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WHO SEARO and George Institute for Global Health lay focus on digital health and AI for NCDs

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Agreement is valid for an initial period of two years, commencing 1 April 2026 and ending 31 March 2028



Recognising the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) across the WHO South-East Asia Region and the potential of digital health and AI to strengthen primary healthcare systems, WHO and The George Institute for Global Health, India have signed a Project Collaboration Agreement to strengthen the design, implementation, evaluation, and scale-up of evidence-based digital health and AI interventions for primary healthcare and non-communicable disease prevention and management.

Non-communicable diseases account for more than half of all deaths in the Region, with nearly half of these deaths occurring before the age of 70. Yet, primary healthcare systems remain ill-equipped to respond to health workers that are concentrated in urban centres, and treatable conditions frequently go undetected or poorly managed at the community level.

The objectives of the collaboration between WHO and The George Institute for Global Health, India are to:

- Advance implementation science for digital health interventions in primary health care, particularly for NCD prevention and management.
- Generate real-world evidence on the effectiveness, feasibility, scalability, cost-effectiveness and equity impact of digital health programmes integrated within health systems.
- Support the development of guidance, frameworks, and tools for designing and implementing AI-powered digital health programmes aligned with WHO digital health strategies.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity building through technical workshops, webinars, and collaborative learning platforms for policymakers, researchers, and implementers working on digital health.
- Strengthen collaboration with ministries of health and global partners to support the integration of digital health innovations into national programmes and health system strategies.
- Create and disseminate technical guidance, evaluation frameworks, and toolkits for responsible AI deployment in LMIC healthcare systems.
- Support WHO in convening regional dialogue on ethical AI governance, data privacy, and interoperability standards.