Ghana

Enabling environment – policies and strategies to support the information society

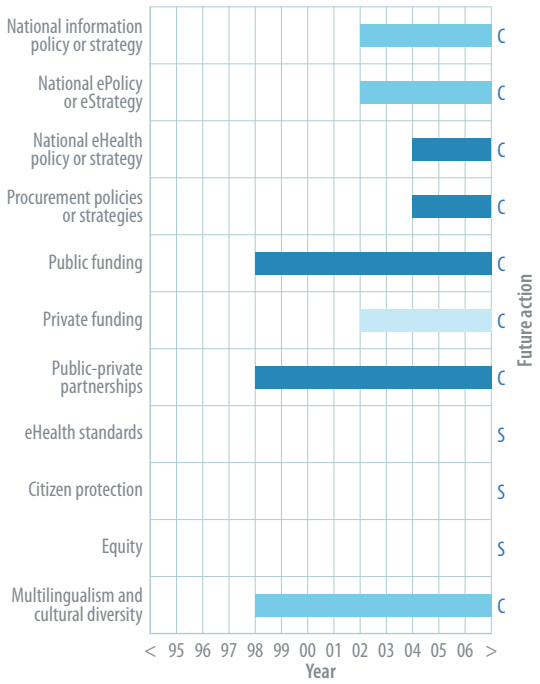

Figure 1. Enabling environment for ICT in the health sector: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

Ghana 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 and are rated from slightly to very effective. They are all predicted to continue over the next two years. Norms and standards for eHealth systems, services or applications are likely to be introduced in the near future. Protection and inclusiveness procedures for citizen protection and equitable access to eHealth are also planned to begin over the next two years. Reported as the most effective actions contributing to an enabling environment for the use of ICT in the health sector are the establishment of an ICT unit in the Ministry of Health and the appointment of an ICT focal point at the national level. Complex policy formulation at the sectoral level is posing a significant challenge in this field.

Infrastructure – access to information and communication technologies

ICT infrastructure development for the health sector is supported through intersectoral and nongovernmental cooperation. Ghana highlights the establishment of Communication Information Centres in 2002, and the availability of Internet connectivity and mobile telephony. A national ICT in health development plan for health sector connectivity and a national policy to reduce the costs of ICT infrastructure will be implemented by 2008. The decentralization of funding to the sub district level has been an effective action in building ICT infrastructure for the health sector. However, there are still gaps in funding, as well as planning; both are significant challenges in this field.

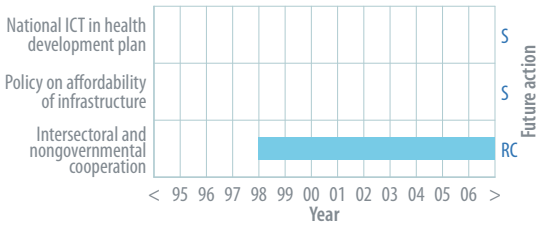

Figure 2. ICT infrastructure development for the health sector: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

Cultural and linguistic diversity, and cultural identity

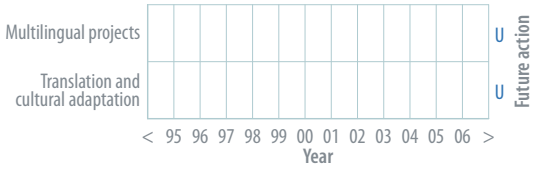

Figure 3. Electronic multicultural health content: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

To date, none of the specified actions to promote the development of electronic multicultural health content have been implemented and a decision remains to be made as to which actions will be taken.

