

**Organizational Structure for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the
Development of the Health Information System 2024-2030
Terms of Reference (ToR)**

Acronyms

- **KMA** – Kosovo Medicines Agency
- **CRA** – Civil Registration Agency
- **KAS** – Kosovo Agency of Statistics
- **AIS** – Agency for Information Society
- **DEIPC** – Department of European Integration and Policy Coordination
- **NDHIE** – National Digital Health Information Ecosystem
- **HIF** – Health Insurance Fund
- **TG** – Technical Group
- **NIPHK** – National Institute of Public Health
- **DPI** – Digital Public Infrastructure
- **DHSCK** – Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo
- **PHC** – Primary Health Care
- **MoH** – Ministry of Health
- **NBTC** – National Blood Transfusion Center
- **HIS** – Health Information System
- **KHUCS** – Kosovo Hospital University Clinical Service
- **ToR** – Terms of Reference
- **OPM** – Office of the Prime Minister

Executive Summary

In order to implement the unique and integrated health information system as a national priority, following the approval of the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Health Information System 2024-2030, an organizational structure has been established that will support effective implementation and coordination between the management and executive bodies. Taking into account the complexity of the activities and the interaction between them, this structure aims to clarify tasks and responsibilities, as well as address the main challenges in implementation.

The organizational structure for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Health Information System 2024-2030 is organized into three main levels. The common goal of these levels is the creation and functionalization of a unified system that addresses the tasks defined under the strategy.

In accordance with the Health Law, respectively Chapter IX, which regulates the health information system, it is determined that the Ministry ensures the establishment, development and functioning of a unique and integrated health information system in the entire health sector, regardless of the form of ownership, type of institution and its organization, based on norms and standards determined by the Ministry..

The Department of Health Information Systems within the Ministry has the responsibility of contracting for the establishment of systems, their maintenance and applications, data management, providing the necessary hardware for all users in accordance with the planning of all institutions that are part of the public health system, on the other hand, ensures that health systems are accessible to other private and public-private institutions in order to generate reports on key indicators in the health sector in accordance with legal obligations and other obligations determined by the legislation in force..

All institutions in the health sector, whether public or private, are obliged to ensure that the network is functional in their institutions, to identify the hardware and all other components, to make planning and requests with the Ministry of Health, all information technology officers are also obliged to provide advice to system users or relevant applications in the institution where they operate and have a contract.

Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK)

– This committee has a leadership, monitoring, coordinating and advisory role for the creation of a national health information ecosystem (HIS).

Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) is of great importance for many aspects of the health system, including improving access, quality and efficiency. The main reasons why the establishment of a dedicated mechanism for digital health is essential:

Improving access to healthcare: The Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) can facilitate the development of digital tools, such as telemedicine platforms in accordance with applicable legislation, which help bridge the access gap in remote or underserved areas in Kosovo. This allows patients to consult with healthcare providers without having to travel far, which is particularly beneficial in rural areas.

Data Standardization and Interoperability: The Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) plays a key role in establishing and implementing standards for data exchange and interoperability between healthcare providers. This enables different systems to share patient data securely and efficiently, ensuring continuity of care across different healthcare institutions.

Improving Health Information Systems (HIS): A central mechanism for digital health can ensure that health information systems are properly implemented, maintained and standardized, contributing to improved data accuracy, patient records and more reliable health statistics that inform public health decisions.

Increased Efficiency and Cost Savings: By digitizing and automating processes, such as patient registration, record keeping, and billing. This not only improves operational efficiency, but also brings financial savings to the healthcare system over time.

Improved Public Health Monitoring: With a strong digital health infrastructure, Kosovo can better track and respond to public health challenges, such as outbreaks of infectious diseases, chronic diseases, etc. Digital health registries and data analysis can provide critical insights for timely interventions and the formulation of effective health policies.

Promoting Privacy and Security: recommends, advises on the creation of privacy/data protection and cybersecurity policies specific to the healthcare sector. This is essential for protecting patient data and ensuring compliance with international data protection standards.

Promoting Innovation in Healthcare: The Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) promotes the implementation of innovative technologies in healthcare, such as AI diagnostics, health applications, and remote monitoring tools. These innovations contribute to better quality care and a more adaptive healthcare system.

Supporting the Objectives of the Health Sector Strategy 2030 and the Strategic Plan for the development of Health Information System 2024-2030: Strategies and strategic plans in health benefit from digital health systems by providing reliable data for strategic planning and resource allocation. The Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) recommends that digital health initiatives are aligned with broader healthcare goals through a unified approach to improving healthcare.

The Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) is essential for providing a strategic approach to modernizing the health infrastructure in Kosovo, creating an ecosystem enabled by digital technology that meets the growing demands for healthcare and provides a foundation for sustainable improvements in health across the country.

