

COLLABORATING AND DELIVERING

DIGITAL

PRODUCTS & SOLUTIONS

AT THE IFRC



THE REPORT

What if our strength as a federated network and our expertise in coordinating and delivering across many sectors, contexts, and languages systematically supercharged our digital transformation efforts?

As the largest humanitarian network, we are in every corner of the world with 191 National Societies and 199, 000 local branches/units. [IFRC Strategy 2030](#) identified 5 global challenges of climate, crises and disasters, migration, health as well as values, power and inclusion. Our network identified 7 transformations - strong and local actors, a distributed network, a trusted organization, volunteering and youth, influencing humanitarian action, digital transformation and financing the future. For every global challenge and transformation, the network is applying digital products and services to enable our response. Digital transformation can enable our efforts with digital technologies, skills and methodologies focused on the changes for people, processes, and products.

As a federation, each sector and each national society, or even many local branches, are creating and /or using new or existing digital technologies to support their work. Overall, the IFRC coordinates our efforts and makes decisions as a federation via our working groups, governing boards, and joint mandates. The successful collaboration approaches of first aid, surge, and protection, gender and inclusion demonstrate how we might shift our approaches with technology. The IFRC Digital Transformation strategy indicates a need to adjust our approaches and organizing models for technology delivery. We see opportunities to take a systems and federated approach to digital products and services. Not all digital products and services should become global tools. Not all global tools would be created by the Secretariat. By being more collaborative and strategic with technology we can build with each other. The key is to determine - which tools/services should be done as a federation and how might we collaborate to scale if assessed as feasible?

The recent IFRC Solferino Academy report, [Humanitarian Leadership for the Future](#), cited the legacies that hold us back, the opportunity to be more anticipatory and take risks and the leadership skills to be fit for the future. Each of these observations are

directly applicable to the conundrum of digital transformation. How we collaborate or don't collaborate as a network on digital products and services is steeped in the legacy model of humanitarian work rather than being strategic and embracing new models for digital to support our work. That is not to say that current digital products and services are not effective. It is more that we need to reflect on how and when we push to make change as a network.

We take pause to consider - how can we be more purposeful with our digital transformation efforts in what we invest and develop as a network? The following document shares insights about product/service development in our network, including some challenges and recommendations for change. In addition, we are sharing some practical guidance for successfully scaling up digital products and services. We asked participants in workshops and via discussions - How can we collaborate as the IFRC network on digital products and services? When and how should we decide to scale up digital products/services? What are the processes and governance involved to equitably collaborate within our network.

The [IFRC Digital Transformation strategy](#) highlights the need to scale up products and services, collaborate as a network, professionalize network-centric product/service lifecycles, and enhance overall capacity building. There are difficulties with scaling up, including the scarcity of long-term sustainable digital products and services across the humanitarian sector, and many strong digital ideas and projects that have ended up in the 'digital graveyard'. It is important to not leave anyone behind in the pursuit of efficiencies through scaling up digital services and products.

Overall, there is some agreement that National Societies and the Secretariat should collaboratively develop some scalable digital products to support a centrally coordinated long-term digital product service model, recognizing the need for financial sustainability to lead to long-term benefits. The decision-tree on which digital product and services should be scaled up is to be created as part of the digital transformation governance steering group with National Societies. Any potential framework would need to be negotiated, implemented and governed by the network. The majority of National Societies develop specific digital products for their domestic use. There are also (very) few National Societies that develop digital products specifically for use by other (partner) National Societies. The question becomes which products and services could benefit from a network-approach. And, how can be built on those efforts within the network but also with partners and even opportunities such as [digital public goods](#).

We compiled insights and guidance from over 50 digital and data practitioners across IFRC and National Societies throughout 2023, including special workshops and events: Connect Conference (Kigali, February 2023) and the IFRC Global Innovation Summit (Nairobi and online, June 2023) (see the list in Annex 2). The final summary was open for comments and further insights from the wider digital and data practitioners network. These insights should be reviewed with the complementary (and more formal) research being conducted by the [Global Disaster Preparedness Center on humanitarian accountability and technology](#) (people and communities at the center) and Australian

Red Cross ([Humanitech](#)) on Humanity First.

Note: this is not a comprehensive guidance on product management and the complete product and service lifecycle. Instead, this document aims to provoke conversations and follow-up on how we might take a network-centric approach to our work and some signals on planning for successful initiatives in the IFRC network.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A Resource Management System (RMS) was developed in Sahana Eden software for IFRC to allow the sharing of information on the National Society Inventories, Assets, Staff and Volunteers.

