Viet Nam

Enabling environment – policies and strategies to support the information society

Viet Nam 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 implemented, and are expected to be reviewed and continued over the next two years. The actions are rated from slightly to moderately effective. A national information policy, ePolicy and eHealth policy were introduced in the mid-1990s. It is unknown whether private funding for ICT support of programmes addressing national health priorities will continue. To date, no decision has been made as to which of the remaining actions will be introduced by 2008. Inadequate skills and funds are described as the most significant challenges in building an enabling environment for the use of ICT in the health sector.

Figure 1. Enabling environment for ICT in the health sector: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

Infrastructure – access to information and communication technologies

Viet Nam has implemented a national plan for the development of ICT in health and a national policy to reduce the costs of ICT infrastructure for the health sector. The country rates these actions as moderately effective and plans to review and continue them over the next two years. Intersectoral and nongovernmental cooperation to promote infrastructure development was implemented in 1997. This is rated as slightly effective and a decision remains to be made as to whether it will continue.

Figure 2. ICT infrastructure development for the health sector: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

Cultural and linguistic diversity, and cultural identity

To date, none of the specified actions to promote the development of electronic multicultural health content have been implemented and no decision has been made as to which actions will be taken. The numerous languages spoken in Viet Nam make the provision of electronic multicultural health content a significant challenge.

Figure 3. Electronic multicultural health content: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating
Content – access to information and knowledge

Health professionals have had access to online health content through international and national electronic journals since 1996. The general public gained access to health information in electronic format that same year. These services have been moderately effective and will continue. A policy for a digital national open archive for scientific research published in Viet Nam was successfully implemented in 1991 and will be reviewed and is likely to continue over the next two years. The Ministry of Health ePortal and its connection to the government and local departments is described as the most effective action. Funding is reported to be a significant challenge in the provision of access to electronic health content.

Capacity – human resources knowledge and skills

ICT skills courses as a part of university curricula for health sciences students and ICT skills programmes in the ongoing training of health-care professionals have been offered since 1994/1995. These educational programmes have been moderately effective and are likely to be reviewed and continued. A decision remains to be made as to whether health sciences courses through eLearning for health professionals in training and practice will be introduced by 2008. The lack of an ICT training centre is described as the most significant challenge in building ICT capacity in the health sector.

eHealth tools and eHealth services

All of the listed eHealth tools are rated as very useful if the World Health Organization could offer these as generic prototypes for adaptation to Viet Nam. The specified eHealth services are also considered very useful. Consultant support is mentioned as an additional service that would be very useful.