in full compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2016/679). Upon confirmation of your NoI membership, access to your personal information, as provided in the application form (including your full name, surname, email address, professional affiliation, gender and age), will be strictly limited to:

- The NoI Manager, The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD).
- The EQUICARES project consortium partners.

This restricted access enables consortium members to communicate with you directly - for example, to extend invitations to local workshops or briefing sessions. Your personal data will not be shared with third parties without your consent. During the application process, you will also have the option to withhold permission for sharing your contact details even within the consortium.

8. Points of contact

The Network of Interest is managed by the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). In case you have questions, you can contact us at equicares@easpd.eu.

Concerning the project, the URL for the project website is <https://EQUICARES-project.eu/>, and the contact email is info@EQUICARES-project.eu.

Be sure to follow us and interact with our following social media:

Social Media Platform	Account name	URL
LinkedIn	@EQUICARES	https://www.linkedin.com/company/EQUICARES/
X	@EQUICARES_EU	https://x.com/EQUICARES_EU
Instagram	@EQUICARES.project	https://www.instagram.com/EQUICARES.project/

Facebook	@EQUICARES.project	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61571805159384
Youtube	@EQUICARESEUProject	https://www.youtube.com/@EQUICARESEUproject



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Network of Interest

Activities

Plan



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In case you want any additional information, or you want to consult with the authors of this document, please send your inquiries to: equicares@easpd.eu

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Document overview

This document outlines the main activities and engagement opportunities for members of the Network of Interest (NoI) under the Horizon Europe EQUICARES project from the official launch of the NoI – November 2025 – until the end of the project – December 2028 –. The NoI will play a key role in supporting dissemination, communication, and the strategic uptake of the project’s outcomes. It will also serve as a collaborative space for stakeholders committed to improving access to mental health services for groups of people in vulnerable situations.

Dissemination activities

The NoI will be regularly informed of project updates and results and will contribute to their wider dissemination. These activities will be coordinated by EASPD, in its role as NoI manager, in collaboration with the project’s communication leader, Q-PLAN, and the broader project consortium.

A series of **online webinars** will be organised around the completion of key project outcomes (“milestones”). These events will present major project outcomes and allow members to engage in discussions around their relevance and potential uptake.

The following project results have been identified as relevant to organise an online webinar:

Webinars on EQUICARES Milestones	Date
Atlas on Mental Health and Care Innovative Solutions (M18)	September 2026 (M21)
Piloting of innovative solutions in Smart Health Labs” (M36)	February 2028 (M38)
Delivering the AI-based Assistant (final version) (M36)	July 2028 (M43)

NoI members will be invited to attend these webinars. Beyond attending, members are encouraged to disseminate the outcomes within their own organisations and networks to enhance their impact.

The webinars/workshops will offer comprehensive updates on the milestones achieved across each thematic area and will feature a feedback session, allowing participants to share and discuss their perspectives.

Communication & Knowledge transfer activities

All key dissemination materials (e.g. policy briefs, infographics, newsletters) will be forwarded by EASPD to Nol members via email. Members will be invited to share these materials through their own channels (e.g. websites, mailing lists, internal updates, organisation's newsletter).

Campaign activities on social media

When public campaigns or awareness-raising initiatives are launched as part of the project, Nol members will receive pre-prepared content to help boost visibility (e.g. LinkedIn posts, visuals). Members are encouraged to share these on LinkedIn, particularly with audiences interested in mental health, social services, and innovation.

Participation in partner events & pilot sites

Throughout the duration of the project, various events and workshops will be organised by project partners, and notably by the pilot partners based in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Turkey (pilot countries).

These events represent an opportunity to

- showcase the progress of pilot activities;
- gather insight from stakeholders and local communities to nourish the project;
- foster cross-regional learning and exchange between project partners and Nol members,
- support the replication and scalability of successful practices beyond the pilot sites.

While attendance is not mandatory, members of the Nol can be invited to take part in these events as observers, contributors, or speakers – depending on the format and topic of each activity.

Activities, events to take part:

Name of the activity	Location
Co-creation workshop to design new innovative solutions for enhancing mental health accessibility	Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Turkey .
Capacity building activities and Small-scale citizens project on mental health care	Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Turkey.
Virtual focus group to analyse identified innovative solutions for enhancing access of mental health and care services	Online
Development of MOOCs	Online
Testing of the AI-assist with mental health experts	Online
Hackathon	Brussels
Conference Final event	TBC

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EQUICARES - Network of Interest (NoI) - Application Form

The **EQUICARES project** is a Horizon-funded initiative that aims to map the mental health needs of diverse groups in vulnerable situations, identify barriers to accessing mental healthcare services, and develop, pilot, and provide innovative, digitally-based solutions to improve access to mental health support.

The Network of Interest (NoI) is being established within the framework of the EQUICARES project to support the implementation of its core activities, promote the dissemination of findings and outcomes, and contribute to the project's long-term impact and sustainability.

Please **ensure you have read the Terms of Reference**, which outline the scope of your involvement in the NoI the opportunities your participation will offer, as well as present the selection process.

To join the NoI, we invite you to complete this application form by responding to the questions below. Your responses will help assess your expertise, experience, and suitability for contributing to the objectives of the NoI. **Applications will be reviewed** by the NoI manager, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD).

If you are a partner of the EQUICARES project and you are proposing experts, please fill the following form with the information about the expert and not your organisation. Provide only information you are allowed to.