RMS is an integrated and web-based system which manages staff, volunteers, membership, warehousing and assets with the use of geographical information systems (GIS), project tracking and vulnerability tracking features for National Society and secretariat staff. RMS enables National Societies to view and analyse hazards and vulnerabilities together with their material and human resources, such as volunteers, staff, offices and warehouses, on a digital map to examine how well its people and resources are positioned to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable communities that suffer from natural disasters and longer-term development challenges.

It was deployed and used by the IFRC in Asia Pacific region until 2016. This tool is no longer in use. One of the main reasons was that product improvements and upgrades to meet technology trends needed to be funded. National Societies preferred products that provided more interactive/mobile functional/improved features/"bigger" ERP systems and other humanitarian information tools such as Go.ifrc.org. There is some explorations to use the volunteer management module within the RMS, but this is funding-dependent.

We need to include in that **design process** all the relevant **stakeholders**, whether it's the people in the **community** that we serve, or it is the people, the **volunteers** in our context that work with these digital technologies, or whether it's the **staff**, or whether it's the teams that process information, but also **when we make partnerships** with other actors that we work and include those partners in the design process.

*Juriaan Lahr,
IFRC Director of Digital Transformation*

CONSIDERING NETWORK APPROACHES

The IFRC delivers a multitude of products and services with some basic types: items created for a specific National Society, items created for a specific group of National Societies and/or sectors, and items that are created for the whole IFRC federation. Some products/services serve a unique purpose and may not serve another NS or context. **How and when should we approach products and services as a federated network and scale the product/service as a network?** What are some of the challenges and opportunities to transform how we collaborate? We will go deeper into each of the following topics and share some recommendations for the network.

As a global federated organization, we don't function like companies with hierarchical structures - we are IBM without an 'asset map' or service catalog of all the digital products and services across the network. As of yet, there is no digital product/service registry process across the federation. Unlike companies, each national society is a separate organization with its own budget, structures, and work. We are bound together by our fundamental principles and core work in the humanitarian space. Thus, there are some unique challenges. The lack of knowledge about existing digital solutions and capabilities across the IFRC leads to duplication and inefficiency. A lack of collaboration and co-design often leads to products which do not address core operational needs and solve critical community and National Society needs.

Diverse product management and software development solutions - lack of coordination or realization on more agile approaches, considering how to better align with and use [Digital Public Goods](#), different business models, and methodologies such as open source development framework. Given the complexity of our work, there is siloed working, competition, and lack of collaboration which can result in duplication and inefficiency. Providing ongoing support to NSs fairly, equally, and sustainably is challenging. Balancing the need for contextualization with the cost and speed of scaling is crucial. Overcoming resistance to change and increasing user adoption is vital. Each of these challenges are also opportunities to adjust our approach to digital transformation.

Our network determined the following recommendations for each of the areas:

KNOWLEDGE AND CAPABILITIES

Lack of knowledge on what digital solutions/tools/products/platforms and capabilities we have across the IFRC leads to duplication and inefficiency.

Recommendations:

- Design and build lightweight processes to collect and share about active and inactive digital solutions/products. This could be in the form of an inventory/registry of digital solutions/products across the Movement and digital people/capabilities at different National Societies.
- IFRC should coordinate the knowledge management and disseminating best practice examples on digital product/service development. This could be done via multiple teams (a partnership between Digital Transformation (DT) & National Society Development (NSD) departments (learning teams)).
- Increase knowledge-sharing events on digital services & products across the IFRC (e.g. Digital Transformation department's 'Data & Digital Leads Practitioners' monthly call).
- Organize meetups and conferences at regional level to have National Societies share which products they have developed and see if others can use the same. For example, instead of developing many volunteer management systems, use one system across the region or type of NS. (e.g. IFRC Global Innovation Summit)
- Integrate into onboarding for new employees in NS on what the IFRC does (and who does it) in digital transformation/services / products

RESOURCING AND HOW WE COLLABORATE

Support functions for digital products and services are difficult to ensure the amount of support in a fair, equal and sustainable manner.

