Russian Federation

Enabling environment – policies and strategies to support the information society

The Russian Federation reports that all of the listed actions to promote an enabling environment for information and communication technologies (ICT) in the health sector have been taken and they are expected to continue. The majority of these actions are considered moderately to very effective. Important initiatives are the consolidation of the work of chief scientists in the area of health computerization, and the establishment of medical informatics associations. The most effective actions initiated, include the federal programme ‘Electronic Russia’, attracting non-budgetary sources of funding; and the participation of international organizations (which has attracted additional funding). Other important initiatives are the establishment of a committee for standardization within the area of ICT in health, and the creation of a testing centre for software used in health care. Ensuring the general public participation in the global open information society and the automation of resource management are reported as significant challenges.

Infrastructure – access to information and communication technologies

A national plan for the development of ICT in health was implemented in 2002, and intersectoral and nongovernmental collaboration was introduced in 1993. Both initiatives are rated as moderately effective and are expected to continue. There are plans to design a policy on affordability of infrastructure by 2008. The Russian Federation describes centralizing the compulsory medical insurance (OMC) system as the most effective action in building ICT infrastructure for the health sector. Standardization issues within the ICT field pose significant challenges.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, and cultural identity

The development of electronic multicultural health content is promoted in the Russian Federation through the introduction of multilingual projects, and support of translation and cultural adaptation. These actions were implemented in 1991 and are likely to continue. The development of Russian-language versions of international web sites is highlighted as another important initiative. The establishment of Russian-language electronic libraries is described as the most important action. However, ensuring access by Russian speakers to foreign sources of medical information remains a significant challenge.
Health professionals have had access to online health content through international and national electronic journals since 1995, and this service has been extremely effective. A policy for a digital national open archive for scientific research (published within the country) was implemented in 2002 and health information for the general public has been created and provided since 1999, the latter rated as a very effective initiative. These services are expected to continue over the next two years. The establishment of electronic medical libraries is expressed as the most important action in the field of extending access to the community.

Content – access to information and knowledge

Health professionals have had access to online health content through international and national electronic journals since 1995, and this service has been extremely effective. A policy for a digital national open archive for scientific research (published within the country) was implemented in 2002 and health information for the general public has been created and provided since 1999, the latter rated as a very effective initiative. These services are expected to continue over the next two years. The establishment of electronic medical libraries is expressed as the most important action in the field of extending access to the community.

Capacity – human resources knowledge and skills

ICT skills courses as a part of university curricula for health sciences students, introduced in 1973, have been very effective. ICT skills programmes in the ongoing training of health-care professionals have been offered since 1995 and are rated as slightly effective. Health sciences courses through eLearning for health professionals (in training and practice) were introduced in 2002 and are considered moderately effective. All these educational programmes are likely to continue over the next two years. The training of specialists is considered a challenge in the area of building ICT capacity in the health sector.

eHealth tools and eHealth services

General Practitioner Information Systems (GPIS) are rated as an extremely useful tool if the World Health Organization could offer these as a generic prototype for adaptation to the Russian Federation. The majority of remaining listed eHealth tools are rated very useful. Among the listed eHealth services, advice on methods for monitoring and evaluation of eHealth services, and advice on eLearning programmes are considered extremely useful. Participation in international conferences and fora for regular exchange of experiences are mentioned as additional activities that would be extremely useful.

Figure 4. Online access to health content: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

- Access to international journals
- Access to national journals
- National open archive or repository policies
- Health information for the general public

Figure 5. ICT capacity in the health sector: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

- Undergraduate or postgraduate education in ICT
- Continuing education in ICT
- eLearning in health sciences

Figure 6. Preferred generic eHealth tools to be provided by WHO

- Electronic Health Records (EHR)
- Patient Information Systems (PIS)
- Hospital Information Systems (HIS)
- General Practitioner Information Systems (GPIS)
- National electronic registries
- National drug registries
- Directories of health-care professionals and institutions
- Decision Support Systems (DSS)
- Telehealth
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

Figure 7. Preferred eHealth services to be provided by WHO

- Advice on national needs assessments for eHealth
- Advice on eHealth policy and strategy
- Advice on methods for M&E of eHealth services
- Information on effective/best eHealth practices
- Advice on eHealth norms and standards
- Information on trends and developments in eHealth
- Advice on eLearning programmes
- Advice on human resources development for eHealth