Technical Group (TG)

– The Technical Group acts as a bridge between the DHSCK, organizations and units within the Ministry of Health (MoH). This group is tasked with coordinating activities, addressing strategic and technical requirements, and is comprised of decision-makers, technology and health experts, and technical implementation teams.

Organizations and Departments Inside and Outside the Ministry of Health

– This level includes all organizations within the health sector, relevant departments and units within the Ministry and outside the Ministry of Health that participate as needed. Their role is to describe work processes, interconnect systems, test and populate data. Also, the relevant units are responsible for the technical system functioning.

This complete and clearly divided structure aims to ensure sustainable implementation and continuous coordination of the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Health Information System, creating a system that meets the standards and specific requirements of the health sector in Kosovo.

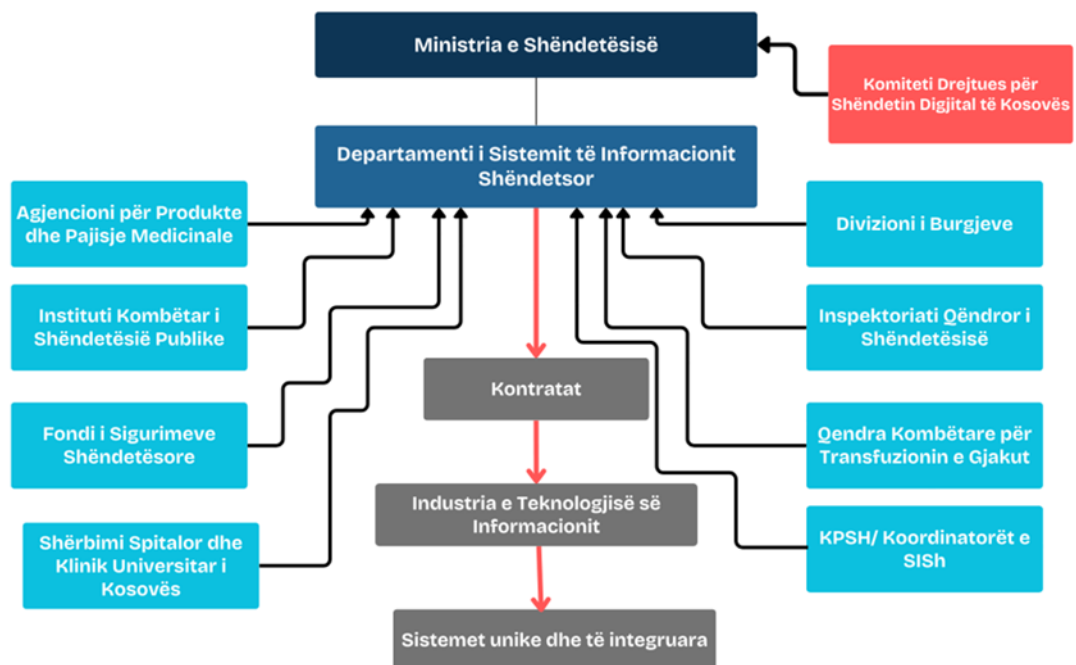


Figure 1: Organizational chart

Termination, Modification and Variation of the ToR

The Terms of Reference are proposed by the Committee and approved by the Minister according to the procedures set out in the Committee's Regulations.

Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK)

The purpose of the DHSCK

The Digital Health Steering Committee of Kosovo (DHSCK) has an advisory role and provides ongoing monitoring, strategic direction, and coordination of actions to create a complete national ecosystem of health information system (HIS).

Duties and responsibilities of the DHSCK:

- 1. Proposes the drafting, updating and eventual revision of the Digital Health Strategy:** DHSCK proposes the drafting, updating and the eventual revision of the digital health strategy and the Health Information System (HIS) development plan, for the overall management and long-term goals of digital health in Kosovo.
- 2. Management and Monitoring of the Implementation of Health Information Systems:** The Committee monitors the implementation and functioning of health information systems in accordance with the defined strategy, provides advice, recommendations to the Department of Health Information System and Strategic Management and Planning of HIS;
- 3. Proposes the drafting of Health Information Management Policies:** DHSCK will propose policies that guide health information management.
- 4. Recommends options for securing financial resources and support:** The DHSCK recommends securing funds for the implementation of the digital health strategy, including a recommendation for the source of funds.
- 5. Resolving Strategic and Technical Issues:** DHSCK facilitates addressing the key challenges identified by the technical group during the implementation of the Action Plan of Strategic Plan for the development of Health Information System 2024-2030, and within its scope gives recommendations for solving the identified problems.
- 6. Coordination with Key Stakeholders:** guides collaboration between stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, healthcare providers, other governmental, non-governmental and local institutions, to ensure coordination and support of digital health initiatives in accordance with international standards.
- 7. Oversight of Data Interoperability and Standards:** DHSCK proposes standards for data exchange and systems interoperability, ensuring that all of Kosovo's health systems function in harmony.
- 8. Capacity Building and Training:** DHSCK recommends training programs and initiatives to increase the digital skills of health professionals and technical staff, to ensure the appropriate and safe use of digital technologies in the health sector.

