Introducing the WHO/ITU National eHealth Strategy Toolkit

1st exploratory regional seminar on eHealth benefits & cooperation in the Southern Mediterranean countries and the EU

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WHO/ITU National eHealth Strategy Toolkit

An introduction

By the end of this presentation

- The WHO/ITU national eHealth strategy toolkit
- Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process
The National eHealth Strategy Toolkit

Resources:
www.emro.who.int/entity/ehealth
WHO/ITU National eHealth Strategy Toolkit

An introduction

- WHO and ITU: Why did we start?
  - Many diverse, small scale eHealth applications, unable to communicate and share data
  - Barriers to scale up to support a larger patient and care provider base
  - Difficult for decision makers to understand the current health situation, for policy and planning
  - Duplication of efforts, leading to waste and inability to integrate solutions

→ Joint WHO-ITU guidance for national strategy development
National eHealth Strategy Toolkit

- A resource for developing or renewing a country’s eHealth strategy
- From countries just setting out to those that have already invested in eHealth
- A framework and method for the development of a vision, action plan and monitoring framework
Role of a national strategy

– Serves as an umbrella for planning and coordinating different national e-Health efforts…

– …while considering fundamental elements in terms of regulatory, governance, standards, human capacity, financing and policy contexts.
National context for eHealth development

Established ICT environment

- Strengthening eHealth enabling environment, create foundations
- Developing and Building up
- Scaling up
- Mainstreaming

Emerging ICT environment

- Experimentation
- Early adoption
- Strengthening infrastructure, make the case for eHealth

Source: http://www.who.int/goe/en/
Part 1: Establishing a national eHealth vision and strategy

A framework for a national eHealth vision

- Strategic context ➟ Rationale for eHealth
  - Population health
  - Health system status
  - Health strategy, goals and priorities
  - Economic and social development goals
  - Goals and challenges
  - Implications for eHealth

- eHealth vision ➟ Desired outcomes
  - eHealth outcomes for the health system
  - Changes and impact on key stakeholder groups

- Required components ➟ Foundations for change
  - Leadership and governance
  - Strategy and investment
  - ICT services and applications
  - Infrastructure
  - Standards and interoperability
  - Legislation, policy and compliance
  - Workforce
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

1. **Confirm health sector leadership.** National planning requires sustained leadership and commitment from senior government officials and health sector leaders. Development of a national eHealth plan often launches a country’s formal program in eHealth.

2. **Establish governance mechanisms** to provide improved visibility, coordination and control of planning activities. This includes the formation of a steering committee and an eHealth strategy team.

3. **Identify key health and non-health sector stakeholders** to be involved in the development of a national vision and plan and its subsequent implementation.
Overview of the process

1. Manage the process
2. Engage with stakeholders
   - Establish the strategic context
   - Draft an initial vision
   - Learn from trends and experience
   - Gather information on the eHealth environment
3. Identify required components
4. Assess opportunities and gaps
5. Refine vision and develop strategic recommendations
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

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Establish the governance

An introduction

How to manage the vision development process

- Health sector leadership
- Steering committee
- Stakeholder reference and expert advisory groups
- Core eHealth strategy project team
- Broader stakeholders and general public
WHO/ITU National eHealth Strategy Toolkit

An introduction

The core strategy team

- Understanding of the health sector
- Ability to research, analyze and extract lessons
- Strategic analysis and planning experience
- Experience in working with stakeholders
- Broad knowledge of ICT, eHealth and its application
- Senior health leadership should be present
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

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Identify and work with stakeholders

Broader stakeholders and general public
- Individuals, carers, families, community groups, employers

Engaged stakeholders
- Advocacy groups, health executives, insurers, patient associations

Key influencers
- Advisors, academics, and senior executives in health, funding and investment organizations

Decision-makers
- National eHealth steering committee

How to work with stakeholders
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

4. **Establish the strategic context for eHealth.** This provides the foundation for eHealth vision and planning, and enables the government to assess and make informed decisions on how to better harness ICT for health system strengthening and improved health outcomes.

