Moray's new Rural Centre of Excellence for Digital Health & Care Innovation
A hub for inclusive civic engagement for transformational social impact

Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre

Moray Growth Deal
Innovation from Tradition

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Background

The Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre (DHI) is one of Scotland's Innovation Centres and offers a unique set of capabilities to transform health and care services. Funded by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council, the DHI is a national resource that supports partners to identify, develop, co-design and deliver transformative innovation to improve health and care services.

The DHI considers that a person-centred model of service transformation is the most appropriate means and a key enabler of responsive and efficient public services as determined using insights gained over eight years and numerous projects. DHI's support has delivered service improvements which have been realised using participatory design methods. With the recent establishment of a Rural Centre of Excellence (RCE) in the Moray local authority area, there is an opportunity to reinforce DHI's engagement strategy so that inclusive engagement is embedded and prioritised as a core principle of the RCE, enabling a meaningful and sustained partnership with groups of people who may be marginalised or harder to reach. The RCE is one of a portfolio of initiatives funded by the Moray Growth Deal investment, aiming to level up the local economy and addressing inequalities and rural imbalances. The RCE aligns with existing local and national strategies aimed at transforming health and care through technology, and will also implement the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtSD)[1]. With rural inequalities brought into sharp focus due to COVID-19, a renewed and concerted effort to ensure inclusion and enable a range of voices to participate in DHI's work, is not only expected but there is also a clear and strong imperative to promote equal opportunities and embedding diversity, in line with our public sector duty.

Aims

The aims of the RCE are broadly to:
1 - Accelerate innovation for the next generation of digital health and care technologies with a rural focus;
2 - Support industry and the health and care sector in the implementation of new service models;
3 - Foster the conditions for successful technology upscaling by focusing on service, business and technical readiness levels;
4 - Enhance training and upskilling opportunities to enable sustainable digitally-enabled health and care services.

From Vision to Reality

The main routes to achieving the aims above are:
1 - The use of participatory design methods involving Moray's residents, health and care professionals and community actors – giving them the opportunity to address their health and care challenges and co-create their innovative digital services.
2 - The use of a Living Lab methodology [2] combining multi-stakeholder exploration of issues, co-creation of solutions, real world testing and evidence-gathering alongside dynamic research and innovation processes.
3 - The use of DHI's readiness framework, incorporating service readiness [3], business readiness and technical readiness.
4 - Using developmental procurement methods and enabling infrastructure such as the DHI's Data Exchange [4], the solutions have a viable route to adoption.

The RCE will follow an adapted framework drawing on Scotland's National Standards for Community Engagement ("Standards") [5]. These are good-practice principles that will guide delivery of engagement opportunities such as dissemination events and participatory design workshops, however, rather than creating a new model, a specific rural approach within the current Standards will be taken and the well-known Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will also be used (Figure 1).
A structured process (Figure 2) is proposed to align with the above methods and actions. The proposal is to develop five Living Labs, aligned to key thematic areas (healthy living, mental wellbeing, smart housing and communities, co-managed long-term conditions and, care in place) of priority for health and social care.

Discussion and Outcomes

The approach outlined, in particular the use of participatory design methods, is anticipated to deliver coherent and sustainable services via innovative Living Labs. The rural focus of the RCE in Moray aims to encourage and promote rural healthcare and economic development and contribute to a number of outcomes aligned to Scotland's National Performance Framework. Simultaneously, disparities in health outcomes compared with urban environments, are expected to be addressed.
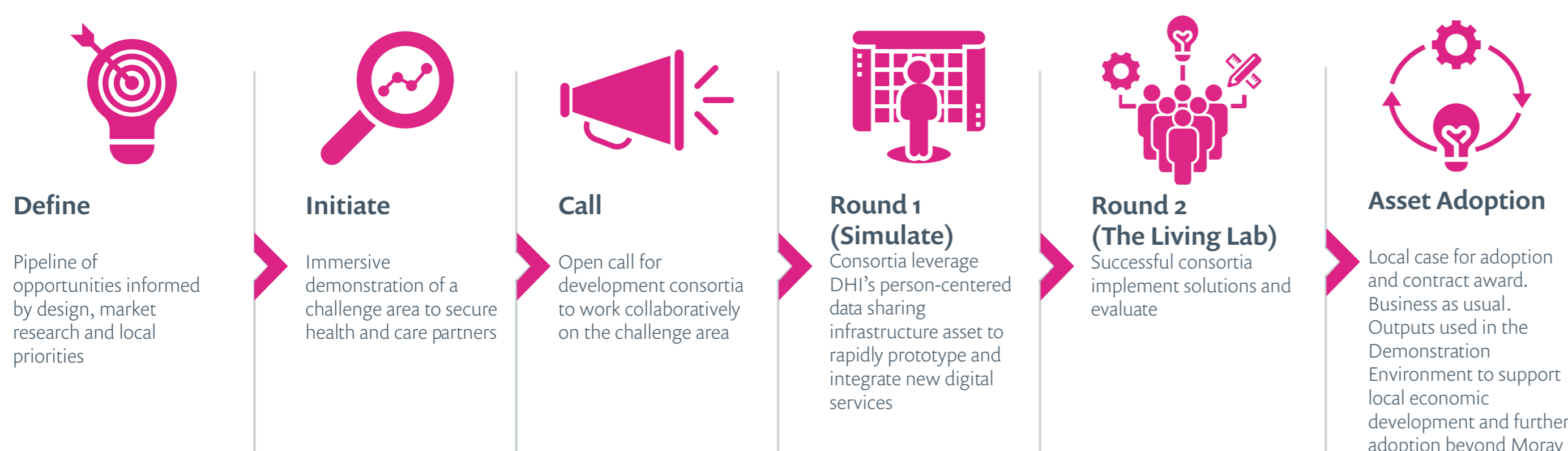

Figure 1- Sustainable Development Goals addressed by the RCE

Join Our Network

Figure 2 - Proposed process for implementation of RCE activities

Define
Pipeline of opportunities informed by design, market research and local priorities

Initiate
Immersive demonstration of a challenge area to secure health and care partners

Call
Open call for development consortia to work collaboratively on the challenge area

Round 1 (Simulate)
Consortia leverage DHI's person-centered data sharing infrastructure asset to rapidly prototype and integrate new digital services

Round 2 (The Living Lab)
Successful consortia implement solutions and evaluate

Asset Adoption
Local case for adoption and contract award. Business as usual. Outputs used in the Demonstration Environment to support local economic development and further adoption beyond Moray

References

1 – The Scottish Approach to Service Design, Scottish Government Digital Directorate, 2019. https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-scottish-approach-to-service-design/
2 - European Network of Living Labs, https://enoll.org/about-us/
3 - Hughes, J.; Lennon, M.; Rogerson, R.J.; Crooks, G. Scaling Digital Health Innovation: Developing a New 'Service Readiness Level' Framework of Evidence. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 12575. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182312575
4- DHI Exchange, www.dhi-scotland.com/dhi-exchange/
5 - Scottish Community Development Centre. (n.d.). National Standards for Community Engagement. Communities Scotland.