9. **Research and Evaluation:** proposes research and evaluations to measure the impact and effectiveness of digital health initiatives and to inform decision-making for future developments.

DHSCK's responsibilities have an impact to the establishment of a sustainable and functional health information ecosystem in Kosovo, ensuring that digital systems support quality and accessible healthcare for all citizens.

The DHSCK is headed by the Minister of Health or a delegated official reporting to the Minister of Health.

Membership and Quorum

- **Chair:** Minister of Health or delegated official
- **Deputy Chair:** Department of Health Information System (HIS),
- **Secretariat:** Department of Health Information System (HIS)
- **Members:** Representatives from:
 - Kosovo Hospital University Clinical Service (KHUCS)
 - National Institute of Public Health of Kosovo (NIPHK)
 - Health Insurance Fund (HIF)
 - Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
 - Representative from the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA)
 - Representative from the Civil Registration Agency (CRA)
 - Representative from the Agency of Information Society (AIS)
 - Representative from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS)
 - Representative from the Information and Privacy Agency (IPA)
 - Representative from the Cyber Security Agency
 - Legal Department
 - Department of Strategic Health Planning

The Committee may extend its membership to other organizations or individuals as necessary. The Committee shall conduct its activities in accordance with its own rules of procedure of its operation, which shall be approved by the Committee itself. Decisions shall be taken by a quorum determined by the Regulation.

Technical Group (TG) for implementation

Duties and Responsibilities of the Technical Group (TG):

1. **Addressing Strategic and Technical Requirements:** The TG is responsible for identifying and addressing requirements related to the implementation of the digital health strategy and the technical needs arising from this strategy.
2. **Standards Development and Oversight:** The TG plays a role in the development, approval of standards for data exchange, systems interoperability, and information security in digital health systems.
3. **Monitoring of NDHIE Software Components:** The TG monitors the development and performance of the software components of the National Digital Health Information Ecosystem (NDHIE) to ensure efficient and sustainable functioning.
4. **Ensuring Data Access and Protection:** TG is involved in implementing best practices for data protection and security, ensuring that health information is secure and accessible only to authorized persons.
5. **Oversight and Coordination of Technical Infrastructure:** The TG ensures that the technological infrastructure necessary for the operation of digital health systems is appropriate and functional, including connection to public digital infrastructure.
6. **Drafting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** The TG drafts SOPs and provides technical guidance for the operation of health information systems, including the storage, access, and dissemination of information.
7. **Consultation and Coordination with Other Stakeholders:** The TG collaborates closely with various stakeholders in the field of digital health, including technology experts and representatives of health institutions, to ensure that technical standards and policies are harmonized.
8. **Improving Technical Capacities:** The TG organizes and provides training to improve the technical and digital skills of personnel involved in the implementation and management of digital health systems.

Objectives of the Technical Working Group

1. **Oversight of data standards**
 - Adoption and use of standards that support the Strategic Plan for the development of health information system 2024-2030 .
2. **Ensuring strategic initiatives are addressed**
 - Engagement with national and international standards and accreditation bodies.
 - Drafting a plan for an interoperable NDHIE.
 - Implementing the model for data management and access.
 - Implementation of the national ID for healthcare.
3. **Development of guidelines for NDHIE**
 - Data standardization and definition of techniques in the health sector.

- Creation and approval of the Universal Patient Identifier.
 - Ensuring access and security standards.
4. **Monitoring of NDHIE software components**
 - Using interfaces and ensuring their performance.
 5. **Addressing strategic initiatives for interactive registries**
 - Development and implementation of basic registries for interactive systems.
 - Strategic plan for health data analysis and advancing reporting capabilities.
 6. **Drafting guidelines for the NDHIE integration**
 7. **Supervision of NDHIE infrastructure components**
 - Alignment with the Kosovo Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).
 8. **Ensuring connectivity to the government network for health institutions**
 - Development of standards for the sustainability of health institutions and for all levels of the health system.
 9. **Development of guidelines for data storage and security**
 - Standards for maintaining and managing server infrastructure, physical and electronic data security.
 10. **Providing feedback to the DHSCK and accurate dissemination to Council members.**
 11. **Liaison and coordination with other working groups**
 12. **Coordination with stakeholders working in similar fields**
 13. **Identification of technical areas for the implementation of the Digital Health Strategy**
 14. **Annual update of the work plan for the Digital Health Strategy**
 15. **Overall governance for the introduction, review, approval and operationalization of NDHIE software.**

Main Activities:

1. **General Activities:**
 - Regular meetings (at least once a month).
 - Documenting meetings.
 - Providing feedback to group members.
2. **Implementation of the Strategic Plan for HIS:**
 - Annual review of work plan and timelines.

