World Health Organization

PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
Twenty-fifth meeting
Provisional agenda item 2.2

EBPBAC25/3
23 December 2016

Report on information management and technology

Report by the Secretariat

1.   At the twenty-first meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board in January 2015, the Secretariat presented its second annual report on information technology.[1] This report is a response to the Committee's request to the Secretariat[2] to periodically report on various elements regarding information management and technology.

2.   The previous report stated that the Secretariat has developed a revised strategic direction "to increase the capability of the Department and to support the Organization in several key initiatives". The Secretariat continued to pursue initiatives that improved business processes, modernized systems and increased staff productivity.

3.   Core capabilities were developed to meet new challenges quickly and efficiently, as stated in the previous report. Since then, the Secretariat has implemented a new structure at headquarters and created the following competency centres:

- **Project Management Office**, which works in partnership with the technical units and captures business requirements, maps processes and manages projects according to scope, time and resources.

- **Business Intelligence Competency Centre**, which develops toolkits to facilitate collection of vital data, enabling faster decision-making based on available evidence.

- **Solution architecture** that defines the technology road map for the Secretariat and builds tools with appropriate technology and platforms that are cost–effective, scalable and maintainable.

- **Information security** that explores threats and vulnerabilities and takes action to protect the information assets of the Organization.

        This structure aims to support information technology teams across the Organization, both at regional and country levels.

---

[1] Document EBPBAC21/3.

[2] See document EB132/43.

4.   In addition, the Secretariat also established a **communications and change management** function to ensure staff are aware of and can benefit from changes made in information management and technology and to promote the vision and mission of information technology as a strategic enabler in WHO.

UPDATE ON VISION, MISSION, STRATEGY AND TACTICS

5.   Reflecting on experiences in supporting health emergencies and outbreak responses and recognising the continuous challenges of business units, the Secretariat upholds the strategic direction with an adjustment to the strategic vision and mission.

6.   The **vision** of information management and technology in WHO is to become true strategic enablers to our clients and partners, helping them to achieve health and well-being goals.

7.   The **mission** of information management and technology in WHO is to deliver world-class information management services to the Organization.

8.   To achieve the mission, the **strategy** is to address four key result areas:

- **Information management.** Enabling faster and better decision-making by leveraging the best business intelligence technologies, advanced analytics and digital dashboards (portals). This dimension addresses modern knowledge management capabilities for more effective collaboration and sharing.

- **Infrastructure (shared services).** Providing the foundation for productivity, collaboration and business process support, including network, collaborative services and productivity devices (such as personal computers and switchboards, for example, private branch exchange).

- **Information security.** Providing more secure and more resilient information services, including prevention, risk management, and response and recovery.

- **Business process support.** Developing secure, cost–effective platforms to support business processes, including the corporate platform (Global Management System), emergencies processes and other mission-critical processes.

9.   The immediate actions and tactics to support the strategy are the following:

- **People.** Having the right staff profile is essential to our strategic intent. The Secretariat focused on developing the appropriate structure for the Organization and established the competency centres (formerly known as "centres of excellence") identified in the previous report.[1] To facilitate the execution of important initiatives, additional resources are brought in as needed through vetted third-party partners.

---

[1] See document EBPBAC21/3.

- **Digital assets.** Stabilizing, protecting and evolving WHO's assets (such as the Global Management System, collaboration platforms and infrastructure) to support achievement of business goals by providing a relevant workplace and information management tools for WHO staff.

- **Operations.** Reinforcing and supporting the global information technology operations team at the Global Service Centre in Kuala Lumpur, to adopt best practices and deliver services efficiently from a cost-effective location.

- **Application development.** Enhancing the current capability for application development to ensure the capacity to develop applications (for example, enlist the participation of regional information technology teams) beyond the area of the Global Management System (for which adequate support is available).

- **Project Management Office.** Monitoring continuously the execution and manage the delivery of projects according to the triple constraint of "scope–time–resources" with proper project governance structures.

- **Shared services.** Developing a compelling portfolio of shared services that will inform end-users of service availability, costs and support (Figure).

