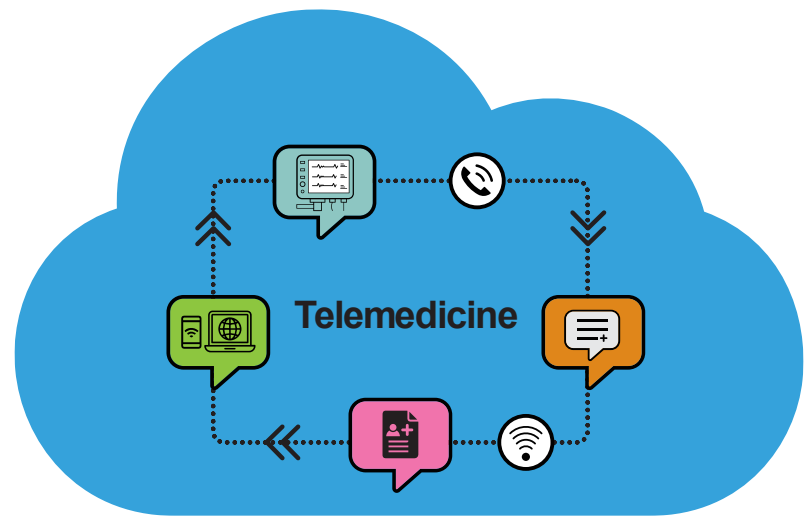


Regional Telemedicine Network

An initiative to accelerate the implementation of telemedicine in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

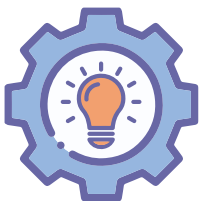


The initiative of establishing a regional telemedicine network could be an innovative accelerator to promote the implementation of Telemedicine in the Eastern Mediterranean Region by supporting the member states in policymaking, advocacy, norms and standards, capacity building, and sharing experiences. Telemedicine could be a solution to promote universal health coverage and improve access to standard and quality healthcare services in remote areas and vulnerable populations.

Digital health is the field of knowledge and practice and expands the concept of eHealth to include digital consumers with a wider range of smart devices and

connected equipment. As indicated in the regional strategy for fostering digital health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2023–2027) published in 2022, countries should support providing opportunities for telemedicine and remote healthcare services, especially for remote and hard-to-reach areas and target groups.

WHO will provide technical support and allocate relevant resources for the development of national action plans and setting of norms and standards and will coordinate the involvement of relevant United Nations agencies and stakeholders in priority digital health programmes.



“WHO will provide technical support and allocate relevant resources for the development of national action plans and setting of norms and standards.”

Iran has been advocating for the expansion of eHealth services since the fourth national development plan (2004) and has observed progress in developed infrastructure and knowledge. Iran, with the available experience and upgraded capacity, has the potential to co-lead this initiative in the region, initially through conducting a regional workshop.

A delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran, as honorary participants, attended the first Central Asian regional meeting on telemedicine in Tashkent-

Uzbekistan, on 5 and 6 December 2022. A member of parliament and two members from the Ministry of Health and Medical Education represented the Islamic Republic of Iran and two members of the WHO country office in Iran participated in this event. The Ministry of Healthcare of Uzbekistan organized the meeting in cooperation with the German Society for International Cooperation together with WHO Headquarters and Regional Office for Europe and the German Robert Koch Institute, and the Charité University Hospital.



The workshop was designed to practice and brainstorm ideas for developing a regional network for telemedicine and sharing experiences from the member states. Experts and specialists from Central Asia and other countries and international organizations were present. Although Iran is not a member state in Central Asia, having a history of technical collaboration with RKI and Charité University Hospital, participated in these two days meeting and contributed to the technical discussions and group works and shared experiences on the ongoing projects of digital health in Iran.

Also, several sessions were conducted to discuss different areas of telemedicine, including clinical practice, technical aspects, capacity building, legal considerations, and regulations. By the end of the conference, participants concluded telemedicine

prospects, sustainability, and scale-up in healthcare systems as a joint mission.

The adoption of telemedicine initiatives through WHO's technical support by member states in the Eastern Mediterranean Region can lay the groundwork to accelerate achieving universal health coverage, decrease financial hardship and address inequity in vulnerable and at-risk populations in the underprivileged and distant areas.

“Digital Health to address inequity in vulnerable and at-risk populations in the underprivileged and distant areas”