- Providing leadership and guidance for the achievement of goals.
 - Receiving reports and monitoring progress from members.
- 3. Consultation with Stakeholders and Experts:**
- Continuous coordination and consultation with stakeholders and experts in the field of digital health.
- 4. Coordination of Technical Data:**
- Management and coordination of technical data for the development of health information systems.

Membership and Quorum:

The quorum of the technical group is assessed by a majority of the participants present according to the law on general administrative procedure.

Responsibilities of the Technical Group:

- 1. Management and Administration Support:**
 - Assist in the implementation of management and administration policies and guidelines.
- 2. Support in the Development of Administrative Capacities:**
 - Providing assistance to improve the administrative capacities of the organization and health institutions.
- 3. Support in the Development of Support Systems:**
 - Contribution to the development and improvement of digital health support systems.
- 4. Support in the Development of Basic Medical Systems:**
 - Contribution to the development of basic medical systems and their integration into the information system.
- 5. Support in the Development of Digital Health Systems:**
 - Facilitating the advancement and implementation of digital health systems at the national level.
- 6. Hardware Development Support:**
 - Assistance in the development and implementation of hardware solutions for healthcare systems.
- 7. Cyber Security and Data Protection Tips:**

- Providing guidance and support for improving cybersecurity measures and protecting health data.
- 8. Composition of the core technical group:** Subgroups may be established depending on the needs assessed by the chair of the core technical group.
- **Chair** - Director of the Department of Health Information System.
 - **Ministry of Health (MoH):** (MoH Administration, Prison Department and Shtime Special Institute)
 - **National Institute of Public Health of Kosovo (NIPHK)**
 - **National Blood Transfusion Center (NBTC)**
 - **Kosovo Medicines Agency (KMA)**
 - **Kosovo Health Inspectorate (one representative for each Department)**
 - **Kosovo Hospital University Clinical Service (KHUCS)**
 - **Primary Health Care/Municipality of Prishtina (PHC)**
 - **Health Insurance Fund (HIF)**
 - **Private and Public-Private Health Institutions.**

Duties and Responsibilities of IT Officers and HIS Coordinators

1. **Description of work process:** Ensures that systems development is in line with the organization's requirements and needs.
2. **Technical Requirements Collection:** Collects and addresses technical requirements for the development and improvement of software systems, and sends them for review to the Ministry of Health (MoH).
3. **Recommendations for Data Protection and Systems Security:** Provides guidelines for protecting personal data and ensuring security in the use of systems.
4. **User Access Management:** Manages and administers user access to relevant systems, ensuring that each user has access consistent with their responsibilities and duties.
5. **Implementation and Care of IT Infrastructure:** Ensures the implementation and maintenance of the IT infrastructure, guaranteeing its optimal functioning.
6. **Network Needs Identification and Planning:** Plans and identifies requirements to maintain the functionality of the government network so that it operates without interruption.
7. **Disaster Recovery Plans:** Implements and maintains plans for recovering IT systems after a disaster, including hardware recovery.
8. **Health Information System (HIS) Implementation and Support:** Ensures that the health information system is operational and accessible, while maintaining the accessibility and availability of patient data.
9. **Identification of Additional Training Needs:** Identifies opportunities for ongoing training and retraining for health institution staff.

10. **Help Desk Services:** Provides technical support through the help desk to address technical issues and problems.
11. **IT Project Management:** Manages and ensures the efficient implementation of information technology projects.
12. **Promoting Systems Interoperability:** Facilitates the interoperability and integration of various health information systems for more efficient functioning.
13. **Identifying and Addressing Difficulties in the HIS:** Identifies difficulties that arise in the HIS and addresses them by following relevant rules and procedures.
14. **Data Entry into the Health Information System in a Timely manner and Accurately:** Ensures that data is entered into the health information system in a timely manner and accurately.
15. **Cooperation with Regional and Central Units of HIS:** Coordinates and supports cooperation between regional and central units of HIS for better data and systems management.
16. **System Population:** Ensures that the system is filled with the necessary data, respecting the tasks and responsibilities assigned to each sector.
17. **Standard Reporting:** Reports in accordance with standard formats created by the HIS Directorate (DHIS) for requirements for IT equipment, training and systems, which will be re-evaluated by DHIS based on current priorities and assessments.
18. **Data Confidentiality:** Ensures that each user signs the document to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of personal health data, in accordance with data protection law.