

Healthcare product testing implemented in collaboration with companies, hospital test beds' personnel and clinicians aims to provide fast feedback of the usability of new healthcare ideas and products.

Test beds where hospital premises are replicated for health care device testing purposes, have become common facilities in the Nordic University Hospitals. Test beds serve both companies and health care professionals hoping to test the suitability of their innovative health care ideas or devices. At its best, test beds provide health technology companies and startups means to faster product development times and access to wider markets and improved implementation of the solutions, which truly are needed in the hospitals.

“The size of market for a specific health care product is limited. Nordic cooperation has helped us to widen our contacts to other Nordic countries, and to find potential new customers,” Monidor CEO **Mikko Savola** says. Monidor’s novel intravenous therapy solution was one of the solutions tested in collaborative network of Nordic University hospital test beds formed in Nordic Test Beds project. Currently the company operates in Finland, but will probably enlarge its operation to other countries.

In the Nordic Test Beds project altogether 15 healthcare solutions were selected for further evaluation and testing in suitable test beds in a collaboration network of Nordic hospital test beds, including the University hospitals of Aalborg (Denmark), Lund (Sweden), Oslo (Norway), Oulu (Finland) and Uppsala (Sweden). “The solutions tested range from simple hang-on box for patient’s personal belongings to complex diagnostic systems,” project coordinator **Kalevi Virta** says. “For example virtual reality solution for surgery planning, cast replacement and fast hemolysed blood sample identification tool were tested.”

In addition to decreased development times and costs and enhanced quality of the products, the long term goal of the project has been to create common Nordic practices for health care test bed activities. “Clear rules would make it lot easier for companies to test their products. In the long run both companies and patients benefit,” Virta says.

The project partners invite other Nordic actors working on Nordic health care test beds to join collaboration around Nordic health care test beds. “The report on the evaluated benefits of health care test bed collaboration, Health Innovation Assessment Tool and guidelines for testing created in the project are freely available. I think these are useful tools for both health professionals and companies in the field,” Virta says.

Nordic Test Beds project has joined experiences and know-how of Nordic university hospitals and innovation centers in order to create efficient Nordic test bed cooperation ecosystem and common best practices. The project has evaluated or tested 15 concrete health care product/service idea test cases in five Nordic university hospital test beds. The project participants include Innovation Skåne, Innovation Akademiska at Uppsala University Hospital, Aalborg University Hospital at North Denmark Region, Oslo University Hospital, OYS TestLab at Oulu University Hospital, BusinessOulu and Centre for Health and Technology at University of Oulu. The project has received funding from Nordic Innovation, a Nordic institution working to promote cross-border trade and innovation, with board members selected by the five Nordic governments.

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