

K. CHHING, H. OWSIEJCZYK, S. BENVENISTE, S. REINGEWIRTZ, E. BRANGIER, A.S. RIGAUD. **National expertise center in cognition: New tools for progress.** *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):159; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.616.00

Purpose The National Expertise Center in Cognitive Stimulation (CEN STIMCO) is a French non-profit organization created in 2011. It is funded by the National Fund for Solidarity and Autonomy (CNSA), and aims to (i) assemble the different protagonists involved in cognitive stimulation/compensation and facilitate exchanges between them to further innovative research and product development, (ii) appraise the various methods and assistive technologies that could help people with cognitive impairments, and (iii) spread knowledge on these methods and technologies to reach interested professionals and, most importantly, all potential end-users. **Method** The CEN STIMCO's activities include (i) the compilation of an exhaustive state-of-the-art review of the field, serving as basis for (ii) the creation of a standardized evaluation process for the certification of products and methods^{1,2}, with a centralized, freely accessible repository for end-users (iii) studies on the needs of the different populations involved in order to guide R&D efforts³, and (iv) socio-economic studies to assist innovators in the creation of sustainable business models. STIMCO for example leads a working group of 5 French organizations that aims to adapt a multidisciplinary appraisal method for the assessment of innovative healthcare projects (GEMSA) to create a standardized appraisal tool applicable to all types of assistive technologies. Evaluations are performed by STIMCO's member laboratories and include assessment by academic and field experts, user testing in living labs and at home, clinical studies, quality management and public health impact quantification. This type of holistic evaluation is what end-users demand and still lack. Thus, the action of the CEN STIMCO constitutes an ongoing research experiment in itself: through its certification-based business model, it aims to find a viable method for providing such vital information to end-users for free in a financially sustainable way. **Results & Discussion** The CEN STIMCO enables information to circulate between actors; creating opportunities that lead to joint projects related to cognitive stimulation and compensation⁴⁻⁶. Additionally, through its certification effort, it furthers transparency and visibility in the fields of cognitive stimulation and cognitive assistive technologies. It will scientifically assess its progress and impact and publish the results after three years, when it will be financially independent.

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Affiliation: CEN STIMCO, Paris, France; **E:** contact@censtimco.org

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