

## **Update on the infrastructure fund**

### **Information management and technology**

#### **Report by the Director-General**

1. In January 2017, the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its twenty-fifth meeting noted the Secretariat's third annual report on information technology.<sup>1</sup> This present report responds to the request in decision WHA70(16) (2017) for reporting to the Board at future sessions both on the implementation of the infrastructure fund and on the financing of the fund and to the Committee's request to the Secretariat for further updates on progress in information management and technology.<sup>2</sup>

#### **THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2017: PROGRESS REPORT**

2. Since submission of its report to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee in January 2017, the Secretariat has maintained its strategic direction. The work on information management and technology focuses on the following four key areas:

(a) **Information management.** The Secretariat has begun the development of the integrated digital platform, starting with an emergency dashboard to monitor outbreaks and health emergencies. In addition, the updated WHO website was launched in 2018 and the use of business intelligence tools is now embedded in the Secretariat's service delivery model and ways of working. Updated enterprise social media platforms have been launched to allow easy and timely interaction among staff.

(b) **Infrastructure (shared services).** The Secretariat is increasingly moving towards cloud-based applications to allow for scaling up and easy access from anywhere in the world. Equally important is the fact that this fundamental shift will also reduce hardware and maintenance costs over time. As part of this transition, email services have been migrated to the cloud. In addition, new methods are being used to store files safely and the implementation of cloud collaboration services to share information seamlessly has been started.

(c) **Information security.** Following the introduction of the cloud-computing policy, the Secretariat has launched a cybersecurity programme to identify weaknesses, manage risks and act on realized threats. The Secretariat has introduced cybersecurity awareness training and made it

---

<sup>1</sup> See documents EBPBAC25/3 and EB140/5.

<sup>2</sup> Document EB140/5, paragraph 15.

mandatory for the workforce. The strengthening of the capacities for event management and incident response is ongoing and planned to be completed by the end of 2019.

(d) **Business process support.** The programme for transformation of the Global Management System was completed at the end of 2017; it included more than 15 initiatives that aimed to improve processes and user experience in the areas of corporate management and health emergencies.

3. In addition, the Secretariat has continued cross-cutting work supporting the key result areas, as follows:

(a) The Project Management Office has created a **project management centre of excellence** to help to institutionalize project management as a discipline across the Organization through frameworks, toolkits, coaching and training. A portfolio and project management tool has been implemented to help the monitoring of the progress of initiatives.

(b) **Operational services** have been reinforced by increasing the maturity level of the Global Service Desk processes in Kuala Lumpur, as certified by an external company, resulting in improved use of managed services partners to deliver services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

(c) **Change management and communications** are now an integral part of any Secretariat initiative, which ensures that staff members are aware of, and can benefit from, the change made.

4. Notwithstanding the achievements of the previous years, there is much more to do. Several initiatives are proceeding and some have yet to be started, but it is important to review those projects in the context of the Secretariat's revised information management and technology strategy.

## REVISED STRATEGY ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

5. WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 recognizes the important and emerging role of digital technologies in the areas of service delivery, health systems, data collection, communications and innovation. Furthermore, in keeping with the above-mentioned focus on an organizational shift towards strengthening critical systems and processes, the Secretariat is also committed to building and continuously improving fit-for-purpose information technology systems to meet mission-critical business requirements.

6. The Thirteenth General Programme of Work has provided the Secretariat with the opportunity to rethink and realign its information management and technology strategy with the general direction of the Organization. In that regard, the vision and mission have been readjusted to stay relevant to the Secretariat's work on the general programme or work, as follows. The **vision** is to use information technology to the maximum advantage in order to innovate, collaborate and transform the Organization for a healthier world. The **mission** is to connect and empower people, automate and optimize a digital World Health Organization so that it can achieve its strategic goals.

7. After reviewing the current portfolio of initiatives and services against the strategic goals of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, the Secretariat has identified the following necessary actions:

