



# Pacific Health Information Network

Concept Note Pacific Health Information Network 26 – 28 March convening 2025, Nadi, Fiji

Established in 2006, the Pacific Health Information Network (PHIN) vision for the Pacific is to foster digital health and support capacity building of health professionals to realize, navigate and achieve goals of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) national health plan using health information for evidence-based decision making to measure and improve health outcomes through appropriate and sustainable digital health solutions.

PHIN events provide an opportunity for the region's health professionals to connect, share, learn best practices and discuss health information systems (HIS) and digital health (DH) strengthening challenges, ideas and approaches in implementing the *PHIN Activity Implementation Scheduled 2023 – 2025* and towards another key initiative *Regional Action Framework on Digital Health in the Western Pacific*.

HIS and digital health solutions hold immense potential to advance the health of the Pacific population and to accelerate progress towards attainment of the Healthy Islands vision and Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Successful implementation of digital interventions during the pandemic demonstrated that a digital future is possible for the Pacific, despite known infrastructure challenges.

Interoperable HIS and digital health solutions can also alleviate stresses on the health care system, for example by lightening the burden on the health workforce. With ICT infrastructure becoming more widely available thanks to increasing investment in the region, PICTs are supported to maximize this opportunity. The PHIN country representatives must therefore lead urgent actions to prevent HIS and DH interventions from remaining siloed and unable to meet emerging health system needs.

Moreover, the foundations for sustainable health information and digital health advancement requires consistent investment and effort to foster continued progress over time. Developing digital enterprise architecture is also a complex challenge requiring long-term planning and coordinated efforts. Incremental steps, informed by each PICTs digital health maturity, must be taken to develop ICT infrastructure, human resources, interoperability, digital health literacy and institutional capacity. This must be done cohesively and sustainably, to successfully support implementation and uptake of increasingly advanced interventions.

As HIS and DH interventions become more complex, additional investment is required to ensure that people are protected by appropriate privacy and security mechanisms. Hence the PHIN promotes cooperation and close collaboration with development partners and stakeholders to ensure that advancements ameliorate existing inequities and do not widen the digital divide as each PICT embarks on its journey to health information and digital health transformation.



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## Objectives for the 2025 gathering of the PHIN

A PHIN convening will be organised by the Pacific Community (SPC) and Australian e-Health Research Centre | CSIRO with funding from Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Other stakeholders and business partners will be given the opportunity to engage at this year's event.

The objectives of the meeting are:

1. For health information/ digital health professionals to share progress and challenges in their improvement efforts and identify common challenges for support and explore opportunities for advancements in health.
2. Develop Pacific regional framework for standards and interoperability adoption, a foundational approach to enable seamless data exchange for PICTs.
3. To facilitate knowledge exchange, mapping of support from partners and potential collaboration on issues of concern in the region.

The event will provide a technical forum to discuss priority areas that are of common concern in the region. The priority areas have been identified in collaboration with PHIN members, development partners and for the first time business partners | stakeholders.

## Digital Health Standards and Interoperability technical workshop

The workshop will address key barriers by exploring how to build capacity for implementing interoperable health systems, foster integration to tackle fragmented infrastructure, and provide a platform to support knowledge exchange to improve digital literacy across the region.

The workshop further aligns with the need to ensure PICTs with Digital Health Strategy in place are promoting scalable solutions for secure data exchange including for example supporting NCD management, and advancing connected healthcare systems within, across islands and eventually across the Pacific region.

## Participating countries progress updates

Several country focal persons have requested to present on their countries' current developments and challenges. Presentations will be delivered by attending lead/ country focal person using a template provided in advance of the meeting.

## Health information systems development and digital health transformation in the Pacific

Each PICT are at varying levels of achieving HIS implementation and DH transformation due governance, socio technical infrastructure, financing abilities, deployment of digital health solutions and national challenges with data. The thematic discussion around these sessions will evolve around the following questions:

- What is the status of HIS and DH development and transformation in the region?
- What are the key opportunities and challenges common to countries since the last PHIN meeting 2023.
- What is driving digital health transformation in the region?
- What has been the role of development partners in supporting HIS and DH in the region?



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- Who are the stakeholders supporting in advancing digital health transformation in the region?
- Do we need to leverage use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technologies, tools and applications?

## HIS linkages with Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

This meeting will also bring together the Pacific Civil Registrars Network (PCRN) and together explore two specific initiatives to address key concerns and importance of health and statistics data for use in national planning and policy.

- Regional Coding Approach to Cause of Death
- Open source and/ or cloud-based IT solutions.

## Participants

Participants at the meeting will include 1 – 2 health professionals working in the Ministry of Health from each of the Pacific countries. In addition, development and private sector partners will be invited to participate. The event will be conducted in English.