

CORONASYS INNOVATION SHEET 23

WHO DIGITAL IMPLEMENTATION INVESTMENT GUIDE

Background

Digital health solutions can contribute to the health of people worldwide. They can be a major help especially for people with disabilities, people in rural areas where health facilities are scarce, or in times and areas where health care staff are limited¹. During Covid-19, the importance and potentials of digital health solutions have been further emphasised²³. Digital health solutions contributed to almost every area of the fight against the pandemic: diagnostics, contact tracing, information, treatment and social support are just a few examples⁴⁵. But the pandemic also emphasised the need for investments in digital health not just to tackle the current crisis but also to “build back better”, make health systems more resilient against future crisis and increase availability and inclusiveness of existing technologies and new developments.

Features

The WHO provides a comprehensive manual for doing just that in its 180-page *Digital Implementation Investment Guide launched in September 2020*⁶. The guide not only provides key principles for digital innovation enhancement but also a step by step guide that is intended to work governments through the process of identifying, designing, financing and implementing needs-adapted digital health interventions⁷. The DIIG is the result of vast international expertise and is an addition to the “WHO guideline: recommendations on digital interventions for health system strengthening”⁸ and other related WHO documents⁹¹⁰.

Potentials

The guidelines can be a useful tool for governments in selecting and implementing digital health tools in one or more health programme areas. Due to its needs-based approach and international alignment, it is applicable to low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) as well as high-income countries. The guide might also be helpful for local (health) officials who want to improve their knowledge regarding digital health and possible implementation strategies.

Points to consider

Obviously, the guideline needs to be applied to the local context and the specific needs of the community.

Conclusion

The guide can contribute to informed decision-making and strategic planning of digital health investments. It might contribute to the availability and accessibility of digital health solutions not only for communicable diseases like the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic but for other (public) health needs as well.

State of information: 10/30/2020

Launch: September 2020

Country: International

Focus area: Policy, Digital Health

Author: WHO

Beneficiaries:

- Governments
- Local authorities
- Public health officials
- population

¹ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. “Digital Health Ecosystem for African Countries: A Guide for Public and Private Actors for Establishing Holistic Digital Health Ecosystems in Africa,” 2018. https://www.bmz.de/en/publications/topics/health/Materilie345_digital_health_africa.pdf.

² WHO. “COVID-19 and Digital Health: What Can Digital Health Offer for COVID-19?,” April 10, 2020. <https://www.who.int/china/news/feature-stories/detail/covid-19-and-digital-health-what-can-digital-health-offer-for-covid-19>.

³ Keesara, Sirina, Andrea Jonas, and Kevin Schulman. “Covid-19 and Health Care’s Digital Revolution.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 382, no. 23 (June 4, 2020): e82. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2005835>.

⁴ Statucki, Tazia, Nigel Howard, Wade Ackerman, and Christina Kuhn. “The Potential Benefits of Digital Health Technology in Managing COVID-19.” *Covington Digital Health*, March 27, 2020. <https://www.covingtondigitalhealth.com/2020/03/the-potential-benefits-of-digital-health-technology-in-managing-covid-19/>.

⁵ World Health Summit, PD 27. Digital Health & AI for Pandemic Preparedness, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbgdA6hGtKk>.

⁶ Henderson, Emily. “WHO Launches New Guide to Ensure Effective and Sustainable Digital Health Investments.” *News-Medical.net*, October 14, 2020. <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20201014/WHO-launches-new-guide-to-ensure-effective-and-sustainable-digital-health-investments.aspx>.

⁷ WHO. Digital Implementation Investment Guide (DIIG): Integrating Digital Interventions into Health Programmes, 2020. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-digital-implementation-investment-guide>.

⁸ World Health Organization. WHO Guideline. Recommendations on Digital Interventions for Health System Strengthening, 2019. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK541902/>.

⁹ WHO. “Classification of Digital Health Interventions v1.0: A Shared Language to Describe the Uses of Digital Technology for Health. Technical Documents.,” 2018. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/260480>.

¹⁰ WHO. “WHO | EHealth at WHO.” World Health Organization. Accessed October 30, 2020. <http://www.who.int/ehealth/about/en/>.

Background on Innovation Sheet Series

As part of a real-time evaluation of the SARS CoV 2 pandemic (with focus on epidemiological, medical, economical, societal, technical, and cultural developments in Germany and Armenia) the CoronaSys research team, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Martin Voss, is conducting a continuous monitoring of developments and medical, technical, and social innovations concerning Covid-19.

Multiple national and international media outlets, research platforms, and scientific and organizational guidelines, briefs, and updates are screened to feed into this outlet. The rationale behind this is to support the projects' network partners in Armenia and Germany with short summaries of key developments and promising innovations that are shaping the global, German, and Armenian outbreak response and recovery.

The aim of these short briefs is to give condensed and structured information on selected innovations emerging out of the conducted horizon scanning. This could be mainstream big-ticket items or fringe subjects that are easily overlooked in the global flood of information. Some innovations will be followed through their evolution in time while others may only appear once. While subjectively selected, the briefs are descriptive in nature and leave analysis and critical interpretation to the reader. Network partners in both countries are invited to provide feedback on their interest areas and suggest particularly relevant topics for the CoronaSys Workshop series.

The CoronaSys Innovation Sheet Series is published by the [Academy of the Disaster Research Unit](#), which is, as a non-profit limited liability company, a spin-off of the [Disaster Research Unit](#) at the Free University of Berlin. The series is part of the research project "[CoronaSys](#): Addressing the corona pandemic in Armenia through systemic risk management", sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or if you wish to be taken on (or off) the project mailing list for CoronaSys updates, innovation sheets, and workshop invitations, please send a message to Janina Schäfer (schaefer@a-kfs.de). For general project inquiries, you may contact the team lead Sara Merkes (merkes@a-kfs.de) or the project lead Martin Voss (voss@a-kfs.de).

Previous CoronaSys Innovation Sheets

- 1 "New" Antiviral Face Masks
- 2 " Dyphox" Surface Coating
- 3 MOVES SLC Portable ICU
- 4 Portable TRI- KLEEN 500UV
- 5 Convalescent Plasma Therapy
- 6 ASIC- App
- 7 BinaxNOW Antigen Test
- 8 Corona Traffic Light
- 9 Aproof at Home Antibody Test
- 10 IVAT Hygiene Tower
- 11 LY-CoV555 Antibody Treatment
- 12 4C Mortality Score
- 13 Regional Corona Prediction Model
- 14 Computer-designed Mini- Proteins
- 15 Covid-19 Simulator
- 16 Trimodulin
- 17 BNT162b2-Vaccine
- 18 SARS-COV-2 Rapidplex
- 19 European Corona- Map
- 20 FELUDA Paper Strip Test
- 21 Humanitarian Action Mapping Tool
- 22 IKKA Score

All previous CoronaSys Innovation Sheets are available online:

<http://coronasys.a-kfs.de/category/innovation-stream/>

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