Figure. Portfolio of global shared services for information management and technology
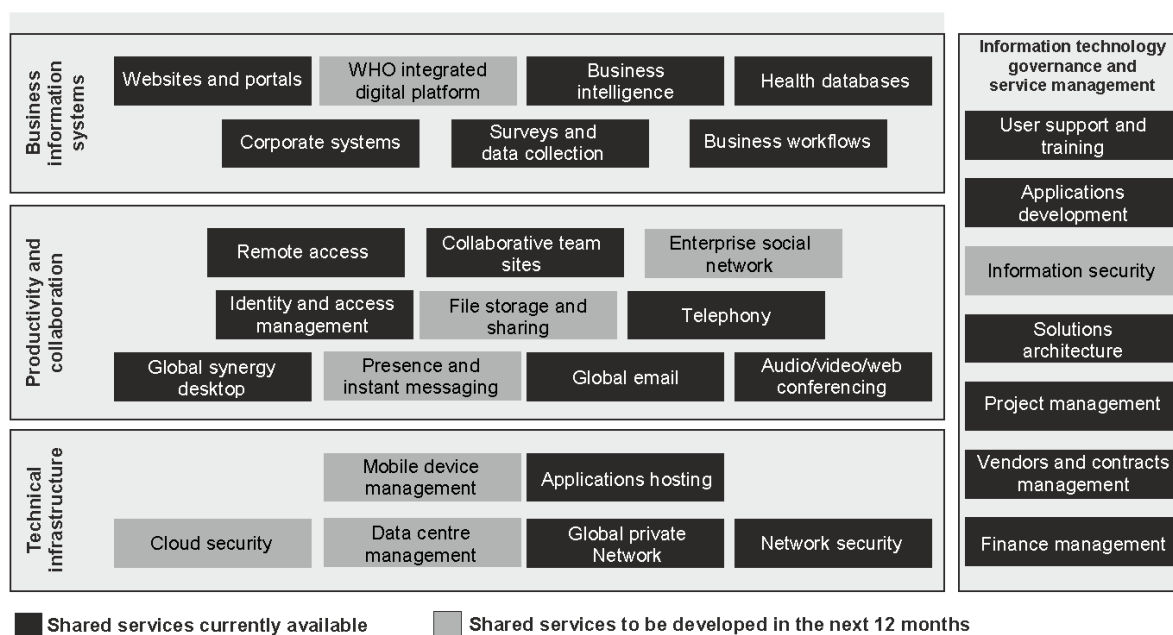
- **Communication and change management.** Promoting and explaining the changes resulting from new and/or improved information systems and tools and engaging end-users regarding their experience to inform appropriate information technology initiatives.

FUNCTION OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

10.   The Secretariat, through the information management and technology function, brings together different information technology teams across the Organization in support of technical programmes, corporate processes and the new WHO Health Emergencies Programme. It has the responsibility of bringing together not only information technology solutions but also all relevant information technology resources to deliver the best value to the Organization.

11.   The Secretariat also strives to reduce the total cost of ownership of information technology and its solutions across WHO. At its nineteenth meeting in July 2016, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee noted progress made to address the "concerns raised by it with respect to the absence of an appropriate global IT governance structure".[1] This will be achieved by overseeing the alignment of information technology principles, solutions and resources, and quality of service.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF WHO

12.   As the new structure of the Organization is now in place, though additional resources in each competency centre are arguably still required, the Organization is now moving towards a true digital transformation.

13.   A technology and application road map was drawn up, which was globally agreed upon by information technology teams, and forms as the basis for major developments in the coming years.

14.   The first phase of the Global Management System Transformation[2] has launched more than 15 initiatives, to streamline processes and improve end-user experience. Projects such as staff recruitment (and on-boarding), business intelligence, service management, engagement management are just some examples of improvements not only for corporate management processes but also for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. More importantly, management of the Global Management System Transformation programme brought increased awareness and appreciation of active project governance and its impact on delivery.

15.   Improvement of shared services remains a key priority. A global cloud computing policy was introduced to govern the use of cloud solutions with data encryption for the Organization. Such solutions not only allow for scalability and ease of access from anywhere in the world, but they also reduce hardware and costs over time, increase service continuity and are more secure. The first project is the migration of the Organization's encrypted emails to the cloud; other initiatives will follow.

16.   Information technology policies and procedures are being reviewed not only to reflect relevant changes in technology and practices but also to:

- clearly define accountability and responsibility in using WHO information systems, tools and devices;

---

[1] See Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee (IEOAC) of the World Health Organization (Geneva, 27–29 July 2016). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016 (http://apps.who.int/gb/ieoac/PDF/19/IEOAC_Report_of_the_19th_Meeting.pdf, accessed 8 December 2016), paragraph 31.

