

Bulgarian Joint Cancer Network (BJCN)



COUNTRY

Bulgaria

LOCATION

**Sofia (main)
Varna (3rd visit)
National network**

PERIOD

**November 2024
– October 2025**

SCOPE

National

CORE PARTNERS

**St. Ivan Rilski Hospital,
Military Medical
Academy, Nadezhda
Hospital, Bulgarian
Joint Cancer Network,
Ministry of Health,
National Health
Insurance Fund, patient
organisations**

OVERALL MATURITY CHANGE

**From 12% to 25%
(+13%)**

The CCI4EU Deep Dive in Bulgaria supported the development of a national Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructure (CCI) through the Bulgarian Joint Cancer Network (BJCN), bringing together leading hospitals, public authorities, professionals, and patient organisations.

The intervention focused on three priority areas – structure of the CCI, patient pathways, and screening and early detection – with the aim of strengthening coordination, improving quality of care, and supporting a transition toward a more integrated, data-driven cancer system.

Focus Areas



Structure of the CCI

Patient Pathways

Screening and Early Detection

Why This Deep Dive



Bulgaria was selected for a Deep Dive as a country with strong clinical capacity, committed stakeholders, and a clear opportunity to further strengthen coordination across cancer care, research, and public health.

While diagnostic and treatment services are widely available through the National Health Insurance Fund, the assessment identified several important areas for further development, particularly in governance, data integration, screening, and continuity of care. Strengthening organised national screening programmes, further developing population-based cancer registration, and advancing structured patient pathways would support the delivery of more consistent, high-quality care across the system.

At the same time, the presence of engaged institutions — particularly St. Ivan Rilski Hospital, the Military Medical Academy, and Nadezhda Hospital — together with the coordinating role of the Bulgarian Joint Cancer Network, provided a strong basis for collaborative progress.

The Deep Dive offered a structured framework to build on existing strengths and support the transition from emerging collaboration toward a more coordinated, standardised, and sustainable national cancer infrastructure.

Work Performed



3 onsite visits conducted (November 2024, March 2025, October 2025)

Multidisciplinary workshops, and process mapping carried out across hospitals and institutions

Co-development of colorectal and cervical cancer patient pathways using the iPAAC methodology

Discussions held with national stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health and NHIF, on governance, screening, and data systems

More than 20 coordination videoconferences organised with national teams and experts

Participation in the CCI4EU Capacity Building conference

Access provided to tools and resources through the CCI4EU Resource Centre

Organisation of an observership visit focused on colorectal cancer pathways

Strengthening of collaboration, technical capacity building, and support for early-stage implementation of structured cancer care approaches

Key Developments



Initiation of a national CCI model through the Bulgarian Joint Cancer Network, bringing together key institutions

Early-stage progress toward formal collaboration and governance structures, including discussions on a Memorandum of Understanding

Development of cervical and colorectal cancer patient pathways using the iPAAC methodology

Pilot data collection and initial definition of quality indicators, highlighting gaps in continuity of care

Limited progress in screening and early detection, with ongoing discussions on alignment with European guidelines

Provision of training materials and recognition of NHIS as a future platform for data integration

Strengthened collaboration across stakeholders and increased readiness for multidisciplinary, pathway-based care

Next Steps



- Formalising governance and collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding and clear leadership structures

- Strengthening multidisciplinary coordination and quality assurance mechanisms

- Further developing and implementing patient pathways, with integration into hospital systems and national guidelines

- Improving continuity of care, including rehabilitation, survivorship, palliative care, and patient support

- Advancing screening and early detection through better alignment with European standards and professional training

- Leveraging the National Health Information System for future data integration and monitoring

- Strengthening data interoperability, quality monitoring, and workforce capacity

Sustained policy support, funding, and institutional commitment will be essential to translate these initial advances into a fully operational and effective Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructure.