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IAEA, WHO and IARC conduct assessment to inform further investments in cancer care in Uzbekistan



The IAEA, IARC and WHO conducted an imPACT Review in Uzbekistan to assess the national capacities and health system readiness to respond to the cancer burden. (Photo: C. Henrich/IAEA)

Uzbekistan has made substantive progress in the expansion of access to, and quality of, cancer care services, an IAEA-WHO-IARC-led team concluded this month, following an [imPACT Review](#).

In the years since the conclusion of a [2014 review mission](#), the number of functioning [external beam radiotherapy](#) machines in Uzbekistan has grown from five machines in four cancer care institutions to 19 in 15 institutions in 2022.

In 2020, more than 20 000 new cancer cases were registered in Uzbekistan, an annual figure which is expected to nearly double by 2040, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). In its efforts to address the growing cancer burden, the Government of

Uzbekistan invited experts from the IAEA, WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) to assess its national capacities in cancer control and to provide corresponding recommendations to strengthen their national cancer infrastructure and workforce.

Comprising international and national cancer specialists, the team provided actionable guidance to expand and enhance cancer care in Uzbekistan—particularly in the areas of [breast](#), [cervical](#) and [childhood](#) cancers—by scaling up prevention and early diagnosis services, improving quality and access to treatment, and by guiding the development of a [new national cancer control programme \(NCCP\)](#) and [further investments in cancer control](#).

Following in-country visits to key facilities and discussions with the main stakeholders and service providers, the [imPACT Review](#) equips national decision-makers with baseline data and analysis on cancer control capacities in their country.



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“This impACT review also included an in-depth analysis of infrastructure, equipment and workforce needs in the main cancer care hospitals in the country,” said Christoph Henrich, the Programme Management Officer of the IAEA’s technical cooperation programme in Uzbekistan. “This information is now being used to define corresponding equipment and human resource capacity building activities for upcoming oncology projects for the country.”

National cancer control planning

One of the main priorities of Uzbekistan is to formulate a comprehensive cancer control strategy in the context of available resources. Responding to this need, the IAEA, WHO and IARC can support national, evidence-based planning for the introduction of the most effective cancer control interventions, across the entire cancer control spectrum, from cancer prevention and early diagnosis to treatment and palliation.

“Without careful planning and evidence-based strategies, there is a risk that resources available for cancer control will be used inefficiently or inequitably,” said Lisa Stevens, Director of the IAEA Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). “By supporting the development of comprehensive, data-driven

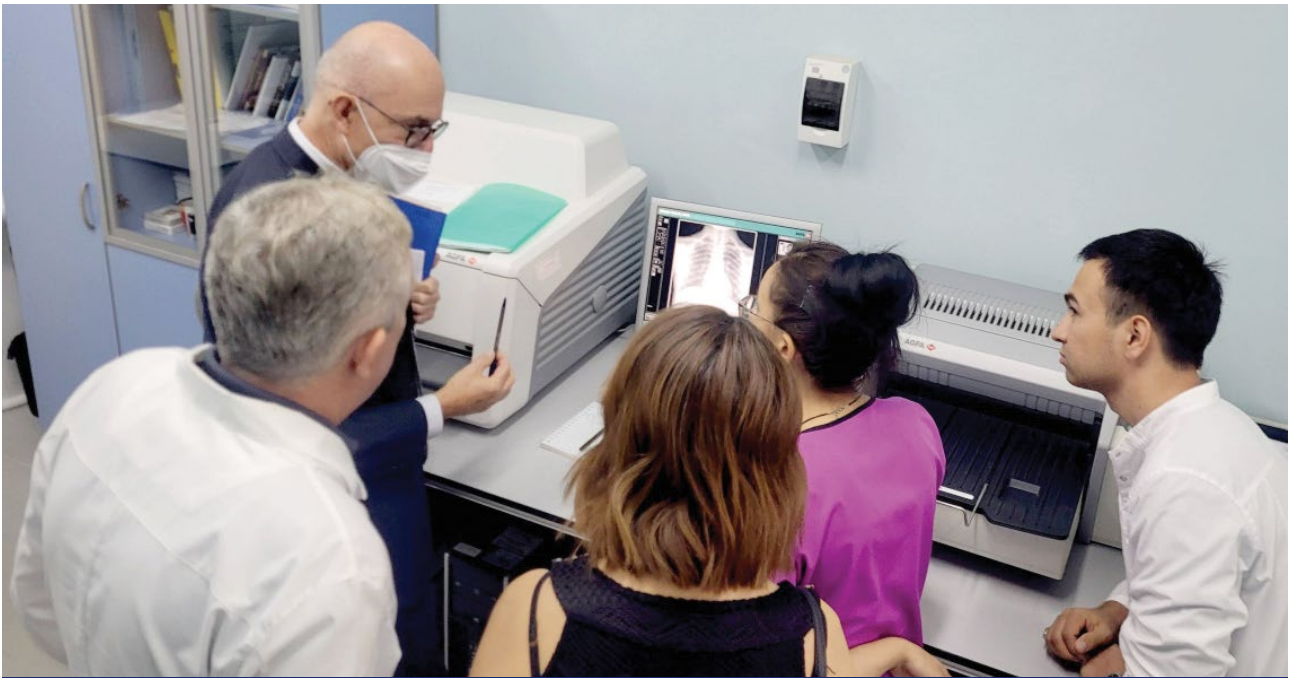
NCCPs, we can help countries achieve a substantial degree of cancer control even where resources are severely limited.”

As part of the impACT Review, Uzbekistan received technical advice from the IAEA, WHO and IARC to align the development of their new NCCP with key national health policies and country-specific cancer burden, existing health infrastructure, available resources as well as the socioeconomic context of Uzbekistan.

“The Ministry of Health appreciates the long-term partnership with the IAEA, WHO and IARC, working together to improve the capacity of the health system in responding to cancer burden. We very much value the recommendations from the impACT Review as they will guide us in ensuring health care in Uzbekistan is provided according to internationally recognized standards,” said Uzbekistan’s Deputy Minister of Health, Elmira Basithanova. “Our objective is to strengthen early detection and treatment services for the most prevalent cancers in the country, such as cervical, breast, colorectal and childhood cancers. Using the expertise from the three agencies, we will continue our collaboration in the future and work together towards formulating the new national cancer plan of Uzbekistan based on the recent mission findings.”



Uzbekistan is a focus country of the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC). According to the WHO, 80% of children with cancer will survive in high-income countries, but only 20% will survive in low- and middle-income countries. (Photo: C. Henrich/IAEA)



“The Ministry of Health appreciates the long-term partnership with the IAEA, WHO and IARC, working together to improve the capacity of the health system in responding to cancer burden,” said Deputy Minister of Health Basithanova. (Photo: C. Henrich/IAEA)

The road ahead

For Uzbekistan, and other countries working on strengthening comprehensive cancer care capabilities, there are options for international support, funding and partnerships. The IAEA is committed to being part of this support. On World Cancer Day 2022, the IAEA launched the Rays of Hope initiative to assist low- and middle-income countries to increase access to radiotherapy.

To address the growing need for funds and to maximize the impact of the [Rays of Hope](#) initiative, the IAEA is working closely with the

Islamic Development Bank to coordinate funding for equipment, training and education through a partnership agreement signed in 2019.

Within the framework of this partnership, a project with Uzbekistan was launched. Through this, the IAEA provides technical advice to the Government of Uzbekistan in the implementation of the initiative to increase access to cancer care. The latest [impACT Review](#) will further guide the planning and implementation of this Uzbekistan-IsDB project.

Link to related resources:



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