

1. Shining a new light on accountability: focus on financial reporting and compliance



As part of the assessment of direct financial cooperation, WHO staff and Haiphong University of Medicine and Pharmacy professors visit a health centre in Viet Nam to assess the role e-learning may play in improving health outcomes.

Accountability has always been embedded in the structure of WHO and its operational policies and procedures. In response to the rapidly evolving environment and organizational reforms, the three management divisions are spearheading initiatives aimed at institutionalizing a culture of accountability across the Region.

In July 2015, a review was conducted by the Regional Office in collaboration with country offices, to establish simple, cost-effective measures to enhance the

timeliness of reporting and resolve the issue of overdue donor reports. Of the 300–350 reports due each biennium, 90 were overdue from 2014–2015.

Following the review, RDO, DAF and DPM joined forces to revamp the monitoring system and strengthen internal communications, resulting in the clearing of 100% of the 2014–2015 backlog. With the new system, standardized reporting templates are being rolled-out, and the focus on report quality has sharpened.

Similarly, the Regional Office's prioritization of DFC management and controls has led to enhanced collaboration with Member States and improved productivity. Under the leadership of the Budget and Finance unit – and continuous efforts by the networks of programme management and administration officers – the Region has cleared the total backlog of more than 100 DFC reports and maintained zero overdue status since September 2015. This renewed focus has also resulted in new ways of working at the country-level with country offices in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, as well as the governments establishing joint systems to improve operations for DFC activities.

To further improve the system and make those results sustainable, the Regional Director established the full-time position of Compliance and Risk Management Officer directly under him. The officer will join the global network of compliance officers, coordinate with DPM and DAF and fully utilize existing mechanisms, including the programme management officer (PMO) and Programme and Administration Officer (PAO) networks, to further improve compliance and promote a culture of risk management in the Region. ■