



IFRC Digital Transformation Strategy

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1. Terms

Entities referred to in this document:

- **IFRC** International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The 192-member Red Cross and Red Crescent NS together with the Secretariat (headquartered in Geneva and with regional offices and (60) country cluster support teams and country offices located to support activities around the world).
- **NS** National Society
- **The Membership** the 192 members of the IFRC
- **The IFRC Network** refers to constitutional components of the IFRC, which includes the 192 RCRC National Societies (including their local network of branches, staff and volunteers, and recognized Reference Centres or Hubs, and Academies) and the IFRC Secretariat (including the decentralized Country Offices, Clusters, Regional Offices)
- **The IFRC Secretariat** the Secretariat in Geneva including its regional offices and (60) country cluster support teams and country offices located to support activities around the world
- **IFRC Reference centres** are delegated functions of the IFRC and hosted in various Red Cross Red Crescent NS. Their primary function as 'centres of excellence' is to develop strategically important knowledge and best practice that will inform the future operations of the IFRC and NS in their key areas of interest and influence.
- **National Society centres:** are functions established by NS to develop (strategically) important knowledge and best practice that will inform the future operations of these NS in their key areas of interest and influence, and may be deployed for other components of the IFRC Network but are not formally recognised as Reference Centre and thus do not perform a formal delegated function of the IFRC.
- **National Society Development (NSD)** support as: "any support provided by an external actor to a National Society, based on the request and priorities of that National Society, that purposefully contributes to helping that National Society to achieve and maintain a sustainable organisation able to deliver relevant, quality, and accessible services" (NSD Compact, adopted 2019); NSD support therefore includes all efforts by other actors to support a National Society's work to increase the relevance, quality, reach and sustainability of its services. It includes what is commonly called 'capacity building, strengthening, enhancement, or sharing', 'organisational development', 'peer-to-peer review', or 'material/financial investments'

Other terms:

- **Data** [general] is an unprocessed collection of numbers, letter, words, symbols, etc. Data by itself has no meaning.
- **Data Analytics** refers to qualitative and quantitative techniques and processes used to enhance productivity and business gain. Data is extracted and categorised to identify and analyse behavioural data and patterns, and techniques vary according to organisational requirements. Data analytics includes collection, measurement, analysis, visualisation and interpretation of data.

- **Digital Innovation** is the research and development of new data and digital products, processes, or business models
- **Data Literacy** is the ability to read, create and communicate data as information, as well as understanding the possibilities of using data and its consequences.
- **Data Management** is the overarching administrative process that includes acquisition, validation, storage and protection of data. The aim of data management is to ensure the data is accessible, reliable and timely for the end-users.
- **Data Protection:** Implementing data protection best practices in the ongoing and new operations, including but not limited to establishing and implementing policies for processing personal data, specifying purpose(s), minimizing data collection, providing information on personal data processing in an understandable manner, securing personal data, assessing data subjects' rights and other legal obligations (including any relevant national laws) before sharing personal data with third parties, and implementing means to respect data subject requests.
- **Data Science** is an interdisciplinary field that uses scientific methods, processes, algorithms and systems to extract knowledge and insights from many structured and unstructured data. Data science is related to data mining, machine learning and big data.
- **Human-Centred Design** is the process to involve end-users in the design of digital services and to have continuous feedback loops.
- **Information** *[general]*: **Data** that has been given value through analysis, interpretation, or compilation in a meaningful form that informs, answers a question of some kind.
- **ICT** *[general]*: stands for information and communication technology, a term that emphasizes the integration of telecommunication in the IT environment.
- **Information Management** (IM) Information management in the context of the IFRC is the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of data and information to support decision-making. Data analytics is part of this process but has a definition of its own.
- **Information security** *[general]*: information security is the process of protecting **Data** whether in storage, transit or processing from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, destruction, modification, or disruption whether accidental or intentional. Information security controls ensure Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability and Compliance of all identified Information asset.
- **Integrability** *[non-functional requirement]*: this refers to testing if separately created/developed solutions work correctly together. This refers to the usage of industry standard integration platforms wherever possible. This includes but is not limited to the use reputable development tools, standard hardware and software interfaces, drivers, formats, algorithms, libraries, ports, cables, connectors, media, communication and network. See also **Interoperability**.
- **Interoperability** *[non-functional requirement]*: this is the characteristic of a **Solution** to work with other **Solutions**, at present or future, in either implementation or access, without any restrictions. It makes it easier to exchange **Information** both internally and externally. See also **interoperability**.
- **IT Service** *[general]*: is a customer-oriented offering and/or consumption of a technology-based transaction. For example, a domain name system (DNS) is not considered to be an IT service because it is not experienced by customers as a transaction or offering. Instead, it is considered as an IT component. An email system would be considered as an IT service since it does offer end-user experience.

- **Security** [*non-functional requirement*]: security is the ability of an application to avoid malicious incidents and events outside of the designed system usage and prevent disclosure or loss of Information. This involves both cyber and physical aspects. Cybersecurity consists of properties like Authentication, Authorization, Encryption, Confidentiality and Compliance.
- **Solution** in the context of ITD policies, a solution refers to the combination of hardware, software and processes that support an activity mandated by the IFRC
- **Technology** related to both digital and data, where digital refers more to the infrastructure, applications, and data refers to the processes of data analytics.
- **User** [*general*]: the term user refers to all IFRC **Employees**, **Staff** and third-party suppliers permanently or temporarily authorized to store, process or transmit IFRC **Information asset**, regardless of the legal framework behind their activities.



2. Introduction

In virtually all countries, people increasingly rely on and expect a diverse range of digital services) to interact with local government, companies, and community organisations and services. The IFRC's Strategy 2030 identifies that this disruption, for better and for worse, is already happening within humanitarian assistance. The Digital Divide remains a persistent and significant challenge at both international, national and local levels, but also presents an opportunity for improving our humanitarian service delivery.

The need for a successful and large-scale Digital Transformation is urgent. Digital transformation is prioritised as one of seven transformations identified by the IFRC to rise to the next decade's main challenges. The IFRC's Strategy 2030 highlights that effective integration of data analytics and digital technology, capabilities, and digital culture enables the network to harness its collective intelligence, multiply its impact, and democratise access to information. It goes accompanied with a competitive advantage – with better information, we have better negotiation power and increase trust vis-à-vis donors, governments and the private sector. Furthermore, better information allows us to increase transparency and trust of communities, while allowing us to develop new ways to engage with them.

While “digital” is commonly understood as “applying the culture, practices, processes & technologies of the Internet-era to respond to people's raised expectations”¹, there is no such common definition for digital **transformation**. For the sake of creating a common language, this strategy is guided by the following definition²:

Digital transformation is a disruptive or incremental shift that allows us, the IFRC, to pursue new ways of humanitarian assistance by transforming current practices and developing new digital humanitarian services. Utilizing data analytics and digital technology – deployed by confident professionals, in service of people in need, and handling the data responsibly – can improve relevance, speed, quality, reach, accessibility, resilience, and sustainability of services by our NS.

3. Scope

Digital Transformation brings widespread opportunities that require diligent management and clear scope setting.

First, the Digital Strategy **intends to develop and implement a standard for the digital delivery of humanitarian assistance in line with our fundamental principles and with NS**. The focus is on strengthening the **delivery** of humanitarian services. **The Digital Strategy therefore prioritises investments to improve relevance, speed, quality, reach and accessibility of humanitarian services to people in need**. Second, the aim is to increase the **sustainability** of our humanitarian mandate and with it, four levels of shared accountabilities (performance, technical, social, and resources). The Digital Strategy is comprehensive such that accountabilities and collective systems

¹ <https://definitionofdigital.com/>

² This definition is based on a Digital Transformation Research, reviewing 36 academic sources of literature on digital transformation, conducted by the Delft University of Technology in collaboration with the Netherlands RC in 2020. Find the research paper [here](#).

spread across the IFRC and that information and knowledge logically flow from this primary focus on the humanitarian angle.

The major advantage of this prioritisation is that this drives the digitalisation of our services to focus on people in need, to then align collective systems to support accordingly. Secondly, this hierarchy of focus enables us to ensure that our scarce day-to-day operations and change management resources are prioritised, better aligned and are not conflicted by shifting directives.

Our Digital transformation is a journey rather than a specific destination. We do not aim for a **fully** digital IFRC, but a **more** digital IFRC. We do this in line with the Strategy 2030 and the Digital Pledge, brought forward by both IFRC and ICRC. We encourage ambition of digital transformation by applying a digital maturity and an organising model.

We recognise that this Digital Strategy is not a digital strategy on its own, but more a **strategy fit for a digital world**. The journey is long and never-ending – there will always be an innovation to explore. Most of this Digital Strategy relates to a three- to five-year time horizon, but the IFRC must also make sure to keep options open for further (potentially more radical) digital services solutions as technology and our appetite for organisational change evolve.

4. Methodology

This strategy is rooted in a 12-week consultation which included working groups³ and workshops⁴ with three stakeholder groups: NS representatives from every region, IFRC secretariat members, and private sector partners. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were held with seven National Society leaders from all regions. Furthermore, digital events⁵ were organised in four official languages and two time zones, attended by approximately 75 NS.

The executive summary below presents three enablers at the heart of this Digital Strategy: People, Sharing Capabilities and Interoperability. These enablers have been drawn as priorities from the stakeholder consultation process. In order to advance these enablers across the Network, the Digital Strategy outlines two pillars: a maturity model and an organising model.

The three enablers and two pillars are introduced in the executive summary and further detailed in chapter 7. In turn, chapter 8 presents pathways for change, chapter 9 outlines ambition and a timeline, and chapter 10 addresses limitations and risks.

³ The working groups addressed a framework of 86 hypotheses that considered core themes for consideration in the strategy (situational context, positional power and organising models)

⁴ The workshops elaborated on the technical and financial design of the Digital Strategy

⁵ Research insights were shared in interactive digital sessions: one session for technical / managerial staff at the Climate: RED summit, two virtual dialogues on NS leadership level, and one session with Netherlands RC' international delegates

5. Executive summary

As mentioned in the introduction and scope, this Digital Strategy aims at strengthening the relevance, speed, quality, reach, accessibility and sustainability of humanitarian services by improving the Network's capacity to utilize data analytics and digital technology.

In order to achieve this aim, the following three **enablers** are woven through our Digital Strategy:

- Emphasizing that people are at the centre of the process
- Energising our network to share capabilities and knowledge between NS
- Improving IFRC's capacity for interoperability and common data standards

As there are clear actions required to secure digital transformation, these enables are supported by **two main pillars**:

- A **maturity model** that provides strategic direction to NS, encourages ownership of Digital Transformation at NS level and measures progress (chapter 7.1)
- An **organising model** that leverages existing capabilities in the IFRC and promotes the establishment of an accelerator team (chapter 7.2);

This Digital Strategy concludes by presenting pathways for change (chapter 8), an ambition and a time-line (chapter 9), as well as limitations and risks (chapter 10).

Enablers

In order to advance Digital Transformation across the Network, this Digital Strategy is built on the following three enablers:

People

The digital transformation we embark on is as much about people and culture as about leveraging data and technology. The digital strategy supports the IFRC in leveraging modern technology but emphasises that this cannot be done without overcoming the most challenging aspect of transformation: the paradigm shift required to spark behavioural change in differing user-groups. For example, NS need to develop a data-driven, decision-making culture and determine information needs, tailored and relevant to differing department and service areas. Information security needs to be integrated in this data-driven decision making as an overarching element of humanitarian protection, ensuring compliance with the do-no-harm principle.

Volunteer management is also a great focus of change: technology increases the opportunity for remote involvement, which radically changes the way volunteers engage, and may significantly attract new volunteers with specific data and digital capabilities.

Sharing capabilities and knowledge

We have a strong culture of helping each other within the Network, and the Secretariat promotes extensive projects and programmes to facilitate exchange of knowledge and capabilities. However,

support is incremental, and typically has a short-term focus and is constrained by organisation silos. At the same time, strong digital capabilities already exist in our network.

To capitalise on these capabilities, this Digital Strategy taps into the network of extensive capabilities that already exist in NS, the Secretariat and our private sector partners to support NS to drive forward through the maturity model. The mechanism for this is an organising model that incentivises creation of capacity through competency networks which is then deployed to those with the ambition to drive digital transformation in their NS but currently lack the capabilities. Building this mechanism will be an important initial step in the move towards delivering the strategy.

Interoperability and common data standards

This Digital Strategy aims to advance the interoperability of systems and services, as well as a common data model and common data standards within the IFRC Network, contributing to efficient and effective coordination. This will require actions to generate timely, trusted, granular, and accessible data at all levels.

Today, there is hardly interoperability of systems. Instead, there is a do-it-yourself mentality among NS, partially caused by the lack of joint procurement of digital services. In many well-funded NS, business units operate solely in a national context, receiving services from national service providers. In less well-funded NS who rely on international support, there is more space for a global offering. This is partly because it is part of funding packages, and partly because the NS do not have their own capacity to procure or manage digital capacities in-house.

Strategic Pillars

In order to operationalize the three enablers (people, sharing, interoperability), this Digital Strategy is built on two main pillars: the maturity model (chapter 7.1) and an organising model (chapter 7.2).

Pillar one: the maturity model

The maturity model in brief

The strategy considers differing levels of digital capabilities across various user groups by outlining a maturity model divided into three steps to set out a way forward in the journey and to give us a basis to assess progress.

In summary, **Step 1** sets up the fundamentals – leadership creates a high-level vision on Data and Digital, a multi-disciplinary digital team is starting to form. At technology, the focus is on getting basic IT infrastructure, digital applications and network systems available.

Step 2 advances to improve effectiveness in humanitarian services. Then, advances are made in digital and data literacy; we see multidisciplinary digital and data teams that deliver operational and humanitarian impact and share data across the whole organisation for self-service insight analysis.

Step 3 encourages new ways of humanitarian assistance enabled by digital tools to quickly react on humanitarian needs. All staff and volunteers must be trained in data and digital tools, and leadership

optimises humanitarian assistance continuously. Decisions will be data-driven, and the organisation will have a completely flexible and scalable IT infrastructure to build new tools following a human-centred design process

The working estimate is that of the 192 NS, approximately 162 NS are at the first step, 20 NS are at the second step, and 10 NS are at the third step. This distribution on the one hand shows the scale of the digital divide that needs to be addressed, and on the other hand that there is strength and ability available in the Network for steps 2 and 3.

The IFRC secretariat will lead by example and will do a self-assessment on its digital maturity in Geneva, and across all IFRC Offices.

Ownership of digital transformation at NS level

The objective is to address the digital divide by radically increasing the adoption of digital transformation in the NS in general and specifically at Step 1. Consequently, this encourages National Society leaders to take full ownership of their own journey through the maturity model. This will mean difficult decisions to ensure prioritisation. They will be stimulated to design an accelerator team to support, monitor progress and act as agents of change for their National Society by encouraging a cultural integration of the maturity model, as well as its implementation. NS can tap, as needed, into the required competency networks' capabilities and global services within the IFRC Network to graduate to the next maturity step.

Pillar two: The organising model

To organise the Secretariat and NS for change, the strategy pursues an organising model that includes an accelerator team.

Accelerator team

A new organisational entity will be launched, consisting of 30 FTEs. These FTEs will follow a matrix method where they work across all the divisions and with NS. They are carefully selected and have a significant role, including reporting duties, to:

- Refine and manage the maturity model
- Design and develop digital services
- Develop finance mechanisms, manage performance and monitor implementation
- Manage cultural change, digital mentoring, research, communications and regional coordination

Given challenges on affordability and scarce resources, the Accelerator team will be predominantly staffed through transfers and secondments of carefully selected people to deliver these key activities.

We must prioritise this transformation over some existing initiatives so that the required focus is applied. Where specific expertise is lacking in the Network, private partners will be invited to provide direct and collaborative support through dedicated staff. Beyond staffing, further requirements for the Accelerator team will be met through a shared investment model.

Leadership authority and accountability

Delivering change in a complex, federated organisation is a big challenge and demands strong leadership. The accelerator team will be directed by a Digital Transformation lead, who will coordinate between global (IFRC) and local (NS) level. At the global level, the Digital Transformation lead will work across the IFRC Secretariat divisions, with a direct reporting line to the USG (Global Relations, Humanitarian Diplomacy and Digitalisation (GRHDD) Division) and indirect reporting lines to the other two USG (Management Policy, Strategy and Corporate Services (MPSCS) Division and National Society Development and Operations Coordination (NSDOC) Division). This is to ensure a holistic approach is maintained, particularly in working collaboratively with Operations and NS. The Digital Transformation lead in turn directs the accelerator team dispersed across key IFRC Secretariat functions in Geneva and regions, collaborates with IFRC competency networks and private sector partners and incentivises and promotes the transformation across all levels. The Digital Transformation lead leads by example by integrating data and digital in the accelerator team's own decision making. The accelerator team is available to provide direct support to NS in their digital transformation, however, NS are expected to own the digital transformation process at national level.

A shared investment model

To resource the competency networks and other joint investments in the IFRC's digital transformation process, a combination of effective cost recovery and shared investment models are needed. The Shared Leadership approach will be used to build on existing models and framework agreements to establish a set of services for shared investment and for procurement. This pertains to global licensing agreements to support NS in developing their digital services and capabilities.

Pathways for change

The two strategic pillars of this strategy require particular action in order to ensure the biggest positive impact on humanitarian services when we digitise them. Therefore, in chapter 8, this Digital Strategy elaborates on the following pathways for change:

- In order to **build on the case for change**, human-centric design should be centralised in our service delivery, as well as fostering behavioural change in the way staff, volunteers and communities at-risk relate to data and digital;
- In order to benefit from increased service delivery and decreased costs, **the Secretariat and NS need to align;**
- We need to prioritise **digital innovation of front-line humanitarian services;**
- We need to create better opportunities for **private sector partnerships;**
- We need to create new opportunities for operations teams to use data to support decision-making, by starting **a program of work on data and analytics;**
- While our Digital Strategy highlights the importance of people and their culture of using data and digital, we acknowledge a strong need to **deploy the appropriate technology;**

Measuring success and achieving ambition

There are two main clusters of digital capabilities in NS: those at the early stages of digitising internal processes, driven by infrastructure and practical support for fundamental processes and systems, and

those with several years of building capabilities. This includes advanced web services, data analytics, and business intelligence, as well as facial recognition, virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

The ambition of this Digital Strategy (chapter 9) is to ensure that ~50% of the number of NS in Step 1 graduate to Step 2, and 50% of those NS in Step 2 graduate to Step 3, within four years. This is significant as 50% of the membership would advance one level. The number of NS in Step 1 will be reduced by ~50% from 162 NS to 85. Furthermore, the aim is to multiply the number of NS in Step 2 by ~5, from 20 to 94 NS. The ambition means that the IFRC will have moved from 'most are at Step 1' to 'most are at Step 2'. The advanced group of NS in Group 3 will have grown from 10 to 16 – this further strengthens leading-edge capabilities as a differentiator in the competition for donor funding.

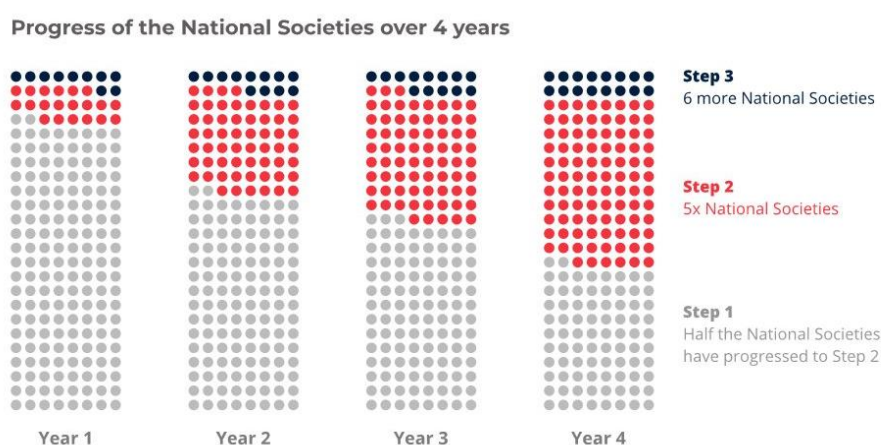


Figure 1: Ambition of Digital Transformation

Risks and limitations

In chapter 10, this Digital Strategy outlines how to manage risk and limitations:

- What is the cost of doing nothing?
- How to overcome challenges?
- How do we manage risks?

Having introduced enablers and pillars of digital transformation at IFRC, the remainder of this document further details the digital strategy. First, the key insights from research conducted with three stakeholder groups (NS, Secretariat, Private sector partners) are presented in chapter 6. Second, the strategic pillars are explored in-depth in chapter 7: the maturity model in chapter 7.1 and the organising model in chapter 7.2. Finally, the Digital Strategy concludes with pathways for change in chapter 8, ambitions in chapter 9, and limitations in chapter 10

6. Research insights

This section contains insights from the analysis of a framework of 86 hypotheses applied within three working groups, in addition to seven interviews with NS leaders, validated and substantiated through a series of membership consultation events, altogether involving 75 NS. The hypothesis framework examined the situational context, positioning power, and the future operating model of the IFRC and its 192 national societies. The insights presented below have served as the founding basis for this Digital Strategy.

People

“We have the tools, but I wouldn’t say we are digitally transformed, because we don’t have the systems and culture in place.” (NS consultation quote)

As emphasized in the introduction and scope of this Digital Strategy, Digital Transformation is as much about people and culture as about leveraging data and technology. We acknowledge that the biggest

challenge to overcome is the paradigm shift needed to spark and sustain behavioural change, which is challenged by the distributed character of the IFRC, as well as the wide-ranging levels of digital capabilities among and within NS.

The emphasis on people and their culture of using data and digital was addressed as a key issue during the consultation with NS stakeholders. For example, our consultation reflected that digital tools are in some local contexts perceived as “leisure” and not recognized for their professional benefit. Across the Network, we need to adapt a culture to make efficiency a primary lens for viewing digital investments, to be evaluated across the network to identify current tools used elsewhere in the Network and opportunities for increasing communication within NS and IFRC. Furthermore, the consultation highlighted that the implementation of data and digital standards need to be accompanied by a focus on soft skill management: in the end, it is not about the tools we put in place but about the way people engage with them.

Setting standards for the delivery of humanitarian assistance

“If the IFRC wants to lead in humanitarian service delivery, it needs to know things others don’t know. Therefore, it [the IFRC] needs to make sure data is collected in the right way and in the right time.” (NS consultation quote)

The speed of data and digital innovation increases the expectations for engagement with volunteers, communities, and partner organisations based on the ease-of-use that digital transformation brings to other parts of society. Digital

transformation, at the same time, provides an opportunity for the IFRC to set a standard for the digital delivery of humanitarian assistance. It allows for process and service optimisation by **fostering faster translation of information into knowledge**. This combination can positively impact decision-making and transparent compliance with our fundamental principles.

Furthermore, the global and often nationwide reach of the IFRC and the ability to respond and generate information at a scale no other humanitarian actor can come close to matching creates an opportunity for the IFRC to become an **increasingly trusted data producer**, with a big role to play for volunteers in data collection and analysis. Faster and better delivery of humanitarian assistance also brings a competitive advantage: it furthers our influence and supports NS' position, vis-à-vis governments and intergovernmental organisation such as the UN. With better information at hand, NS have more negotiation power and can create more effective partnerships.

Sharing knowledge

Digital transformation in the IFRC should be driven by a **needs-based process**, guided and responding to requests from NS regarding humanitarian and operational responses and requirements. The distributed network of the IFRC provides a vast resource of experience, learning, and support that can be leveraged through a better model for **peer-to-peer sharing** and increased collaboration among NS. Sustainable financing for such inter-NS sharing of capabilities needs to be strengthened. Some running examples of peer-to-peer networks and coordination platforms are:

- Communications Network
- SIMS network
- IFRC Mobile Data Collection Working Group
- CASH IM Working Group
- Innovation Kitchen Cabinet
- PMER Network
- Peer networks based on language commonalities, such as in the MENA region

Despite strong efforts to develop and share digital capabilities, **obstacles** concerning alignment and interoperability of systems remain. This includes a culture of risk adversity, need for more top-management buy-in and support throughout project cycles, a lack of sustainable funds and 'fit for purpose' budget management, and a strong tendency to work in silos. Another obstacle to alignment is that in every region, NS are struggling to use and find the technology they need to help them the most in the future. The use of business intelligence and data analytics tools has increased significantly in the last five years. However, demand for reliable data to inform decisions outweighs supply.

One way to improve **sharing** and reuse of capabilities is to develop a global service

Case in point

Launched in 2011, the Digital Divide Initiative supported NS to develop IT plans, improve critical IT systems' reliability, and migrate to cloud-based email systems. Over the medium- and long-term, however, funding and investments were not sustained. NS and the IFRC Secretariat often lack the capability to address these issues individually. Models for collaboration and joint investment have emerged (e.g., Shared Leadership), but these have not yet adapted for broad multi-stakeholder contexts (e.g., including private sector partners) or for providing support to wide geographically dispersed sets of NS.

catalogue⁶, summarizing digital services, products and capabilities available within the Network. Furthermore, given the strength of digital capabilities available across the Network, there will be an advantage in pooling resources in competency-based networks such that NS can share benefits and development.

Digital transformation cannot succeed without timely, trusted, granular, and accessible data. This includes implementing **common data** management systems, protocols, and data protection policies that respect local legislation. For example, a common data model should be developed to support NS in aligning national databases. Furthermore, as expressed in the SMCC2.0 resolution adopted by the Movement in 2019, efficient and effective coordination requires interoperability of systems and services, as well as common data standards. In addition to the opportunity for NS to enhance service delivery, common data standards have been mentioned as a solution to meet reporting needs from NS and expectations from the Secretariat to position the IFRC within the global arena.

The use of automation, while attractive in principle, is difficult to achieve in practice. There have been initiatives to automate disaster monitoring, but there are still many unexplored processes and opportunities within our humanitarian services. To explore these processes further, the Digital Strategy should include continuous learning to better understand how to support digital innovation and to move these lessons through into operations through a rigorous and participatory process.

Insourcing, outsourcing and partnership options

Currently, the IFRC Secretariat and many NS use both licensed and open-source digital solutions. Although there is a recognition that open source solutions have **advantages** such as being free of charge, open-source also has its **limitations** such as bug remediation timelines or sometimes limited availability of technical resources worldwide. An effective support model for bug fixing of open source is key to ensure stability, and availability of the digital service provided. Digital transformation can be accelerated if more IFRC and NS programs contribute to open source communities and share their projects as open source. Open Data is another tool used for humanitarian information and collaboration across organisations. The network is engaged in processes to share data responsibility and when possible in open formats. For large-scale and core components of data and digital, the preference is to utilise licensed services.⁷

On considering the configuration of digital services management, clear guidance needs to be developed in balancing the costs and benefits of **outsourcing versus building in-house capacities**. Gaps in technical product management, IT infrastructure, and connectivity are evident as more of these tools and services are adopted into our digital response offerings. The right partner(s) in these areas alleviate pain points where we cannot reliably attract or afford the right talent. At the same time, outsourcing is a **balance** between control and efficiency, and drawing the line is a delicate job, especially working with humanitarian data where third-party access to data needs to be limited.

⁶ The three working groups have been asked to identify digital capabilities and services already existing in the Network. This preliminary inventory can be found in Annex 1.

⁷ For clear guidance on open-source and licensing, please refer to the ITD Strategy 2030

Achieving success with digital transformation requires a partnership approach that maximises the **goodwill** of partners. A look at the existing RCRC Principles of Cooperation reveals lost opportunities when it comes to collaborating regionally and globally. This “siloing” is prevalent in situations where NS are not collaborative and generous with their partners. Partners such as Microsoft are ready to upgrade our digital capabilities across the Network. However, to meaningfully engage these companies, the Secretariat needs **clear asks** and explicit onboarding. In many well-funded NS, business units operate solely in a national context, taking services from national service providers. In less well-funded NS, there is likely more demand for a global offering of **joint procurement of digital**

“Partnership[s] need to be more sustainable. Not just one of, ‘give us things.’ everyone has to get something out of the relationship.”
(Quote from partner consultation)

services. The collective power that the NS could bring in **negotiating** terms and services with global providers is vastly underutilised. Illustrating this potential, Microsoft has invested CHF 84 million in-kind and cash over the past 7 years with the IFRC Network, working with over 70 NS to provide easy licensing templates for access to

cloud-based services for business operations and productivity software. Instead of leveraging these economies of scale consistently, too often the reliance on do-it-yourself approaches within many of the NS and IFRC programmes, leads to a plethora of solutions. Resultingly, there is little interoperability between the different systems and the maintenance burden is multiplied.

Planning and implementing an IFRC-wide digital transformation bring **information security risks** which require considerable efforts to address by upskilling staff within the IFRC Network. Creating a common understanding about information security with governments and private sector protects our RCRC branding from being used for harm in disinformation campaigns and provides government agencies and other partners the confidence in our digital tools, all of which further protects our staff, volunteers, and people and communities in need.

The broader S2030 picture

Both IFRC and ICRC recognise the need to pursue their digital transformation journeys and have launched the Digital Pledge to encourage the process. As mentioned previously, Digital Transformation is one of seven Movement-wide priorities for the next decade. It is unclear if all significant transformation initiatives in the Strategy 2030 are sufficiently defined to ensure that they align and minimise conflicts in direction or decision-making. However, Digital Transformation is fundamental to the success of the other six transformations identified in Strategy 2030 to rise to the next decade's five global challenges.

7. Strategic Pillars

In order to advance Digital Transformation across the Network, this Digital Strategy identifies two strategic pillars:

- a maturity model that provides strategic direction for NS, encourages ownership at NS level and provides a measurement of progress and investment by the Secretariat, the Network or private section partners (chapter 7.1)
- an organising model that leverages existing strengths in the IFRC and establishes an accelerator team (chapter 7.2)

The pillars of this Digital Strategy are based on research insights shared by the three stakeholder groups mentioned in the previous chapter. This chapter details the pillars by first outlining the maturity model and then the organising model.

7.1 The Maturity Model

As reflected in the Digital Divide Initiative (started in 2011), NS represent a broad spectrum of digital capabilities. Some NS are in the preliminary stages of digitising internal processes, driven by infrastructure and practical support for the fundamental processes and systems. Other NS have years of building capabilities to include advanced web services, data analytics, and business intelligence. Others still extend into exploring and piloting digital innovations, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

Generally, the maturity of NS' digital capabilities does not outpace the level of the local economy. Therefore, this approach must be multi-faceted, defining the support and goals for each NS that is practical and appropriate for their specific circumstance and using existing procedures and governance.

The digital services maturity model provides this direction, encourages ownership of Digital Transformation within NS and provides a measurement of progress and investment by the Secretariat, the Network, or private sector partners. The model builds on and would link to existing mechanisms for assessing NS capabilities, including the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) and Preparedness for Effective Response (PER). The model guides NS to:

- a) determine their digital maturity level
- b) formulate and resource a Digital Transformation Strategy
- c) increase their level of digital maturity
- d) adopt and report against Network-wide standards of digital and data management
- e) identify the percentage of their budget invested in digital transformation

The model is organised as follows:

Building on insights from the Digital Divide Initiative and ICT Health Check and on assessment frameworks already existing in the Network, the maturity model defines a way to measure and progress data-driven and digitalisation in a National Society in three steps. Each step touches upon three domains (people, process, and technology), and each domain is divided into distinct

themes. The Process domain consists of 5 themes: (1) Engagement, (2) Organisational structure and internal collaboration, (3) Partnerships and Service Delivery, (4) PMEAL & Decision Making, (5) Data Protection and Responsibility, Resource Mobilisation. The “People” domain consists of Leadership and Culture, Human Resources and Data Literacy, including awareness on information security. The “Technology” domain comprises of Data and Digital. This model reflects that digitalisation is **as much about people and culture as about leveraging data and technology**.

The maturity model is a **self-assessment** tool that supports NS to map their own digital transformation priorities. While the maturity model encourages NS to own their digital transformation processes, this Digital Strategy suggests that support should be available through an “accelerator team”. One of the tasks of the accelerator team is to ensure that the maturity model connects to existing assessment frameworks. The accelerator team is explained further in chapter 8.2.

The three steps of the maturity model are outlined as follows:

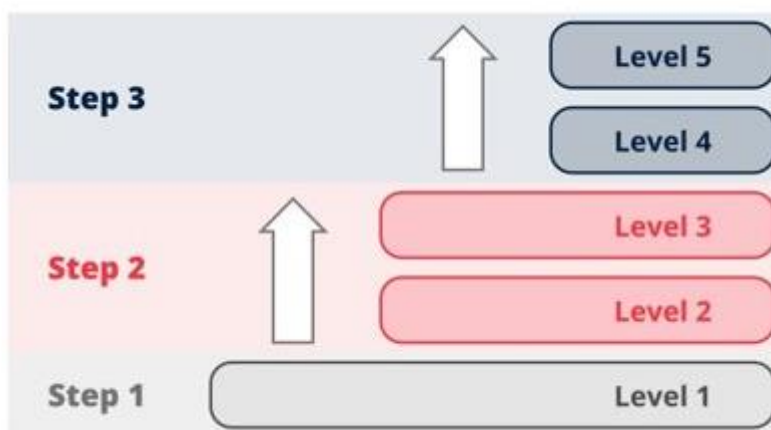


Figure 2: Progress in digital maturity

Step 1 sets up the fundamentals (e.g. availability of basic IT infrastructure, digital applications and network systems), **Step 2** advances to improve effectiveness in humanitarian services and efficiency in supportive capabilities, and **Step 3** encourages new ways of delivering humanitarian assistance by centralizing digital and data tools. For high-level planning, this Digital Strategy estimates that the number of NS in Step 1 is 162, 20 in Step 2 and 10 in Step 3. However, we recognize that the maturity model is a self-assessment and that precise numbers are not yet available. One task of the accelerator team is to review the maturity model and detail further the criteria for each of the steps.

As well as guidance on progression from step to step, the Maturity model promotes an agile, needs-based approach at NS level. For example, sometimes a mobile data collection may be more important to a NS than putting basic IT infrastructure in branches. This maturity model recognises that basic tools may allow a NS to directly implement a transformation. Furthermore, the maturity model recognises that a more digital service offering does not mean that traditional methods should be fully replaced, especially in contexts where digital and data are less accessible or stable. The steps of the maturity model are detailed in the matrix below. For an extended version of this matrix, go to bit.ly/digitalmaturitymodel.

IFRC Digital Transformation Maturity Model

		STEP 2		STEP 3	
STEP 1		STEP 2		STEP 3	
Level 1		Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and management are open to digital transformation There is recognition of the need for data capabilities. Some employees and volunteers are 'data-literate'. There are professional data-employees and some awareness on information security. Basic services provided to public via digital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and management execute digital transformation strategy and actively promote adoption (leading by example) Most employees and volunteers are recruited, trained and supported to work digitally. Internal experts are complemented by external specialists. Data literacy, of staff and volunteers increases. Public services enable two-way interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and management fully understand and use data and digital to optimise and continuously improve the organisation and its humanitarian services Every employee and volunteer is data-literate. Every area of expertise has an internal expert. People in need (also) receive assistance digitally Public can access menu of diverse humanitarian services via digital tools 		
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is fragmented, mostly one-way It is known which processes can be improved by digital transformation. There is little internal cooperation among teams. For some digital projects, there is a collaboration with private sector partners Financing for digital transformation is ad hoc, piggybacking on humanitarian projects Analyses are manual, mostly qualitative and impromptu Complies to minimal GDPR requirements due to an isolated data protection officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is mostly open with insights from online communities Multi-disciplinary data and digital teams working with business owners to improve those processes that have the biggest value increase for the humanitarian services Proactive cooperation with partners bringing unique and specific digital services expertise There is a fixed budget for digital services innovations for humanitarian assistance and internal processes Decisions are mostly made based on data, sometimes using algorithms A digital partnership strategy and ecosystem exists with attention to universities and local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No digital strategy, just strategy in a digital world Donors, employees, volunteers and people in need communicate as equals to improve emergency assistance The ability for incremental and disruptive change, continuous learning & early adoption of new technology Specialists, digital products and services (internal and external) are centrally orchestrated and supported through a service design approach NS shares expertise, services and products in IFRC Network Donors actively stimulates digitally-enabled initiatives Data-driven decisions are the norm, and often based on predictive or prescriptive algorithms Privacy is guaranteed by 'Privacy by design' 		
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data is sometimes used, but not consistent, quality is unknown There are basic IT applications but daily tasks still require a lot of manual labour NS staff are equipped with user devices, e.g. laptop and or mobile phone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data is gathered with a goal in mind, the quality is sufficient for useful insights. Data analytic dashboards are widely available for data driven decisions. For most important internal and humanitarian processes digital tools are developed (partly external) and used. There is a central digital & data / IT infrastructure, and systems are in place with audit trail capabilities to support accountability in Finance, HR, logistics, procurement, etc.. Organisation has formal information security positions; users receive regular information security updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data is continually and unambiguously gathered and used to improve the humanitarian services Central IT infrastructure is flexible and scalable and continuously adjusted to changing internal and humanitarian needs. Ownership, management and roadmaps are in the hands of each organisation Organisation has an information security strategy; regular information security testing is performed 		

Supporting the digital maturity journey across the Network

By connecting across the whole IFRC Network and energising the flow of knowledge and information, there are excellent opportunities to leverage capabilities and knowledge transfer in the network of users. The partnership model with corporations and academia acts as a multiplier in this regard. The table below can be used as a map to identify where existing capabilities sit across the Network and our private sector partners.

		Internal			External	
		National Societies	Peer-to-peer networks	Secretariat	IFRC Network	Private sector partners
People	At-risk communities	Connectivity/ mobilisation	General support	Share best practices	Shared digital services; global entry points as needed	Specialist engagement skills
		Data responsibility				
	Design principles					
	Volunteers	Convening and engaging	Design, Coordination, Training		Exchange of learning	Specialised volunteer engagement
	Staff	Work from anywhere				
Process	Digital Platforms	Flexibility between systems, Recruit skills, Experiment	Analytics, Training, design	ERP; creation and promotion of training, common data model, aggregation	Culture setting, supportive, promoting use & share of data	Legal advise
	Analytics	Application, dashboards, data collection	Analytics specialism, troubleshooting			
	Data literacy	Recruitment drive, education	Data analytics, Engineering (M/L learning, AI)	DL & eLearning, champion common data model	Exchange of learning	
	Digital Platforms	Flexibility & efficiency, digitisation at source, prioritisation of key platforms	Prototyping, ideation	Critical mass identification, procurement	Culture setting, knowledge sharing ; advocacy and guidance for shared systems	Hosting
	Data ownership, capture, maintenance	Strong regimes, primary ownership	Support, applying standards	Guidance, standard-setting, governance	Key skills and resources, global standards	Advisory function
Training, promotion of knowledge sharing						
Technology	Common data models	Implementation, common standards, leadership acceptance	Common data model development	Expertise on a common data model	Advocacy and guidance	Transformation support ; interoperability with partner systems
	IT Infrastructure and core operations support	Human centred, open-source, requirement development, risk management, continuity, help desk	Support	Global standards, framework agreements, cloud knowledge, regional advising	Commitment to standards and frameworks	Service provision, advising
		Build on IFRC services				
	IT day-to-day	24/7	Troubleshoot	Regional advising		Outsourcing
Rules and responsibility	Data protection, information security, incident management	Data protection & information security support and skills	Standard setting, compliance, attitude	Supportive, culture-setting		

7.2 Organising model

Digital transformation is a major undertaking. It cannot be understated that bringing transformative change effectively and efficiently is a complicated process for any institution. The distributed and federated character of the IFRC presents challenges, such as the need for greater standardisation of global systems and data structure while not eroding local choice, or leveraging private sector partners and humanitarian institutions while maintaining the network’s comparative advantages. To address these challenges, the Digital Strategy includes an ‘organising model’ to use the existing strengths in the IFRC.

This organising model is shown in schematic form below and shows the objective for NS to progress through the maturity matrix towards a higher plane of digital maturity. NS are encouraged to own the progress of digital transformation and do this through self-development supported by other NS and Secretariat functions through an ‘energised’ network.

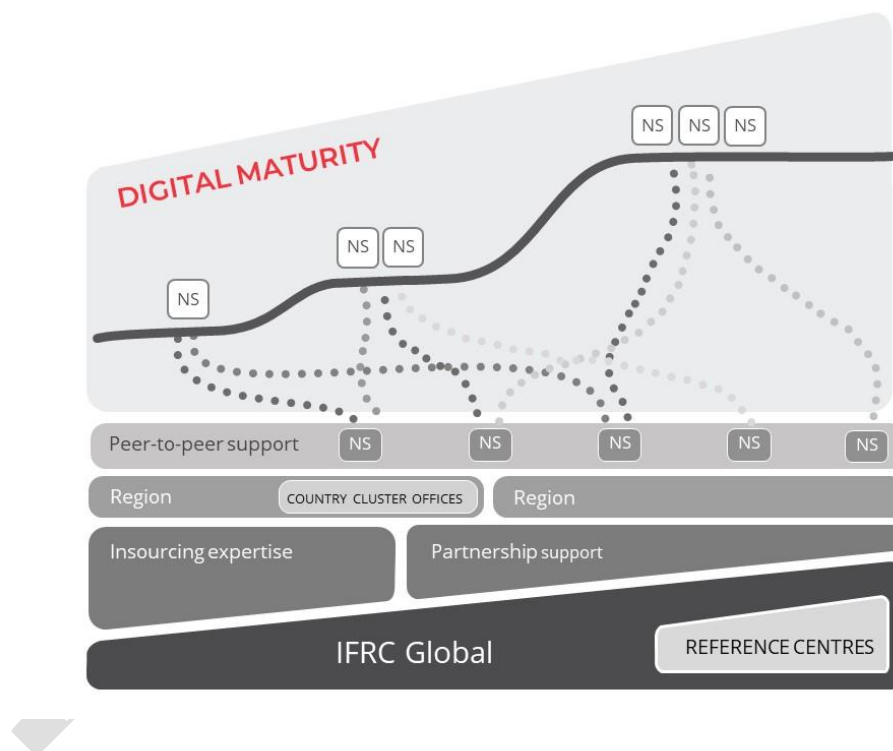


Figure 3: Energising the network

How the organising model fits into our existing capacities:

for NS	for IFRC Secretariat	for partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to benefit from joint investment in collaboration with IFRC and private sector partners • Linking of NS digital strategy to IFRC digital strategy to bring focus, extend humanitarian reach and collective impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving as broker for sharing the knowledge and expertise • Facilitating the interaction among NSs to address digital needs in humanitarian service delivery • Providing strategic and operational coordination to link digital transformation initiatives in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing social impact in target markets through enhanced collaboration with the IFRC Network • Extending reach and collaboration through

for NS	for IFRC Secretariat	for partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in Shared Leadership model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at Country level as part of a Country Cooperation Support Plan and based on outcomes of NS digital maturity self-assessments where partners are willing to pool funding ○ at Regional Level, focused on regional data management ○ at Global Level to guide quality standards and creation of new initiatives 	<p>network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing standards to guide the network • Analysing most impactful digital value cases working closely with programme teams including volunteer management, Health, Community Engagement and Accountability, and Cash • Building on strengths in IT, Information Management team, PMER, and Communications. • Aligning and amplifying ITD Framework, IM Strategy, and related implementation plans⁸ 	<p>network-wide partnering with IFRC members and Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging staff and clients in new collaborative models to digitally extend humanitarian impact.

The maturity model is a strategic pillar that supports the energising approach above. It defines different levels of digital maturity, can identify that level within each NS, and provide pathways for upscaling their digital literacy, capabilities, and tools commensurate to what is effective and appropriate for their setting and mission. The maturity model also outlines how NS may utilise competency networks for ongoing development. Competency networks enable interested NS to monitor progress across multiple NS, find opportunities to consolidate efforts for greater efficiency, and promote knowledge-sharing and transfer where one NS has prior ventured into new technologies or innovations. Coupled with the Secretariat to extend this monitoring globally and coordinate external support where beneficial, the maturity model is a strong component to make digital transformation a reality.

An accelerator team to energise change

Yet, the maturity model will not foster digital transformation on its own. Our consultation underscored the need to incentivise digital transformation through an organisational entity in addition to the NS, Regional Offices and the Secretariat: an Accelerator Team. This new Accelerator team will energise the Network and promote ownership of digital transformation at NS level by providing direct support to NS, brokering support from Secretariat, members and external partners and facilitating peer-to-peer support among NS.

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The accelerator team is only worthwhile if NS invest simultaneously in their Digital Transformation. Therefore, ownership of Digital Transformation at NS level is essential for this Digital

⁸ See '2020-30 ITD Framework' and 'IFRC Information Management Review & Strategic Direction 2020-2023'

Strategy to succeed. Considering the central importance of peer-to-peer support in this model, it is essential that best practices are validated and shared, and that incentives are created to encourage knowledge and capability sharing. The accelerator team will be responsible to encourage this process. The accelerator team will actively engage in “storytelling,” including through identifying “change champions” within the National Societies and promote digital transformation locally.

The activities of the accelerator team are organised along five groupings, set out in the table below:

Maturity model design & roll out, Knowledge Management and Learning	Maturity model	Detail design of the maturity model and guide NS in applying the framework
	Learning & Development	Design and manage global digital L&D programmes
	Knowledge management	Custodian and disseminator of KM on digital
Digital Services design and development	Service design	Software design/development team on demand for small projects (development and advising)
	Service design	Architects
	Service design	User research and design team
	Service design	Digital services design
	Common Data Model	Guide development and promotion of common data model to enhance interoperability among IFRC digital and data services
Finance & performance management	Fund management & incentivisation	Fundraising, marketing, and funds allocation - Finance of transformation activity including governance, securing funds and allocation of funds to NS, research and analysis of return on investment for key interventions
	Performance management	Sets global targets for NS progression through the maturity model; also compliance & audit
	Partnership	Digital partnership management, including fund management, program development to access institutional donor grants
Culture change, research, communications and regional coordination	Change Management	Facilitator of change management advisory for NS.
	Change Management	
	Culture change and research	Coordinate research agenda to support an evidence-based approach throughout the teams’ delivery
	Digital communications and promotion	Promoting progress and capturing success stories;
	Digital community engagement	Guiding focus on community engagement in digital tools and services offered as advisory service for NS and Secretariat programmes
	Regional coordinator	Regional offices data engineers
Standards, guidelines and procurement	Support	Digital event/engagement design and facilitation advisor
	Standards	Setting global standards
	Guidelines	Setting global policies - guidelines
	Information security	Guiding Information Security policy and standards
	Design authority	Custodian of centralisation/ localisation of relevant standards
	Procurement	Full P2P stream, procurement to payment, and contracting - Management of global procurement of license agreements

Fitting the accelerator team in

The accelerator team will be established as change agents and to energise the network over what is planned as a four-year acceleration period. With a digital transformation director and management team of three to five people covered by Other Resources, the team will maximize the use of 26-28

positions drawn from a combination of existing Secretariat staff, secondments from NS, and partner support. Where there are specific gaps and limited experience within the IFRC (e.g. change management for large initiatives), new positions through external recruitment or private sector partner support will be considered. New positions and any additional investments will be covered by Other Resources.

To make this work, the staffing approach should focus on:

- Transfers and embedded assignments are long-term to minimise ramp-up or ramp-down inefficiency
- Part-time allocation of staff is reduced to a minimum and no less than 50%. We recognise that other work will may be deprioritised to resource this team – people will not carry out other work alongside the transformation. There needs to be the focus.
- Robust selection criteria and process as the right people must be in the team
- Include options for remote working

The IFRC Network needs to expand its excellence in multi-sourcing from its resource pool of employees, volunteers, and partner relationships. There is a significant opportunity for role sharing and joint investment from relevant organising models, such as the Shared Leadership model. However, given the complexity of the transformation, the heavy use of sharing is expected to increase the required resources.

Given the reorganisation at the IFRC Secretariat, identifying a specific structure for the accelerator team is not yet possible. However, there are several options to best fit this energisation for transformation and consequently where it best fits organisationally. Each of these options has pros and cons which may be considered for future planning purposes:

Approach for organising	Pros	Cons
Anchored in National Society community	Strong local ownership	Duplication of effort
A separate organisational entity	Customised and outside of influences	Legal structure cost and time
Anchored in IFRC Global Relations, Humanitarian Diplomacy & Digitalisation division and cross-linked to other IFRC Secretariat divisions	Energy from new Division; matrix structure may strengthen links among diverse teams	Some time required as the new Division is formed
Anchored within IFRC Digitalisation & IT department	Provides strong centre of focus and base within existing institutions	Anchoring within only one department loses holistic impact; may not be feasible to consolidate all functions while preserving links to program teams
Shared leadership between NS and IFRC Secretariat	Common ownership & governance	Complex to balance priorities among diverse members (although valuable as a process)
Shared leadership between NS, IFRC Secretariat, and External Transformation Partner(s)	Common ownership & governance; and ties in a transformation partner	Complex and may require new hybrid forms of partnership bridging pro bono support and business relations

Secretariat support and Shared Leadership are not mutually exclusive and would be combined. This shift encourages shared ownership, guidance, and investment by creating opportunities for shared leadership, establishing vital change management roles, and forming sustainable partnerships with technology providers.

Competency networks

Peer-to-peer support is an essential resource for the IFRC's success in digital transformation. A competency network is a group of experts on a given competency (e.g., WASH, data analysis, Cash-Based Financing) from respective NS and/or the IFRC Secretariat. These experts handle requests for expertise from within the network and support the IFRC Secretariat in developing new policies, tools, methodologies, and to share these with the IFRC Network for application (and beyond). Within the network, the information will be available regarding who has specific expertise and knowledge, and the level of availability to execute specific requests. In addition, all existing tools, methods/methodologies, trainings, information on the sector or competency will be available on a digital platform.⁹ A communication or awareness-raising campaign will be set up for the IFRC Network regarding the existence of the different competency networks, in order for people to understand the purpose, and know where to find it and how to access it.

