European Council of Optometry and Optics

ECOO ARTICLE:

I-SCREEN project passes halfway recruitment milestone as consortium gathers for General Assembly

The Horizon Europe-funded I-SCREEN project continues to make strong progress in its mission to transform the early detection and monitoring of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and Geographic Atrophy through artificial intelligence (AI) and community-based eye care.

Milestone reached

As of 22 May 2026, the project has now collected complete Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) datasets from 2,733 subjects aged 55-99 years across Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Spain. In addition, 275 subjects have been enrolled through the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Dijon in France.

This means the PYRENEES study of the I-SCREEN project has now passed the halfway mark towards its target of 5,000 participants by June 2027, representing a major step for the consortium and a clear sign of the momentum building across all participating countries.

General Assembly meeting in Slovenia

The I-SCREEN General Assembly took place on 29 May 2026, bringing together all consortium partners from across Europe. It was an important opportunity to reflect on progress so far, share updates from each work package and align on the next steps as the project moves into its final recruitment phase.

Following the recruitment achievements and consolidation of the timelines, upcoming discussions increasingly focus on data quality, analysis planning and the next steps in developing and refining the project's AI tools. Momentum is now clearly shifting towards validation and fine-tuning as the consortium prepares for the next phase of analysis.

Update on Clinical studies and AI development

In I-SCREEN, individuals identified through the telemedicine screening as having signs of non-exudative AMD are referred to partner clinical sites, where they may enroll in the longitudinal SUDETES and APENNINES studies. Over 500 AMD patients, predominantly resulting from primary care screening in PYRENEES by optometrists, have now been enrolled and are being followed every 6 months for the next 2 years. Participation provides patients with regular ophthalmic examinations and close monitoring of disease progression over time.

Beyond the individual benefit to patients allowing access to advanced care, these studies are generating valuable insights into the early stages of AMD and the development of geographic atrophy. They also provide high-quality longitudinal OCT datasets that form the foundation for training and validating the project's AI models. Together, these datasets are helping to build a scalable, real-world AI-supported system designed to support earliest detection of progressive AMD, while shaping future retinal screening and prediction pathways across Europe on a community level.

Impact on extending timely care to the community

Beyond the science and technology, I-SCREEN is already having a wider impact. It is consolidating the role of opticians and optometrists as primary eye care professionals by empowering them to take an efficient position in the early detection of eye disease. This supports the urgently needed integrated shared-care models with ophthalmology specialists and reinforces community eye care as a key first point of contact for patients. I-SCREEN thereby uses a most professional path introducing state-of-the-art technology based on AI tools providing a standardised and regulated environment for patient care.

With over 500 AMD patients now enrolled in the longitudinal clinical studies of I-SCREEN, already new understanding of AMD is being generated and proof-of-feasibility in a pioneering effort. These novel insights further contribute to improved early detection of AMD, faster and more efficient referral pathways, and lay the groundwork for a robust, AI-driven eye health infrastructure in the future.

This progress would not have been possible without the energy, commitment and teamwork of all participating optometrists, opticians, ophthalmologists, clinical researchers and project partners whose expertise, commitment and teamwork continue to drive I-SCREEN forward.

To learn more about the project and its vision for AI-enabled retinal care, visit the I-SCREEN website.

Project video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhrOeNW2b_U

June 2026

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

I-SCREEN is funded by EU's Horizon Europe programme under the EIC Pathfinder Open call (GA No 101130093), which is designed to support groundbreaking innovations in deep-tech fields, promoting high-risk, high-reward research that addresses global challenges. These calls encourage visionary ideas with the potential for transformative impact, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and pioneering solutions. As part of this call, ECOO has received its funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education Research and Innovation (SERI).

For more information about the I-SCREEN project, visit ***i-screen.eu***.

ABOUT ECOO

The European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) represents the interests of optometrists and opticians across Europe. Our members are national professional associations from 27 countries who together represent more than 200,000 opticians and optometrists. ECOO aims to promote eye health to the public across borders and to harmonise clinical and educational standards of optometric and optical practice throughout Europe.