5. **Learn from eHealth trends and experience.** How eHealth is being used in similar countries, the types of goals it can address, benefits in similar settings.
## The strategic context: Rationale for eHealth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Sample questions</th>
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</table>
| Population health                         | - What are the strategic goals for improving the health outcomes of the population?  
- What challenges will be created by current and expected changes in population health?                                                                                       |
| Equity and accessibility                  | - What are the challenges impacting the delivery of equitable and accessible health services across the population?                                                                                               |
| Health workforce supply and distribution  | - What are the challenges facing the supply of the nation’s health workforce and its ability to support effective and efficient healthcare delivery at all levels of care?  
- What are the challenges related to the distribution of a nation’s health workforce and its ability to support effective and efficient healthcare delivery in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote parts of the nation? |
| Health system structure and organization  | - What are the challenges caused by the existing structural, funding, governance and leadership arrangements of the nation’s health system?                                                                      |
| Effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare delivery | - What are the challenges that affect the quality and safety of health services delivered to the population?  
- What are the challenges affecting the effort, time and cost associated with delivering health services to the population?                                       |
| Emergence of advanced medical treatment regimes | - What are the opportunities and challenges associated with the emergence of advanced medical treatment regimes and the demand for these by the population and healthcare providers? |
| Funding                                   | - What are the challenges regarding funding of national healthcare, such as the growth in public and private spending, sustainability of the health system, projected funding and its impact on future health services? |
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

4. *Establish the strategic context for eHealth.* This provides the foundation for eHealth vision and planning, and enables the government to assess and make informed decisions on how to better harness ICT for health system strengthening and improved health outcomes.

5. *Learn from eHealth trends and experience.* How eHealth is being used in similar countries, the types of goals it can address, benefits in similar settings.
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

6. **Draft an initial vision.** The time horizon, desired outcomes, link to the strategic context, and what eHealth will mean for stakeholders.

7. **Identify the required eHealth components.** What components are needed to deliver the vision? How do they link together? Models such as eHealth architecture, stakeholder benefits model, and component maps can be useful at this stage.
Construct an initial vision linked to health system goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health system goal or challenge</th>
<th>eHealth outcome</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health workforce shortages primarily affect rural and remote communities, due to the concentration of highly trained professionals in urban areas.</td>
<td>Enable electronic access to appropriate health care services for patients in rural and remote communities</td>
<td>Enabling individuals to access services through electronic means will partly compensate for health workforce shortages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS in our country.</td>
<td>Provide individuals with electronic access to the information they need about preventing HIV/AIDS and other diseases.</td>
<td>Access to education and awareness information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is an effective way to combat the spread of these diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate improved monitoring and surveillance of population health through more effective data collection, reporting and exchange.</td>
<td>Surveillance and reporting on HIV/AIDS is essential to the planning and implementation of programs aimed at halting and reversing the spread of the disease.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

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Building blocks of a national eHealth environment that need to be in place to achieve your eHealth vision.
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

8. **Gather information on the current eHealth environment.** Taking a broad focus, this stage identifies components that could be shared, re-used or built on.

9. **Assess opportunities, gaps, risks and barriers.** Describes what is currently available, and what must be developed, and the risks or barriers to doing so. This is a critical analytic step, sometimes requiring external assistance.
Gather information on the eHealth environment

Which components are in place, or are there components in other sectors that can be shared or re-used? This step should be kept time-limited.
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

8. Gather information on the current eHealth environment. Taking a broad focus, this stage identifies components that could be shared, re-used or built on.

9. Assess opportunities, gaps, risks and barriers. Describes what is currently available, and what must be developed, and the risks or barriers to doing so. This is a critical analytic step, sometimes requiring external assistance.
Compare and analyze

Identifying leverage opportunities, gaps, risks and barriers

Vision for national eHealth → Required eHealth components → compare → Understanding of the current eHealth environment → Existing eHealth components → Implications

Leverage opportunities
Gaps
Risks and barriers
Initiating a national eHealth strategic planning process

10. **Refine the vision and develop strategic recommendations.** Takes the initial vision and refines it to be realistic, practical and achievable. Communicates the vision to stakeholders. This is a high-level view of the main components, and the rationale for their selection.
Steps for refining the vision

1. Initial vision for eHealth Analysis of eHealth environment (opportunities, gaps, risks, timeframe)
2. Review of eHealth outcomes, priorities, timeframes
3. Assessed commitments and funding
4. Revised components or timeframe
5. Refined vision for eHealth
6. eHealth components that can be realistically delivered
A last note on strategy

- Each country will approach the process in their own way
- The Toolkit can be used comprehensively, but can also be tailored
- Changes in the context should trigger a review of the plan, to remain relevant
- A practical, step-by-step approach yields concrete results
The National eHealth Strategy Toolkit is the main guidance document.

The Toolkit and other resources can be found on the WHO website:

www.emro.who.int/ehealth
www.who.int/goe/
Global Observatory of eHealth Uptake and evidence building

http://www.who.int/goe
eHealth implemented for the right reason(s)

Thank you