Shared and sustained investment

We strive for low input and operation costs to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are shared across the organisation. To resource the digital transformation process within the IFRC Network, a combination of effective cost recovery and shared investment models are needed. Many NS are recognising the role of digital transformation to improve efficiencies and extend humanitarian services in cost-effective ways. Leveraging the benefits of investment in digital services for cost recovery, e.g. through digital service fees, is an important tool for NS to maintain and sustain investments. This can be an effective complement to enhanced fundraising and partnership support, which are also essential elements.

Pooling funding, expertise, and other resources between NS, the Secretariat, and committed partners can also help provide seed resources and catalyse further investment. Shared investment through models like the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) can enable more consistent access by NS to sustained funding and increase the collective impact for donors. Similarly expanded use of framework agreements (already used for example to leverage contracting terms with service providers between the IFRC and ICRC) and global licensing agreements to enhances the range of solutions available to individual NS in developing their digital services and capabilities. These mechanisms for joint resourcing will also further enable the creation of collective services that connect NS in engaging an increasingly globalized set of volunteers, community members, and partner organisations.

To enable this pooled funding with a global scope, the prioritization of resources needs to be agreed among diverse members of the IFRC Network and made transparent to donors. As such, a management mechanism is needed that brings together representatives from the NSs in the five regions, the IFRC secretariat, possibly the ICRC and private sector partners. We recommend coordination around management and advisory support to enable success of the accelerator team. This should ensure a balanced usage of the funds/resources across geographies, and is the forum for discussion of risks, progress, fund-raising- finances, prioritization – voting of new initiatives approval, terminated initiatives to celebrate, etc. The IT Leadership Group that existed in the past provides useful insights for this governance model. Similarly, the IFRC Secretariat has an IT Steering Committee composed of the 3 USGs, the CFO, the CIO, the director of internal audit and internal investigations, and other directors.

⁹ Properly linked to IFRCs current online libraries and resources.

8. Pathways for change

Having outlined the two strategic pillars in the previous chapter, this chapter outlines pathways that lead digital transformation forward.

Build on the case for change

Strategy 2030 set out digital transformation as a key priority for the future. This recognition of urgency now needs to be followed through with strategic pillars. The strategic pillars are the maturity model and the organising model. The first will enable the IFRC to address the digital divide, the second will energise our network through an accelerator team. This results in different ways of working to not only deliver humanitarian services in increasingly more effective and efficient ways but also to incentivise the sharing across boundaries.

Digitalisation, especially with wide levels of the digital divide is a long journey, not a quick fix. Shifts in behaviour are certainly challenging and creating a supportive culture is vital; these challenges should not be dismissed lightly, and the roles of our leadership and the action of the accelerator team significantly advances the cause. Consequently, there is an on-going need to keep Secretary Generals focused on process improvement and culture change. As mentioned above, National Society champions play a key role here, particularly in Step 1 organisations. The main drive is to encourage ownership at leadership levels in both NS and the Secretariat. Whilst the accelerator team is in place to energise the transformation effort, it mustn't become a silo in its own right and become a barrier to local ownership. With this in mind, the accelerator team is a finite resource to energise, not to own, digitalisation, and will disband once a critical mass of transformation has been achieved. The current plan for this is four years from inception.

The consultation process has also emphasised focusing on the needs of those on the frontline. This is captured in the scope of the strategy, is repeatedly emphasised as human-centred design through the report and needs to be reflected in future budget setting and reviews of innovation.

Finally, the consultation has a strong message on our attitude to digitalisation and a need to sustain emphasis on strong IT project management as well as invest in a program of data and analytics to accelerate our digital transformation. As NS move onwards once the fundamentals are in place, digitalisation blends to cultural change and leadership needs to address this holistically. The accelerator team has the mandate to promote this as NS set out to progress through the maturity model.

Align the Secretariat and NS

The principles of digitalisation – better services, less cost, sharing knowledge and applying the right technology efficiently – are easy to align around. Easy, but it is daunting to know where to start. The maturity model provides many guidelines, including where a National Society currently sits, providing an opportunity for certification of a certain level and sets out aims to progress to the next level. This is a mechanism that can align the leaders within and across NS, shared accountabilities, and collective actions to unify an objective to progress through the maturity levels.

No matter where the current start point is, a next step on the journey is described enabling better understanding of the topic, the relevant terminologies and where best to invest.

Financing will always be a challenge. Having the accelerator team well-positioned and governed supports (a) NS and their ambition to progress, (b) promoting capabilities transfer and the sharing of capabilities and (c) influencing collective digitalisation policy, processes and systems.

The consultation sessions with National Society leaders proved that having some vehicle for sharing success stories, guidance and advice is valued. Leadership forums are not new but are a key change activity. The accelerator team has a remit to set up a digitisation themed leadership forum.

National Society leadership will have the challenge of how to maintain momentum and actionable with competition on time and resources. Whilst this may be easier in a digital-culture of a National Society at Step 3, there is a strong case for allocating 'digital champion' roles for NS at Step 1, sitting with a Chief Digital Officer role as part of the leadership team to provide focus and address investment priorities.

Governance is also key and is recognised in how we organise for change. As we move to a shared leadership model for the accelerator team, oversight will be provided by an overarching governing body with sub-groups representing NS in each maturity model step. The governing body will build on the learning from the IT Leadership Group that has existed within the IFRC Network in the past and provided a forum for exchange and shared planning and decision-making among the IFRC Secretariat and NS members.

Accelerate digital innovation of front-line humanitarian services

Digital transformation offers potential across the range of humanitarian services. Due to the complexity of change management and limited funding, it is essential to prioritise and to recognise the comparative advantages and interests within a distributed network like the IFRC. A quick-scan is needed to identify those humanitarian services that have the biggest return on investment when using more data and digital technology. A business value case approach is applied; the return of investment is specified in terms of increase in speed, quality, (cost-) effectiveness, transparency and

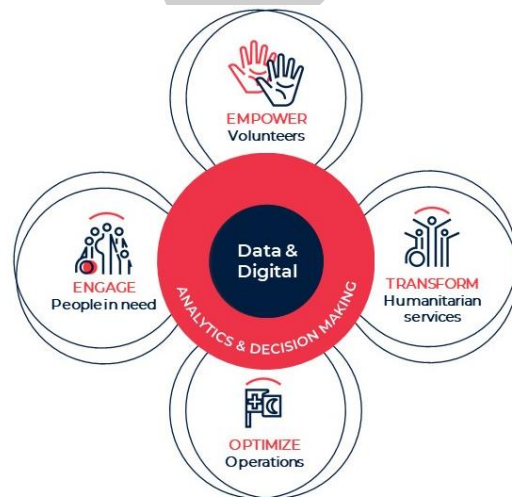


Figure 4: Accelerating data and digital innovation

accountability.

After the identification of the most valuable cases for change a digital innovation project is initiated. National Society operational teams work together with their peers and global counterparts in the IFRC to go through the digital innovation process:

1. Envisioning how the service could change using data and digital. Humanitarian services might be comparable among NS, but differences in context could lead multiple pathways for the digitalization of a particular service.
2. Designing the service. This is where the business value case is further detailed with an initial group of NS. Digital Transformation design principles (Annex 2) are followed, such as a human centred Impact for the operational teams is specified and technology needs are outlined.
3. Promoting the improved service. This is where the new service is promoted and buy-in created with a critical group of NS needed to justify the investment.
4. Implementation. This is where resources are confirmed and partners found, and the digital service is researched, developed, implemented and tested using an iterative digital development approach. A support network from early adopters is formed to help other NS implement.

From the consultation process several humanitarian services have been highlighted that could greatly benefit from going through the above process. A starting list is suggested for the following humanitarian services: health facilities, ambulance services, cash- and voucher-based assistance, and the following supportive services: beneficiary registration, and volunteer management. Annex 1 outlines several current initiatives to address digital needs in these services.

Accelerate progress on data and data analytics including common data model

Building on the progress of many NS in investing in their core IT systems, the next stages in digital transformation emphasise the quality and availability of their data, and related digital services, as essential ingredients for effective and efficient humanitarian services in our digital world. In the next decade, data will become one of the most valuable assets for the IFRC Network. The IFRC and NS will become trusted data providers. A program of work on data and data analytics will create new opportunities for operations teams to use data to support decision making. The following key priorities have been identified:

- Develop and promote a common data model for the IFRC Network to greatly enhance the interoperability of data and insights at all levels.
- Develop a data literacy curriculum for volunteers and staff, to improve quality and use of data in decision making.
- Through the Digital Maturity Model, increase the basic data analytics capacities on People, Process and Technology at all NSs and advanced capacities with a few that will support others;
- Bring together much closer the existing capacities on IT and information management with capacities in the network skilled on data analytics and data science.
- Place more emphasis on data in digital (IT) development projects, ensuring that from now on high quality data is collected and accessible throughout all digital systems.

Develop capabilities by structured networking and better leveraging external partnerships

The Digital Strategy supports a mechanism to connect demand (a National Society that has a need) and supply (a National Society that has capability and capacity to deliver support) through a competency network. This mechanism also facilitates effective private sector partnership.

To professionalise this mechanism, a process to qualify demand, certify supply and fund transfer is required. This is simple in principle but will be difficult to engineer and will require early attention by the accelerator team and its governing body.

Given the innovative nature of digitalisation, there is a need to create enhanced capacity for experimentation and pioneering while at the same time extending consistent access to foundation solutions. Whilst many NS will choose to continue to keep experimentation within their control, the Accelerator team provides a great opportunity to pool resource, in collaboration with the Solferino Academy, IFRC Reference Centres, and other motivated stakeholders.

Deploy the appropriate technology

The RCRC's sovereignty principle holds that NS continue to choose what technology best suits their needs. Alongside this, the accelerator team will work collaboratively with NS technology teams and Secretariat teams to explore standardisation opportunities. There will be many of these in Steps 1 & 2 that will mostly deploy commoditised software, but less in Step 3's leading-edge, until this in turn also commoditises. As standardisation strengthens, the potential for significant volumes will drive procurement savings in license agreements and reduce the overall cost to serve.