Recommendations:

- Consider different modalities for providing support, like centralized services and peer-to-peer support to 'decentralize' support.
- We should put effort in fostering a complete open-source stack of solutions that can be implemented at low cost anywhere.
- A hub/center of excellence could facilitate decentralized support.
- Define the types of support needed and what models to leverage.
- Explore new models to garner and embed support from universities and technical partners. (e.g. Monash University, University College London (UCL), and others)
 - UCL collaborated with the [IFRC GO project](#) with students supporting the software development.
 - Monash University collaborated with [IFRC Solferino Academy on the Limitless program](#) (built a custom platform for video engagement with 17 languages) and Humanitarian Leadership of the Future report (data analysis).

Competition between National Societies who want to protect their 'own' products / product ideas leads to duplication and inefficiency.

Recommendations:

- Arrange a NS and IFRC check in on the Digital Transformation strategy including building governance and engagement for success. This includes discussion and a decision-tree on product methodologies such as open source and partnerships such as Microsoft.
- Explore how to build a culture of collaboration / sharing best practices for working together.

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- Facilitate sessions to bring together NS's working on similar products (e.g. Cash/Assistance : Turkey, Canada, Netherlands, and US) and try to broker a sensible, more collaborative approach.
- Look for similarities in terms of problems for different National Societies. Share problems and come up with shared solutions. That way, products are owned by more than one National Society.

National Societies work in silos, with little collaboration and knowledge sharing, resulting in duplication of effort, overlap of solutions and inefficiency.

Recommendations:

- Implement sustained strategic communication in between events, continuous engagement with National Societies.
- Build communities of practice.
- Ensure leadership & sponsorship from the top.

UNIVERSAL FIRST AID APP

Drawing on the achievements of the British Red Cross First Aid app and the subsequent American Red Cross First Aid app, the French Red Cross, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), introduced the highly-anticipated version 4 of the Universal First Aid App on September 5th, 2023. The application has achieved a global presence, spanning over 190 countries and is accessible in 25 languages. With an ongoing expansion strategy, it has already been downloaded over 113,000 times

At the forefront of this digital initiative are the Global First Aid Reference Center (GFARC) and the Global Disaster and Preparedness (GDPC), playing a central role in strategic collaborations with the IFRC Digital Transformation Department and the Health & Care (H&C) department. Together, we aim to share first-aid knowledge via a modern, advanced platform. The resulting Universal App Program is crafted to

empower Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, offering them a tailored mobile application.

The multifaceted, free, and multilingual application is crafted to not only promote first aid awareness but also instill confidence in citizens to take effective action in emergency situations. It caters to individuals aged four and above, addressing the needs of those with varying levels of first aid knowledge, from novices to those seeking to refresh or maintain their skills. The overarching vision is to develop a user-friendly, multilingual application capable of delivering instant access to crucial information during real-life emergencies, transcending geographical and linguistic barriers.

The app's content is curated to cover a spectrum of emergencies, including:

- First aid topics (respiratory difficulties, choking, burns, trauma, loss of consciousness, bites and stings),
- Diseases topics (respiratory infections, cholera, malaria, polio),
- Psychological first aid topics (panic attacks, hyperventilation, verbal de-escalation) and,
- Safety and preparedness topics (heatwave, water safety, road safety, and emergency food safety)

In the pursuit of achieving global scalability, we successfully tackled numerous challenges. Our key insights emphasized the intricacies of product localization in 25 languages. Additionally, it highlighted the necessity for each National Society to have a focal point or local product owner for sustained success in contextualizing the First Aid content. We also encountered challenges in recognizing the significant variations in internet accessibility in terms of cost and technical availability across countries. This intricacy introduces a layer of nuance to the task of creating a universally usable app. Finally, our experience underscores the critical role of substantial funding and adept technical product management in effectively scaling a product at a global level.

The lesson learned about the essential role of funding and technical management gains added significance in light of these challenges. Our experience underscores the imperative of tailoring strategies to diverse global contexts where internet access discrepancies exist, informing future approaches to digital humanitarian assistance.

CASE STUDY

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The need for contextualization is slowing scaling opportunities and adding more costs, leading to a lower chance of 'survival' in the long term. At the same time, contextualization to increase the solution's value is very important. **How do we reconcile this? How can we better use open source and/or existing software/products?**

There is a need to engage with existing open source platforms and tools that exist outside of RCRC when possible instead of building new (there have been success with ODK/Kobo, MapSwipe, OpenStreetMap, OpenDroneMap, implementations of EspoCRM, etc.), refer to [Digital Public Goods](#). This essential step should be part of the product research and part of the pre-work before submitting proposals to donors and partners.