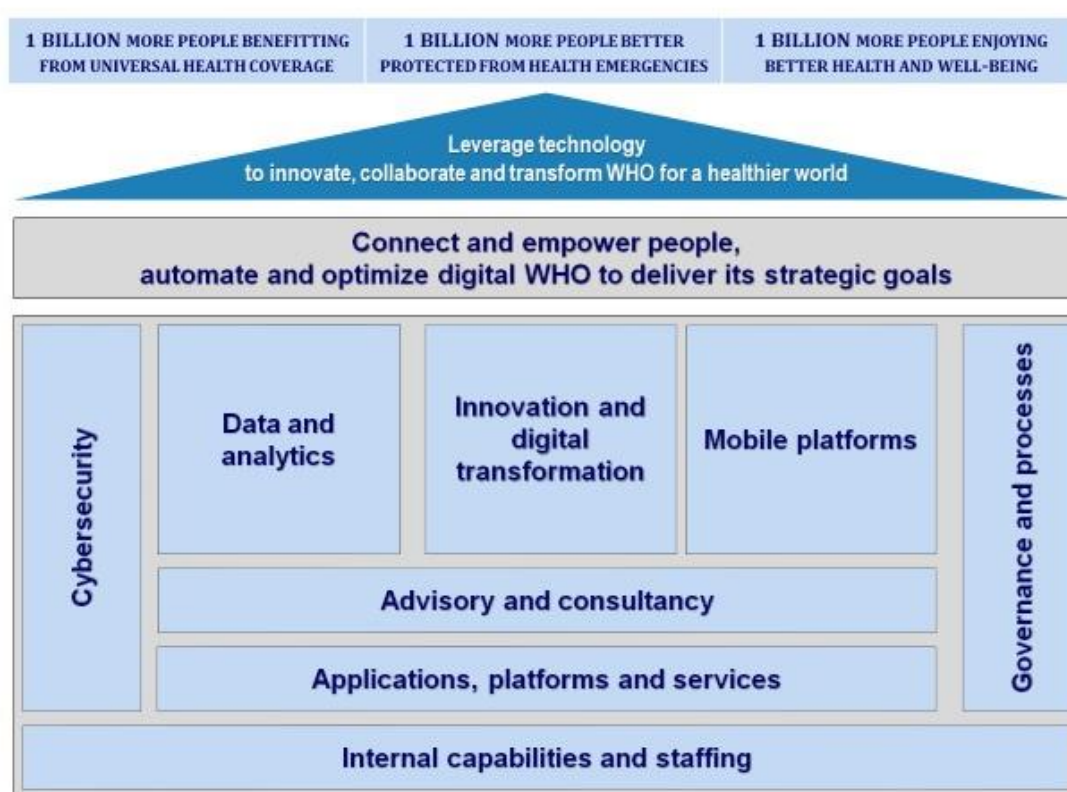
(a) fill gaps in the areas of innovation, digital transformation, and mobile platforms;

- (b) strengthen domains and services in the areas of: cybersecurity; data and analytics; applications, platforms and services; and advisory and consulting services;
- (c) further improve internal capabilities in the areas of governance and processes, and internal capabilities and staffing.

## KEY RESULT AREAS

8. Eight key result areas have been identified that will be underpinned by a set of initiatives (see Fig. 1), as follows:

**Fig. 1. The goals of WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 with the eight key result areas**



- (a) **data and analytics:** help to maximize the use of data as an asset and use analytics for more effective decision-making;
- (b) **innovation and digital transformation:** foster a culture of continuous innovation to drive the digital transformation;
- (c) **mobile platforms:** deliver mobile platforms and systems to transform service and delivery at scale;

- (d) **advisory and consultancy:** expand and formalize the role of providing advisory and consultancy services to support health technical programmes;
- (e) **applications platforms and services:** modernize and leverage enterprise applications, platforms and services to strengthen efficiency and provide new capabilities;
- (f) **internal capabilities and staffing:** reshape the workforce and operating model to be lean, fit-for-purpose and agile;
- (g) **cybersecurity:** protect the Secretariat's digital assets, strengthen data security and ensure the ability to deliver services with an acceptable level of risk;
- (h) **governance and processes:** establish simple and consistent processes and a governance mechanism aligned with industry best practices in order to improve client satisfaction and make better decisions.

9. It is vital for ongoing initiatives to be embedded or subsumed within these new key result areas in order to ensure consistency and relevance within the overall direction of the Secretariat. Table 1 exemplifies the changes for three areas.

**Table 1. Correspondence between ongoing initiatives and three former result areas and new key result areas**

Ongoing initiative	Former key result area <sup>a</sup>	New key result area
Integrated digital platform	Information management	Data and analytics
Prevention and detection	Information security	Cybersecurity
Collaboration services	Information management	Application platforms and services

<sup>a</sup> In the information management and technology strategy 2017.

## IMPLEMENTATION: SUCCESS FACTORS

10. The successful achievement of the revised information management and technology strategy will depend on several critical factors, as set out below.