There is a balance to be made between building on inhouse capacities (insourcing) and procurement (outsourcing). While NS should remain in charge of striking that balance, in general, the IFRC should (1) selectively build capabilities so that we can innovate and develop our own digital service solutions, (2) anticipate gains for NS when we can better connect our digital systems and data across countries (e.g. in engaging migrant and diaspora communities), and (3) utilise the IFRC's collective negotiating power better to reach joint procurement of services with global providers.

Given that technology becomes a key component of how we work in outward-facing humanitarian services and internal processes and that investment in technology and associated processes is significant, we will promote the integration of digital solutions into humanitarian services through enhanced service design and business case models, building on existing successes in these areas by IFRC IT and IM teams. By ensuring a more detailed understanding of a case to change these key services and processes add value in terms of desired outcomes, overall costs, including costs to change and risk. This thinking should be applied tactically on major projects only to ensure that we do not impose unnecessary overhead, for example when digitalising our humanitarian services (e.g. Health, Cash).

One topic that repeated through the consultation is the need to improve problem definition. As-is, there is significant inefficiency both within the IFRC and with our private sector partners. Given this, there should be a good business case for the accelerator team to explore how to train, mentor and shape recruitment policy. Similarly, on specific technical capabilities, three emerged as priorities:

- Data analytics
- Data protection
- Information security

Open source is proving to be an essential tool for services like the GO Platform where extensibility, open access, and partner co-development are key needs. To better support the use of open source,

the accelerator team will need to work closely with IFRC Secretariat and NS procurement and IT departments to ensure streamlined assessment, acquisition, support, and maintenance.

Finally, regarding the principle that digitalisation is a journey, operating models and systems do not remain efficient and effective forever and therefore, a refresh cycle needs to be managed.

9. An ambitious journey for our NS

Measuring success and achieving ambition

An early activity of the Accelerator team will be to develop the maturity model to a functional level and then work with all 192 NS to benchmark their current position. This should be done at the more granular 5 levels of maturity and then summarised using the 3 steps.

The estimated number of NS in Step 1 is 192, 20 in Step 2 and 10 in Step 3. Considering that digital transformation is long-term journey without a specific end-goal, it is important to recognise that the long-term journey becomes a target on its own. It sets a vehicle for performance management of the IFRC as a whole. In the near term, reporting on the status and performance management is part of the remit of the Accelerator team. The following ambition guides our long-term transformation journey:

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Progress of the National Societies over 4 years

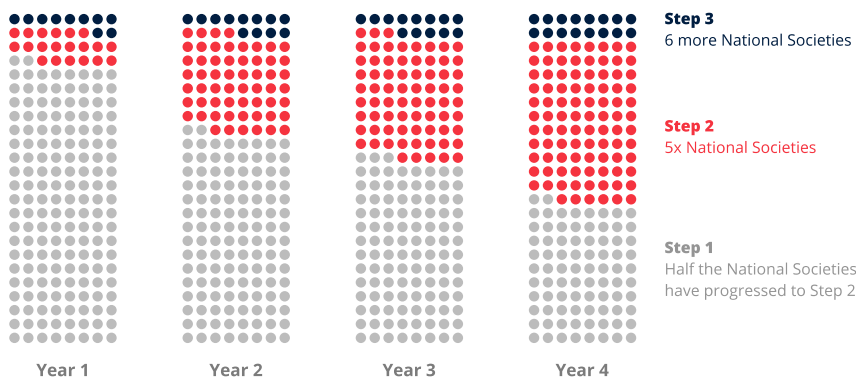


Figure 5: Ambition of progress

By Year 4, the Step 1 cohort has reduced by ~50% from 162 NS to 82. The Step 2 cohort has increased ~5 times from 20 to 94 NS. At this time, as a general statement, the IFRC has moved from 'most are at Step 1' to 'most are at Step 2'. The most advanced group of NS in Group 3 have grown from 10 to 16 – the relatively low rate increase here reflects the leading-edge standards in this group.

The following points need to be considered:

- The focus on Step 1, addressing the fundamental technology – this is an intention to actively reduce the digital divide
- Build scale at Step 2, working with more sophisticated systems – this is where data and systems interoperability starts to present opportunity, together with bigger volume for negotiating better license deals, and growing digital volunteer opportunities
- Pushing the boundaries at Level 3 – this is where the Federation maximises its External Relationships with digital and technology firms and academia, becomes their partner of choice and sustains the position as leading humanitarian services provider

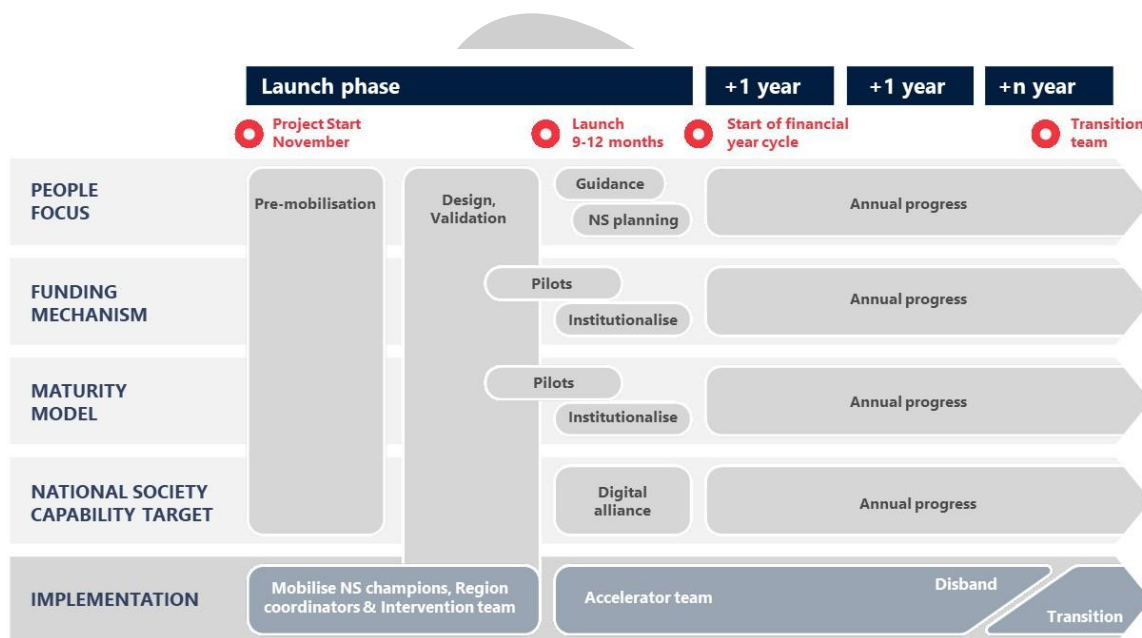


Figure 6: High-level timeline

High-level timeline

The timeline below shows the high-level plan for the major activities as defined in the Technical Design section. There are five major phases:

- Pre-mobilisation – this is the time from the end of the strategy work to the mobilisation. During this time, further consideration is given to major parts of the strategy – the maturity model, funding mechanism for sharing capabilities, research, testing the ambition for National Society targets and conceptualising Learning & Development and other People-oriented work. This work will be funded from existing seed funds (e.g. support to advance digital services as part of COVID response)
- Mobilisation – the start of the engagement with NS including an audit of the as-is levels on the maturity model. Also includes the mobilisation of the Accelerator team
- Design & validation – to operationalise the key parts of the strategy and piloting

- 9-12 months after mobilisation the Accelerator team goes live with the key parts of the strategy. From that point to the end of the financial year, we refine and institutionalise processes. We also advocate for 'digitalisation alliances' from the National Society leadership
- In line with the annual financial reporting process, we then use the parts of the strategy and their associated processes to work with the NS to develop through the maturity model

This process continues until we have confidence that it is self-sustaining. At this point, processes are exported to appropriate parts of the IFRC and the Accelerator team is transitioned

As mentioned in the scope section of this Digital Strategy, Digital Transformation is a journey rather than an end destination. Sustainable Digital Transformation requires a multi-year commitment and adaptivity to ongoing technological innovation. The leadership and organisation's institutions need to reinforce the transformation through budgeting, resource allocation and KPIs, internal inter-disciplinary collaboration, and by adopting supportive line management behaviours.

10. Managing institutional and implementation risk

This strategy outlines the features and benefits of adopting digital transformation and notes above the major changes and resources required to bring this to reality. We do not doubt that this is a major commitment for the Federation and this consideration presents three questions:

- 1) **What's the cost of doing nothing? Do we really need to do this?** Our analysis from the research is that one of the reasons we need to continue and speed up on our digital transformation is to keep our humanitarian services relevant and our institutions up to date. This is affirmed in Strategy 2030; aligns with our purpose of serving those individuals in crisis or disaster; and also maintains our differential when competing for donor funding. Without digital transformation, all this is at further risk.
- 2) **Can we overcome the delivery challenges?** Both at the National Society level and for the Accelerator team digital transformation will bring risk. Whilst much of this will be funding related, the technology-driven transformation also brings risk on brand, process and people-related topics. Implementation will require diligent risk management at both NS level and in the Accelerator team. Given this two-layer approach we will be able to professionally manage risks and where required design and engage appropriate governance arrangements to support risk management and mitigation.
- 3) **How do we manage risk?** A common risk assessment framework needs to be rolled out across the Network to ensure operational and investment risks are taken into account and the risk taken does not exceed the IFRC's risk tolerance. Solutions shall go through risk assessment to establish their confidentiality, integrity, availability and regulatory impact and controls must be built-in to mitigate the risks.