Recommendations:

- Encourage creators & users of digital solutions/products to accept that sometimes 80% of the desired functionality is 'good enough'. We always seek the perfect solution for our own 'special' circumstances. If given the option between a 'free / cheap' product that is able to do 80% of what you need vs an expensive solution that does it all, we should more often go for the first option. This will enable products to scale and will allow more NSs to benefit from products and investments made.
- Product development from ideation to delivery should be equitable in terms of NS involved in the design, decision-making and delivery. This would need to be respectfully socialized and prioritized otherwise we run the risk of creating products that don't serve the need. Point blank- products and services made in the 'global north' without network engagement reinforces existing power imbalances and potentially risks not serving communities well.
- Make a solid analysis of areas where there is a critical need for similar systems/solutions and then ensure collaboration and coordination to develop these systems. Distinguish between programmatic and operational, between nice to and need to.
- Build in scalability by design by encouraging creators & users of digital solutions/products to build in configuration to deal with contextualisation rather than (more costly) customization.

- Co-design digital solutions with several National Societies (preferably with different characteristics, such as different levels of digital maturity) simultaneously, so you build digital solutions capable of servicing a wide variety of NS's / users / use cases.
- Ensure that for all digital product development, co-design with NS's/communities/users is done at the start of the process and throughout the product life cycle, to increase the probability that the solution can be made context-specific and works for all users.
- Research and experiment on how open source models, open source program offices, or innersource methodologies could complement the new forms of partnering and volunteering within our network. Determine if these types of network-centric, collaborative models could be a viable product development option.

Products are often not developed based on operational needs, well-understood pain points or community feedback resulting in products that are not adding value or meeting the most urgent needs.

Recommendations:

- Understand the biggest needs for digital solutions by engaging more with operational units and communities globally to understand the largest areas of need, which digital teams can then look to solve.
- Digital Products and services must serve our humanitarian accountability - put people at the center and be created for and by NS.

RC2RELIEF

RC2Relief was a custom OpenDataKit(X) product created with partners for the Americas region. The concept was to have more than one registration process for affected communities used to identify needs for delivery and distribution of items. It is currently inactive after its use in 2019/2020. The IFRC network was more familiar and had processes adapted for ODK and Kobo and thus, the RC2Relief product was not used. Overall, some of the lessons learned involved: designing with the users, ensuring overall product ownership, having product interoperable infrastructure, and, lastly, ensuring the overall organizational capacity to sustain and evolve a product.

DIGITALLY TRANSFORMING OUR WORK

Digital transformation assessment process has had some success with over 60 National Societies doing the initial 'digital maturity assessment.' There is a lack of follow-up, resulting in the NS not moving forward as quickly as wished.

Recommendations:

- Develop credible plans after digital transformation assessments, which lead to sustained detailed change.
- NS to engage all its partners in the assessment and growth investment plans, to drive longer-term support and financial sustainability
- Track digital transformation so that progress can be measured.
- Socialize digital transformation agenda and opportunities beyond the 'usual suspects'.
 - Provide editable marketing and organizational templates to assist people to share what DT is and how it can have an impact on the 5 global challenges and remaining transformations. For example, the DRR Climate Advocacy network has a common slidedeck, branding, network engagement planning and talking points.

Digital transformation, launching digital products and change, in general, is hard. This leads to insufficient user adoption, resistance to change, and insufficient understanding of the solutions and the need for change (What is in it for me?)

Recommendations:

- Leadership advocating digital transformation/solutions as part of 'the solution' to current and future challenges
- Create change management strategy and plans with regular communications for broader engagement and transparency
- Define key design principles to guide the design of new products in the Movement to allow for interoperability and opportunity for potential integration and adaptation when NS develops solutions.

- Ensure that the value proposition for digital services and products is well-researched, clearly communicated, and tracked after implementation
- Draw on experiences from current common solutions/systems like Restoring Family Links (RFL), the Universal First Aid app and others to learn from their process experiences of arriving at a common solution for the entire network.

SCALING IMPACT IN THE HUMANITECH LAB

Established in 2020 with a vision to 're-invent the typical incubator/accelerator model' that would bridge the gap between technology's potential and humanitarian expertise and reach, Humanitech Lab was launched to accelerate and scale impact. The Lab program has connected innovators into the world's largest humanitarian network to solve community problems including impacts of climate change, migration, and preparing and responding to disasters and emergencies. We are now nearing the end of the Lab's second cohort cycle, and have worked closely with 13 different startups during this time, drawn from more than 160 global applicants.

