

# Accelerating digital health transformation

Fact sheet: October 2024

## Key facts

Digital health is growing rapidly in the Western Pacific Region.

This growth presents challenges including governance, complex environments of stakeholders, sustainable financing, and ethical and secure use of data and technology.

There is a need for better governance and legislation, standards and workforce capacity.

*The Regional Action Framework on Digital Health* calls for countries to prioritize governance, socio-technical infrastructure, financing for digital health solutions, and to focus on data to improve digital health.

Digital health is defined as the uses of information and communications technology to manage health and promote well-being. In the Western Pacific, digital health has grown quickly, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, its full potential remains largely untapped due to several challenges such as managing complex systems and environments, securing sustainable funding, managing advanced tools and applications, and ensuring the ethical and secure use of data and technology.

A 2022 regional assessment identified areas for improvement including better governance and legislation, clearer standards and improved system compatibility, and enhanced workforce capacity to accelerate digital health transformation. Enhancing digital literacy and stakeholder engagement was also identified as crucial to ensure that digital health benefits everyone without widening health and digital divides.

To better leverage digital technologies in health, health policy-makers must focus on three priorities:

1. Improve digital health governance: develop strong policies, regulations and standards to guide digital health efforts.
2. Focus on people-centric technologies: create and use digital tools that address individual and community needs, and ensure accessibility for all, including marginalized populations.
3. Empower and engage diverse players: involve various people, groups or organizations, including users, in digital health processes to promote inclusivity and equitable digital health strategies.

By focusing on these priorities, the Western Pacific Region can advance digital health to help build stronger health systems, improve health outcomes and improve access to health care.

## WHO response

WHO works with Member States to use digital health for effective people-centred health care. This is guided by the *Regional Action Framework on Digital Health in the Western Pacific*. The Framework focuses on five areas: governance, socio-technical infrastructure, financing and economics, digital health solutions, and data. It offers recommendations to address emerging challenges and considers the long-term impacts on future generations and the environment.

Member States, depending on the priorities of their digital health development, can collaborate with WHO and partners to create national digital health plans. The Framework promotes an innovative and participatory digital health ecosystem that uses data and technology to improve access, quality and sustainability of health and health care.