Annexes

Annex 1: Inventory of Digital Capabilities

Examples of digital technology used in humanitarian service delivery

Digital initiative	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI used to restore family links 	In collaboration with the ICRC, many NS now work with technology partners to facilitate restoring family links.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health information systems 	The Red Cross Red Crescent Health Information System (RCHIS) is in the initial development and testing of a patient registration system for use by RCRC hospitals, clinics, and other health service providers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System (FDRS) 	FDRS has become a primary system for tracking data on NS and NS services withing the IFRC Network. Recent data collection during the COVID response shows the opportunity for enhanced analysis on the platform of partner support and other links within the IFRC Network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCRC Nyss platform for community-based surveillance (CBS) 	Developed by Norwegian Red Cross with collaboration with SRCS, Senegal RC, Belgian RC and IFRC. The platform is already in use by several National Societies improving early action and their ability to analyse alerts of public health concern and respond/ share the information with responsible health authorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GO Platform 	The GO Platform is maturing as an open-source platform to manage the collection, analysis, and sharing of the IFRC's response operations data and a growing set of programme data.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) 	The IFRC Secretariat is implementing an ERP system to manage finance, human resource, logistics, and reporting data for Secretariat operations in support of member services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDPC Toolkits and First Aid app 	The GDPC's Universal App program has supported 100+ NS to release a First Aid app, using common content localised for each NS. The GDPC is expanding this approach to other services, including WhatNow messaging and Atlas app for small business preparedness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Block-chain technology applied in CASH management 	The IFRC and Kenyan RC have partnered with RedRose to use blockchain for Cash disbursements in "unbanked" communities. The Netherlands RC 510 team are also developing blockchain-based direct assistance service and the Danish and Norwegian NS has supported the development of a digital local inclusion currency, currently being rolled out in Kenya.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Korea RC - virtual reality (VR) for disaster preparedness training 	The South Korea RC has worked closely with Samsung to develop a series of VR based learning simulations for disaster preparedness. The ICRC has also "insourced" to establish a VR development team in Bangkok to provide remote learning support in RCRC network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambulance services dispatch system 	Mexican RC and Magen David Adom utilizing software to plan and dispatch ambulance services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFRC Americas Region 	Shake-maps and dashboards for weather and hazard monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact Based Forecasting and Risk Assessments 	Netherlands RC supporting other NS to develop automated models and analyses

Peer-recognised inventory of digital capabilities

Disclaimer: this list is an output of one of the working groups held during the consultation process. It is **not exhaustive** and serves as a indicative guideline only.

Capability	Which NS?
Membership registration	Kenya RC
Volunteer management	Burundi RC; Mozambique RC; Spanish Red Cross, IFRC Surge deployment team
APIs, GIS, capacity strengthening	American Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross-510
IM community of practice and Surge information management	SIMS network
Mobile Data Collection	IFRC Secretariat, Spanish RC, Syrian Arab RC
Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence	Norwegian RC, Australian RC; Netherlands RC-510
Cash and IM support	IFRC Secretariat, American RC; British RC; Turkish RC; Kenya RC; Netherlands RC-510
Digital risk assessment (community risk profiles) and Predictive impact analytics (support to EWEA)	Netherlands Red Cross-510
Data team creation, data responsibility, data literacy, human centred design	IFRC Secretariat, Netherlands Red Cross-510,
Data readiness assessment	American RC; Netherlands Red Cross-510
Digital transformation assessment and digital maturity framework	Netherlands Red Cross-510
Digital products and services, scaling	Australian RC, Kenyan Red Cross, Norwegian RC, Netherlands Red Cross-510
Service design	British RC, Australian RC, American Red Cross, Netherlands RC, Swiss RC, Danish RC
Innovation and Research	IFRC Secretariat, Danish RC, American RC; Norwegian RC, British RC, Netherlands RC-510;
Virtual reality and Artificial intelligence	ICRC, Netherlands RC-510, South Korea RC
Pattern-based digitisation	Swiss RC
Dispatch of ambulance services	German Red Cross, French Red Cross, Magen David Adom, Mexican RC

Annex 2: Design Principles and their implications

This list has been developed as part of the consultation’s workshops and serves as a high-level guideline for the accelerator team. The list is a work in progress and will be refined further.

Principle	Implications
Human-centred design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design with the users, not for them. The human-centred design should be the standard across programmes and services, and ideally applied from a user perspective across humanitarian services recognizing that users (whether community members, volunteers, NS staff or partners) have diverse needs and roles that they can play. New systems must add value to as many people as possible and be easy to use (e.g. Data dashboards accessible at multiple levels) Our products and services are as intuitive, useful, understandable, honest and as simple as possible. We use creativity to develop solutions that are focused and elegant. Our service design delivers seemingly simple solutions to complex problems.
Agile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular, iterative to scale programmes with digital as a mechanism rather than an 'add on.' Flexible procurement and project management to allow for rapid prototype and iteration. Adapt culture to make efficiency a primary lens for viewing digital investments, to be evaluated across the network to identify current tools used elsewhere in the Network and opportunities for increasing communication within NS and IFRC.
Interoperable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All digital services have a clear and valuable purpose which will make a positive difference to our staff and beneficiaries. We built specialist tools which do one job well, rather than complex systems which do many jobs poorly. We ensure our systems are interoperable – from data structures and API standards to usability and design. Interoperability and modularity are intended to support multiple uses cases. This has implications for data collection especially, where the current mantra is to collect the minimum data needed for the current project. This may reduce the potential for other uses cases. Systems and processes built to be able to talk to one another vastly improve data collection, reporting, collation, and analysis. Where a collective service/platform has been agreed - to be co-owned and managed where possible. Adapt service design to reflect needs and capabilities of the collective The RCRC Principles of Cooperation need to adjust to address the global reach of technology companies but also to recognise the global dispersal of diaspora communities, which ultimately may have links to multiple NS
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise global resource mobilisation agreements for digital and financing needs. Movement capabilities are improved through digital partnerships.
Mobile-first	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move from an enterprise IT model to an emerging market, mobile-first organisation
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ways of obtaining cross-sector finance and partnership for digital services. Reframe National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) to have a digital arm to directly fund NS for digital needs bypassing secretariat overhead and focused on NS needs. A commitment to explore, train, and incorporate the latest technologies for possible efficiency gains (e.g. AI, ML). There should be plenty of space for bottom-up digital innovations and providing a platform to share and build upon these innovations by others. There is no innovation without failure. Reduce bureaucratic overhead to not only accept failure at times but encourage teams to try, fail, and try again.

Principle	Implications
Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product lifecycle is considered during design and implementation, including costs, resource consumption, longevity, flexibility, and environmental impact. Sustainable solutions are prioritised. We deliver products that scale, not projects that fail. Ensure sustained funding and resource for projects that succeed. Visible and accessible process for projects to graduate from pilot to sustained service. • Sustainable Digital transformation requires a multi-year commitment. The leadership and organisation's institutions need to reinforce the transformation through budgeting, resource allocation and KPIs, internal inter-disciplinary collaboration, and by adopting supportive line management behaviours. However, even for NS with resources dedicated to digital transformation, it can take years to arrive at a level of full digital transformation. This also hinges on having people and practices in place to operationalise digital change. • Multi-channel solutions will require different kinds of partnerships and enabling technology. Operational efficiency will increase if long-term relations can be built with local partners, skilled volunteers, and local nodes of regional and global organisations.
Robust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions are built to survive and thrive in the contexts where we deliver our work, not just in digitally mature countries and offices. This requires the combination of frontline experience with technical expertise.
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We strive for low input and operation costs to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are shared across the organisation. • This requires both products which are designed within the constraints of the end-use context, as well as progressive cost-sharing agreements which draw on the global reach and resources of the IFRC.
Adaptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • digital literacy training, management awareness, analysis working groups, check all Information systems for reports
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system should be capable of recovering from disaster/significant failure within agreed objectives, timescales. Business continuity should be built in from the ground up • Capture and meet expectations at all levels: Beneficiaries, Volunteers, Donors, and NSs by considering engagement as community engagement • Functions for defining, monitoring, and implementing continuous improvement
Non-duplicative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a trusted network of partners that collaborate on getting common operational datasets (CODs) of high quality, granularity and completeness, is a practical way to overcome the data gaps in the IFRC Network, and also to prevent duplication of effort and data collection fatigue with beneficiaries. • IFRC digital services steering group (to include also NS & ICRC?) to be created overseeing digital platform and projects • Annual digital services workshop created to provide more clarity and distributed ownership of service development

Principle	Implications
Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common operating models combined with needs assessments will facilitate tailor-made solutions for NS that respect in-house capacities and practices. The NS with lowest levels of digital maturity need to be prioritised first. Additionally, there is a need to develop collaboration models driven by open access, interoperability, and orientation, to enable local humanitarian workers to create local solutions linked by shared data and digital threads. • A lack of access and connectivity negatively impacts the Networks work with the most vulnerable, and it would be beneficial to carry out mapping of connectivity in a country. A map of connectivity would help IFRC lobby for funding. • Translation into 4 languages as standard (using machine learning via partners, translation services, or leveraging our global volunteer network.) • Establish minimum standards of accessibility (e.g., bandwidth, browser, operating system)
Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFRC makes a clear and public commitment to open source as principal. Open source solutions promote adaptable solutions by reducing vendor dependency. Internal development of software, mobile, and APIs are open-source with standards of accessibility and well-documented for members and IFRC to learn and re-use. • Efforts are aligned with key open source/open data partners to encourage digital volunteerism • In-line with external, established standards and definitions of digital principles related not only to open source technology but open organisations (e.g., https://digitalprinciples.org, https://theopenorganization.org/definition/).
Platform agnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our commitment to service adaptability based on soft/hardware investment. Procurement rules which reflect the commitment
Standardised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for research, development and implementation of a Common Data Model across the IFRC secretariat and NS. This spurs inter-operability within RCRC humanitarian services, and federation-wide reporting of needs and impact. This model should be supported by policies and methods of implementation and reviewed vis-a-vis a new maturity model that maps the technical and security capacity. • If we can get staff, volunteers and the membership into one database – built to industry/IT standards -- we can show scale and scope of the Network and mobilise digitally by improving data collection, reporting, collation, analysis. However, we can't achieve this without a centralised database or common data model w/o common syntax.
Automated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The upkeep of these systems and data is not sustainable with only manual input. How we can work smarter through automation builds in not only efficiency and consistency but incentives (i.e., more value with less work).
Secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollout a common risk assessment framework across the Network that ensures operational and investment risks are taken into account and the risk taken does not exceed the organisation's risk tolerance. • Solutions shall go through risk assessment to establish their confidentiality, integrity, availability and regulatory impact and controls must be built-in to mitigate the risks. • Clear agreement with NS and partners of data protection principle