[2] The second phase is being planned.

- reduce duplication and complexity by adhering to defined technology standards, guidelines and policies; for example, procurement policy for information technology software, hardware and services;

- facilitate cost-saving and cost-efficiency measures.

17. The Secretariat has actively engaged with business units to reduce tactical approaches (short-term solutions) and focus on structural (long-term) solutions. This creates a change in mindset, focusing more on defining clear requirements (and correct planning) than on reactive approaches to manage business goals.

GLOBAL IT FUND: A STRATEGIC PREDICTABLE AND SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT FUND

18. The need to maintain and develop the Organization's digital assets is ongoing. This continuous process needs predictable and sustainable financing. Obsolescence must be addressed, cost-efficiencies must continuously be considered, and information security mechanisms must always be up to date to protect WHO from threats and vulnerabilities.

19. Except for the implementation of the Global Management System, there is no central funding mechanism to develop and sustain key corporate initiatives. Capital investments have had to come out of operating budgets of each major office, resulting in different standards, inconsistent funding and significant delays in implementing projects.

20. An information technology capital investment fund (referred to hereafter as the Global IT Fund) has been approved by the Director-General and will provide a stable mechanism to initiate and implement key global initiatives funded from a central pool of funds. This will ensure that:

- The Organization can keep pace with changes in technology, at a global scale, relatively quicker and easier than before.

- Major offices need not consume their operating budgets to implement substantive technological changes.

21. The Global IT Fund will focus on the same key result areas as the strategy mentioned in paragraph 8: information management, infrastructure (shared services), information security and business process support. It will only fund capital and one-time investments and will not be used for operational or running costs.

22. Across these four key result areas, the Secretariat identified more than 20 major programmes/projects, over six years (or three bienniums), necessary to bring WHO into the digital age.

23. A key requirement for the Global IT Fund to exist and be sustained is appropriate information technology governance. The Secretariat has developed a governance structure with clearly defined responsibilities.

(a) **IT Board.** This comprises nominated directors from major offices. They review the portfolio of submitted projects, define the priorities (based on the budget cap), make recommendations to the Director-General, in consultation with the regional directors through

the Global Policy Group for endorsement and provide oversight on the management and status of projects.

(b)   **IT Leadership Team.** This comprises the global IT management team. They collect business requirements, prepare business cases (and initial estimates) and present them to the IT Board.

24.   At its nineteenth meeting in July 2016, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee reiterated its concern about "the lack of an appropriate IT governance structure, which may impact the efficiency of IT service delivery in the long term".[1] The Secretariat presented the concept and status of the Global IT Fund mechanism to the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee. The Committee was pleased by the considerable progress made by the Secretariat to address the concerns regarding the absence of an appropriate global information technology governance structure and looked forward to receiving a further update on the implementation of the Global IT Fund and corporate policy on information management and technology.

PREPARING FOR 2017 AND THE COMING BIENNIUMS

25.   The area of global information management and technology will in the future ensure that:

- the "WHO Integrated Digital Platform" will start in 2017 and will support all WHO units, in particular the WHO Health Emergencies Programme;

- shared services, including information systems and processes supporting WHO business needs, are delivered securely and reliably;

- processes across all WHO offices are simplified and accelerated without compromising quality;

- products and services to all staff across the Organization are provided with highest quality and efficiency.

26.   The path forward to the Organization's digital transformation means actively working on the four key result areas of information management and technology.

27.   The main priorities in the coming years for WHO in the area of information and management technology will be to launch key initiatives while maintaining stability and ensuring security of current operations, and to have the capacity to support the WHO Health Emergencies Programme with Organization-wide systems and solutions.

---

[1] See Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee (IEOAC) of the World Health Organization (Geneva, 27–29 July 2016). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016 (http://apps.who.int/gb/ieoac/PDF/19/IEOAC_Report_of_the_19th_Meeting.pdf, accessed 8 December 2016), paragraphs 30, 31, 37 and 38, reiterating concern mentioned in document EBPBAC23/3, paragraph 32.

28.   The Global IT Fund, with its strong governance and leadership, is an important element in addressing effectively the needs of the Organization with speed, consistency and cost–effectiveness. Duplication and proliferation of tactical solutions will be reduced if not eliminated in the coming bienniums.

ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

29.   The Programme, Budget and Administration Committee is invited to note the report.

=   =   =