- (a) **Harmonization of operating model.** Harmonization of the operating model across the Organization, including planning, execution and service delivery, will ensure that capabilities available across all three levels work together to achieve common outcomes.
- (b) **Stakeholder engagement and communications.** Endorsement of initiatives will be sought from the Information Management and Technology Steering Committee (see paragraph 12) as well as support from senior leadership. Communications will focus on raising awareness through robust consultation.
- (c) **Supporting capabilities and competencies.** Deficiencies in capabilities that are critical for implementation will be prioritized for remediation and further development.

(d) **Management of risks.** Ongoing risks to the implementation of the strategy will be managed through the Organization's risk management framework.

(e) **Periodic review.** The Secretariat will periodically review and fine-tune the strategy and report on initiatives to ensure that they remain relevant.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

11. A formal governance charter and framework for information management and technology have been established and form an integral part of the Organization's overall governance in that area. The aim of the charter and framework is to ensure the development and management of a portfolio of initiatives that is aligned and consistent with the renewed strategy and the Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

12. The primary role of the **Information Management and Technology Steering Committee** is to review and endorse strategies, approve the portfolio of projects and review performance on service delivery. It is composed of:

- a Chairperson, who is the Assistant Director-General for Business Operations;
- two ex-officio members, namely the Chief Information Officer and the Comptroller;
- three directors from headquarters representing health programmes, health emergencies and external relations;
- one director (either from programme management or from administration and finance) from each WHO region, except the Region of the Americas.

13. The **Information Management and Technology Leadership Team** comprises managers and coordinators at headquarters and in the regional offices and is tasked to develop strategies and policies, to ensure compliance with standards and report on performance. The leadership team also reviews any proposals before they are submitted to the Information Management and Technology Steering Committee.

14. The **Information Technology governance committees in the regional offices** are composed of business owners and representatives of the information management and technology team within a major office; they ensure alignment of initiatives with global strategy and approve the portfolio of projects locally.

15. The Information Management and Technology Steering Committee meets once every two months on average to approve relevant information technology policies, review proposals and/or discuss forthcoming strategic initiatives.

16. Business units submit proposals or business cases with outlines of the problems to be resolved, the opportunities being considered and a cost/benefit analysis. The requesting directors or project sponsors present their proposal(s) to the committee. The Information Management and Technology Steering Committee deliberates on the merits of the proposal and the value it brings, evaluates the urgency of the need, identifies the risks involved and considers its alignment with the direction of the Organization before a decision is made, namely, to reject or approve a proposal.

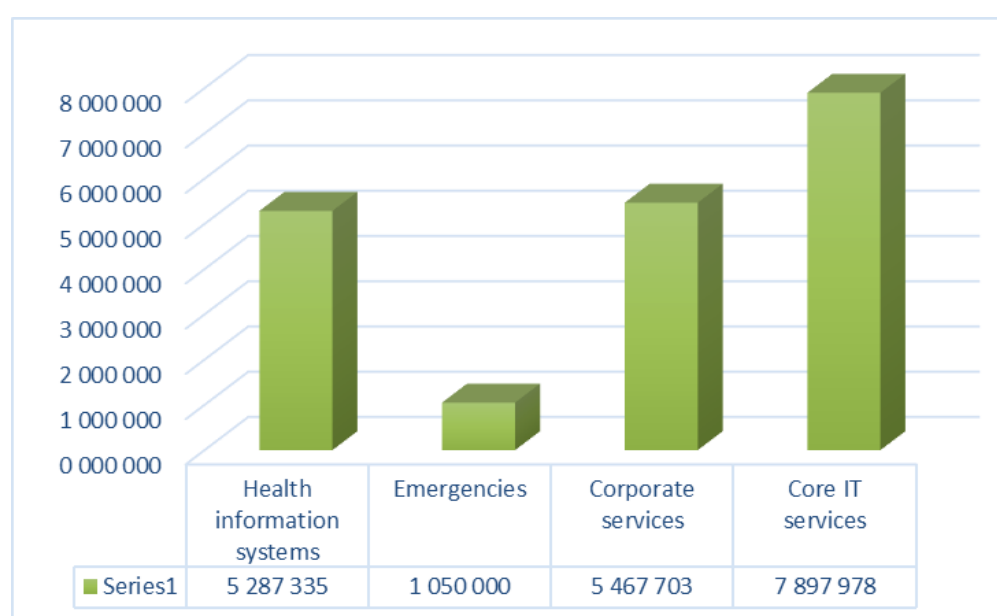
## UPDATE ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS

17. The Health Assembly in decision WHA70(16) (2017) on Infrastructure Fund formally approved the renaming of the Real Estate Fund as the Infrastructure Fund, which includes information technology investments, and requested the Director-General to report on the implementation of the Fund and its financing.

