

# Organisational change readiness assessment during healthcare digitalisation (eHealth) projects

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## Abstract

### Issue/Problem:

One of the pillars for Malta's National Health Systems Strategy (2023 - 2030) focuses on "Incorporating digital health into Innovation, Technology, and Research for Better Health". Investments in digital transformation in healthcare settings are a crucial opportunity to increase health system resilience.

Organisational change readiness assessment (OCRA) is essential in the process for implementation of digitalisation, as it identifies stakeholder motivation in relation to change management, supports the organisational digitalisation process and measures the capabilities within the organisation.

### Literature review:

Facilitators and barriers to digitalisation include individual aspects such as motivation and trust, environmental and organisational aspects such as politics and resource availability, and technical considerations such as system design. Stakeholders resist new technologies when they are perceived to negatively influence patient safety, influence their workload, and threaten job security.

The process for digitalisation involves different steps and engagement of stakeholders should start from the planning stage, through to implementation and must also include training. Effective communication creates institutional trust, helps to remove barriers and leads to more successful implementation.

**Methods:**

Tools for OCRA for digitalisation were compared. The OCRA by Canada Health Infoway and the Pan-Canadian Change Management Network was comprehensive and feasible. This tool consists of a questionnaire with 29 questions to be answered through specific 5-point Likert scales. The answers from the questionnaire are transferred to a scoring profile. The scoring profile covers nine domains: external environment; leadership; strategic direction; organisation structure, tasks and work processes; management processes and communication; culture, norms and morale; human resources systems; employees personal goals and competences; and information processes. The collated replies enable classification of domains ranging from 'will likely greatly support change effort' to 'will likely greatly inhibit change effort'. This tool can be used to measure readiness for proposed digitalisation projects within healthcare institutions.

**Results:**

Radar graphs can be used to compare responses between stakeholder groups and identify their organisational change readiness in terms of support and inhibition of change, allowing for prioritisation for action.

**Lessons learnt:**

OCRA tools provide valuable knowledge for management to prioritise and implement change. Quantitative tools enable measurement of stakeholder readiness and can be used to monitor the change management process at different points in time.

The addition of qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to study insights into motivators and barriers for change would support implementation.

OCRA tools are generic and can be adapted to different digitalisation projects.

**Message**

Measurement of organisational change readiness along different points in time is key for implementation and monitoring of digitalisation projects. OCRA is potentially a good tool for monitoring organisational change readiness.