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Country indicators						
	Population (000s)	21 212	OECD country	No	Main telephone lines*	1.47
	GDP per capita (Int $)	2 159	World Bank category	4	Internet users*	1.72
	Total health expenditure (% of GDP)	4.5	ICT Diffusion Index	0.2183	Mobile phone subscribers*	7.93

Content – access to information and knowledge

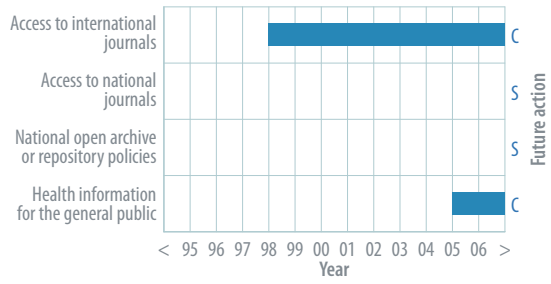

Figure 4. Online access to health content: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

Health professionals have access to online health content through international electronic journals since 1998 and access to national electronic journals will be provided in the next two years. Additionally, Ghana is providing electronic health information for the general public, and plans to implement a policy for a digital national open archive for scientific research in the near future. It also intends to make a bibliography of health research available online. The lack of a national mechanism to promote information sharing is reported as the most significant challenge in access to electronic health content.

Capacity – human resources knowledge and skills

ICT capacity in Ghana has been built through the use of undergraduate or postgraduate training and continuing education in ICT. These actions are rated as moderately to very effective and will continue over the next two years. Health sciences courses through eLearning for health professionals in training and practice will be offered by 2008. Ghana highlights the successful introduction of programmes to promote computer literacy in primary education. Among the significant challenges for Ghana in building ICT capacity in the health sector are the large number of computer illiterate health workers and the lack of technical support.

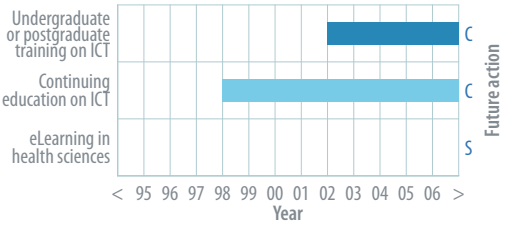

Figure 5. ICT capacity in the health sector: actions taken or planned within 2 years and their effectiveness rating

eHealth tools and eHealth services

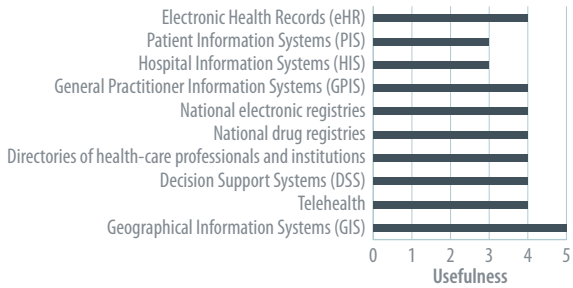

Figure 6. Preferred generic eHealth tools to be provided by WHO

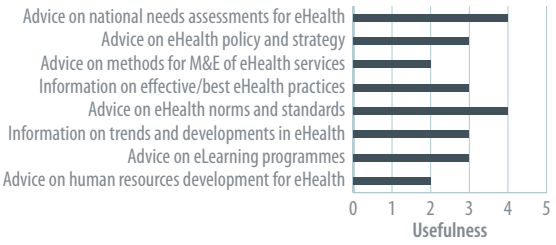

Figure 7. Preferred eHealth services to be provided by WHO

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is rated as an extremely useful eHealth tool; all other listed tools are rated from moderately to very useful if the World Health Organization could offer these as generic prototypes for adaptation to Ghana. Advice on national needs assessments for eHealth, and advice on eHealth norms and standards are considered very useful services. All remaining listed eHealth services are considered from slightly to moderately useful.

Legend

Effectiveness	Future action	Usefulness
Extremely effective	C To be continued	5 Extremely useful
Very effective	RC To be reviewed & continued	4 Very useful
Moderately effective	S To be started	3 Moderately useful
Slightly effective	P To be stopped	2 Slightly useful
Not effective	U Undecided	1 Not useful
Unknown effectiveness	0 No data / No action	0 No data
Start date unknown		
No data		

*per 100 inhabitants

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