Nigeria reports that the majority of the listed actions to promote an enabling environment for information and communication technologies (ICT) in the health sector have been taken between 2000 and 2005, and are likely to continue. The implementation of procurement policies or strategies to guide software, hardware and content acquisition is planned to start by 2008. Norms and standards for eHealth systems, services or applications will also be adopted in the next two years. Regulations to protect the privacy and security of individual patient data where eHealth is used will be enacted by 2008 as well. Nigeria highlights a psychiatric patient information system developed in some of the country’s tertiary health institutions as another important initiative in the introduction of electronic patient management systems. The following are described as the most effective projects in building an enabling environment for the use of ICT in the health sector: a health sector reform programme, which addresses the need to deploy ICT in the health sector; the free flow of ICT hardware and software into the country; and the government’s promotion of locally-developed hardware and software, as well as the local assembly of computers. Policy, technical issues, human resources and funding are mentioned as challenges, which are being addressed where possible by government initiatives.

Infrastructure – access to information and communication technologies

A national plan for the development of ICT in health was implemented in 2005 and is expected to continue over the next two years. Intersectoral and nongovernmental cooperation started in 2001, is considered moderately effective and will continue. The implementation of a national policy to reduce the costs of ICT infrastructure for the health sector is likely to start by 2008. Among other actions Nigeria mentions the National Universities Commission currently working on a National Virtual Library project in 11 universities. The Education Tax Fund has provided funding to some of the country’s universities/colleges of medicine for Internet connectivity and other eHealth training activities. The launch of eHealth as part of eGovernment is described as an integral component in building ICT infrastructure for the health sector. However, other political priorities, insufficient funding and inadequate technical support pose significant challenges in this area.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, and cultural identity

Nigeria plans to implement the listed actions to promote the development of electronic multicultural health content by 2008.
Content – access to information and knowledge

Access to international electronic journals was introduced in 2001. This service has been moderately effective and may continue over the next two years. A policy for a digital national open archive for scientific research was implemented in 2002. Reported to have been slightly effective, this policy will be reviewed and continued. Access to national electronic journals and creating and providing health information for the general public in electronic format are services likely to commence by 2008. The most important projects to promote access to electronic health content are reported to be the establishment of an ICT Committee for Health and the development of an ICT work plan for the Federal Ministry of Health. However, infrastructure at all levels of health care delivery needs to be developed further and at this stage poses a significant challenge. The government is encouraging public-private partnerships to promote access to electronic health content in an attempt to overcome the obstacle of lack of funds.

Capacity – human resources knowledge and skills

ICT skills courses as a part of university curricula for health sciences students have been offered since 1996. This educational programme is rated as slightly effective and will be reviewed and continued. The introduction of ICT skills programmes in the ongoing training of health-care professionals, and health sciences courses through eLearning for health professionals (in training and practice) will begin by 2008.

eHealth tools and eHealth services

All of the listed eHealth tools are rated from very to extremely useful if the World Health Organization could offer these as generic prototypes for adaptation to Nigeria. The specified eHealth services are also considered very to extremely useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to international journals</th>
<th>Access to national journals</th>
<th>National open archive or repository policies</th>
<th>Health information for the general public</th>
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<tr>
<th>Undergraduate or postgraduate training on ICT</th>
<th>Continuing education on ICT</th>
<th>eLearning in health sciences</th>
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<th>Advice on national needs assessments for eHealth</th>
<th>Advice on eHealth policy and strategy</th>
<th>Advice on methods for M&amp;E of eHealth services</th>
<th>Information on effective/best eHealth practices</th>
<th>Advice on eHealth norms and standards</th>
<th>Information on trends and developments in eHealth</th>
<th>Advice on eLearning programmes</th>
<th>Advice on human resources development for eHealth</th>
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Legend:
- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Moderately effective
- Slightly effective
- Not effective
- Unknown effectiveness
- Start date unknown
- No data

Effectiveness:
- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Moderately effective
- Slightly effective
- Not effective
- Unknown effectiveness
- Start date unknown
- No data

Future action:
- To be continued
- RC to be reviewed & continued
- S to be started
- P to be stopped
- U Undecided
- O No data / No action

Usefulness:
- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Moderately useful
- Slightly useful
- Not useful
- Unknown
- No data

*per 100 inhabitants

For more information see Explanatory notes

For electronic version see http://www.who.int/GoE