Sensitive information (age and gender) is collected to ensure balanced representation in accordance with EU priorities. Only the NoI manager will have access to these data; they will not be shared with the rest of the partnership or any third parties.

If you have any questions, please contact EASPD at equicares@easpd.eu

Thank you for your interest and contribution to the EQUICARES Network of Interest.

*** Indique une question obligatoire**

1. Adresse e-mail *

2. Expert proposed on the behalf of: name of the partner organisation: *

3. Terms of Reference (not relevant to partners)

Plusieurs réponses possibles.

I confirm that I have read the Terms of Reference prior to filling the application, and that I understand my role, responsibilities and opportunities by joining the NoI.

Personal and contact information

Sensitive information (age, gender) is collected to ensure balanced representation in accordance with EU priorities. Only the Network of Interest Manager (EASPD) will have access to these data; they will not be shared with the rest of the partnership or any third parties.

4. Name *

5. Surname *

6. Email address

7. Gender

Une seule réponse possible.

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Other

Prefer not to say

8. Rank age (years old)

Une seule réponse possible.

18-30

31-50

51-64

65+

Expertise and experience

9. Organisation name *

10. Position /Job title *

11. Relevant expertise *

Please select your relevant field(s) of expertise

Plusieurs réponses possibles.

- Persons in vulnerable situations
- Healthcare service provision
- Mental Healthcare service provision
- Psychology and / or Psychiatry
- Child and youth services
- Health economics
- Social economy
- Digital health / eHealth
- Digital inclusion and accessibility
- Artificial intelligence
- Patient centric technologies & innovation
- Policy and decision-making
- Advocacy and civil society engagement
- Human rights and social justice
- Autre : _____

12. If you have answered "other" please specify the relevant field of expertise

13. If you have experience in working with and/or representing persons in vulnerable situation please specify which group(s)

Plusieurs réponses possibles.

- Individuals with disabilities
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Migrants and individuals with a migrant background
- Ethnoreligious minorities
- Roma community (focus on women)
- Eldery, eldery migrants, eldery women
- Youth populations, uncacompagnied minors
- Survivors of natural disasters
- Other...

14. If you have answered "other" please specify

15. Years of experience *

Une seule réponse possible.

- 0-3
- 5-10
- 10+

16. Geographic location *
- Please select the level(s) you and/or your organisation operate

Plusieurs réponses possibles.

- International level
- European level
- National level
- Local/Regional level

17. If you previously answered "national" and/or "local", please specific in which country(ies) y operate

18. Social Media (not relevant to partners)
Please share your professional social media accounts (Linkedin, Instagram, Facebook, X, Bluesky)

General rules & data protection

19. I agree that

Plusieurs réponses possibles.

My personal data, as provided in this registration form, will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and accessible to the Network management (EASPD) and the EQUICARES partners.

Ce contenu n'est ni rédigé, ni cautionné par Google.

Google Forms



EQUICARES Network of Interest
Declaration of Acceptance



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Declaration of Acceptance *Network of Interest (NoI) – EQUICARES Project*

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I have read and agree to abide by the EQUICARES Network of Interest (NoI) Terms of Reference.

I confirm my willingness to become a member of the NoI, managed by EASPD and established within the framework of the EQUICARES project.

By signing this Declaration of Acceptance, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

- **Statement commitment:** I will participate in the EQUICARES NoI and will fulfil my responsibilities in my individual capacity. I understand and acknowledge that I may not delegate my responsibilities to another person or be replaced by any other person, without prior written agreement.
- **Voluntary participation:** My involvement in the NoI is voluntary and based on my interest and expertise relevant to the objectives of the EQUICARES project. My participation in the NoI lasts for the entire duration of the project and can be withdrawn at any time by notifying the NoI manager (EASPD).
- **Active engagement:** I agree to contribute to the activities of the NoI, including sharing relevant insights, participating in meetings and events where possible, and supporting the dissemination of the results of the project.
- **Confidentiality and respect:** I commit to respect and maintain the confidentiality regarding any information shared during the course of my membership in the NoI, unless expressly authorised by the consortium. I fully respect and adhere to the confidentiality requirements outlined.
- **Data usage:** I understand that my personal data, as provided in the registration form, will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). My data will only be accessed by the Network manager (EASPD) and the EQUICARES partners for project-related purposes. It will not be shared externally without my consent, and I may request to access, correct, or delete my data at any time. Sensitive information, (age, gender) will only be accessible to the Network of Interest Manager (EASPD); they will not be shared with the rest of the partnership or any third parties.
- **Publication consent:** Please indicate your preference regarding the use of your personal information (name, photograph, and short biography) for communication and dissemination purposes related to the EQUICARES project. This information

may appear on the project website, in social media posts, and in any project-related dissemination materials produced by the EQUICARES consortium.

I consent to the publication of my name, photograph, and a short biography as a member of the EQUICARES Network of Interest. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by contacting the Nol Manager (EASPD), and any published information will be removed accordingly.

I do not consent to the publication of my name, photograph, or biography in any EQUICARES project-related communication or dissemination materials.

Date and place of signature

Name:

Surname:

Organisation name (if applicable):

Email:

Signature:

Network of Interest, contacts

The Network of Interest is managed by the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). In case you have questions, you can contact us at equicares@easpd.eu. Concerning the project, the URL is the following one <https://EQUICARES-project.eu/>, and the contact email info@EQUICARES-project.eu.



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