18. The information technology component of the Infrastructure Fund is financed by the mechanism established in decision WHA70(16), that is through the allocation by the end of each biennium of at least US\$ 15 million, as available, for information technology investment needs. That amount is separate and distinct from information technology operational costs, which cover longer-term staffing, outsourced service provision, maintenance and routine support.<sup>1</sup>

19. Since 2017, 46 proposals have been received with a total cost of US\$ 39.4 million, but only 37 proposals have been approved, with a total approved value of US\$ 19.7 million (see Fig. 2).

**Fig. 2. Total amounts approved by the Information Management and Technology Steering Committee for proposals in 2017–2019 in four areas**



20. The balance of the information technology component of the Infrastructure Fund as at end-September 2019 is set out in Table 2.

<sup>1</sup> See document A70/54, paragraph 7.

**Table 2. Balances and commitments of the information technology component of the Infrastructure Fund**

Opening balance of the IT component of the Infrastructure Fund after the Seventieth World Health Assembly <sup>1</sup>	US\$ 23.0 million
Commitments made from 2017 to 2019 <sup>2</sup>	US\$ 19.7 million
Uncommitted balance of the IT component of the Infrastructure Fund	US\$ 3.3 million

21. In April 2019, the Information Management and Technology Steering Committee approved the allocation of 10% of the information technology component of the Infrastructure Fund, namely US\$ 1.5 million per biennium, to innovative projects in order to foster a culture of innovation across the Organization. The Organization needs to explore new or frontier technologies so as to determine the opportunities for improvement and scaling up. This approach will facilitate the development of proofs of concept using new technology but significantly reducing investment risks. An innovation framework has also been created to govern the process of submission of proposals and use of funds.

22. Since 2017, most of the approved proposals have been focused on improving current corporate services and core information technology services for the Organization as a whole. In the coming biennium 2020–2021, a shift towards health information systems and emergencies will be pursued.

23. All projects approved by the Information Management and Technology Steering Committee are managed through the standard project management approach adopted by the Organization.

## PREPARING FOR 2020–2021 AND ONWARDS

24. In the coming bienniums 2020–2021 and 2022–2023, more demands are expected to be made, many of them for action in some of the Organization's strategic areas, such as emergencies, data analytics, information dissemination through portals, digital health, and innovation. The key strategic investments are likely to be as follows.

(a) **Cybersecurity.** The Secretariat's strategic aim is to implement an integrated cybersecurity service that enables and advances the Secretariat's mission through the implementation of a fit-for-purpose security operations centre, covering prevention, detection and response to cybersecurity incidents.

(b) **Preparation of the next road map for the Global Management System.** Support for the current version of the Global Management System and its allied systems will expire in December 2021; the System will have to be upgraded or replaced. The Secretariat is reviewing the option of replacing the current arrangement with a new system – a modern set of tools with standard best-practice business processes and technology. A new system that is not highly customized will allow the Secretariat to use modern technology, such as mobile access, artificial intelligence and process automation, and to take advantage of new features added to selected platforms.

<sup>1</sup> Comprising the biennial payment of US\$ 15 million and the one-off allocation of US\$ 8 million (see document A70/54, paragraphs 7 and 9).

<sup>2</sup> Including staffing for projects approved within the information technology component of the Infrastructure Fund.

(c) **Customer relationship management.** An enterprise-wide approach to managing engagements and relationships needs to be emphasized. The Secretariat must have a holistic view of whom it engages with in order to make the most of or improve on current engagements, allow for analysis of partnerships to be strengthened, and ensure a predictable pipeline of work. To that end, it is redoubling its efforts to put Member States and partners at the core of its work – not only at the strategic business level but also at the levels of digital engagement and digital transformation.

(d) **Digitalization of guidelines.** As the health care sector undergoes digital transformation, the Secretariat requires a new framework for the production and delivery of content and guidelines, using tools such as the application programming interface, health bots, mobile applications and health information systems. The Secretariat will work to prioritize and deliver the next generation of guidelines in line with the demands and expectation of the modern digital context.

## **ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

25. The Board is invited to note the report and to provide guidance in particular on the digital transformation of WHO.

= = =