Across the two cycles we have refined our innovation approach significantly as we learned about how to set innovators up for success to work in partnership with Australian Red Cross. Scale for us is not creating solutions ourselves, but rather the process we undertake to support our startup partners to scale their impact with communities. Our approach recognises the potential of our global network and brand to scale solutions and seeks to connect innovation approaches with the deep humanitarian practice expertise with links to community and real humanitarian issues that is at the core of the Red Cross Movement, to enable scalable solutions that are co-designed with affected communities and aligned with humanitarian values.

"Australian Red Cross initiative Humanitech has been the single most valuable program we have been part of during our time as a company. Without the introduction to key customers, resourcing and guidance we would not have been able to execute at such a high level and or plan for the future of our company as efficiently or effectively."

– Joe Glesta, CEO Climasens

A 2023 winner of Google.org's USD\$5 million 'Impact Challenge on Climate Innovation' grant, Climasens are now scaling their climate risk technology across Europe, the US and Asia-Pacific. This achievement builds on their success in 2022 as Humanitech Lab's first Scale winner.

Access to humanitarian capability, undiluted funding and the trusted Australian Red Cross and Telstra Foundation brands was noted by Climasens as being catalytic for their success. Humanitech's Lab program connected Climasens directly with the problem space and our programs, brokered new cross-sector partnerships and provided Australian Red Cross mentorship. As a result, Climasens co-created a new heat-focused product with Australian Red Cross Emergency Services and refined their value proposition. This opened new and growing global markets with government and private sector globally, including scaling Australian Red Cross' heat resilience program to target support to at-risk communities.

CASE STUDY



CONSIDERATION FOR **SCALING PRODUCTS OR SERVICES**

Scaling up across the product and service lifecycle is an intricate process that involves a robust strategy interwoven with collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. At the heart of these efforts lies the imperative to foster a culture of collaboration. This goes beyond mere cooperation, reaching across the vast network of partners that include government entities, technology sectors, and communities at large.

This culture of collaboration must permeate every level of the organization, deepening its roots within National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and bridging the various disciplines and departments as well as spanning the different regions. Such an integrated approach is crucial for creating a cohesive and efficient response mechanism.

A pivotal step in this collaborative journey is the creation of an inventory and a shared methodology for IFRC digital solutions and capabilities. This inventory acts as a foundational stone, paving the way for knowledge sharing and the proliferation of digital solutions across the network.

Exploring diverse modalities for supporting digital services and products is another cornerstone of this scaling-up effort. This could manifest through centralised support or peer-to-peer networks, investigating various business models and establishing local centres of excellence. Such a multifaceted approach enables the adoption of best-fit practices for different contexts within the IFRC's vast operational landscape.

Embracing pragmatism is also a key recommendation. There is wisdom in adopting 'good enough' solutions rather than waiting for a 'perfect' one. An iterative approach is championed, incorporating operational feedback to prioritise the most critical gaps and modules within solutions. This realistic approach ensures that services are delivered promptly and efficiently, without being held back by the pursuit of perfection.

The co-design principle is central to this narrative, emphasising human-centered design from the inception and throughout the development of digital solutions. By involving staff, volunteers, and communities we serve in the design process and ensuring that multiple National Societies are involved, solutions that are versatile and applicable across various contexts are crafted.

Strong leadership and sponsorship are the driving forces behind this endeavor, coupled with the definition and development of a global digital infrastructure that can support the growing needs and ambitions of the IFRC.

Best practices are not just to be adopted but also to be improved. This includes defining design principles, product visions, engaging communities effectively, communicating value propositions, and learning from existing solutions. These practices form the guiding principles for current and future digital transformations.

Linking digital assessments and transformation stages to digital services and products ensures that the digital evolution is theoretical, practical, and closely tied to the ground realities. Credible planning and progress tracking are non-negotiable to keep the momentum going and ensure that the strategies yield the desired outcomes. Equally, engaging more intensively with operational units and National Societies helps to comprehend the most significant areas of need, allowing digital solutions to be precisely targeted to address these areas.

Financial models should also be crafted with foresight, ensuring the long-term sustainability of digital solutions, especially for the financially least resourced National Societies. The financial strategy is integral to the sustained impact and reach of the digital services provided.

In essence, scaling up in the product and service lifecycle is an orchestrated symphony of strategic collaboration, practical innovation, user-centric design, leadership, and sustainable financial planning, all playing in harmony with the tune of digital transformation and excellence.

APDRC AND VRT

Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Center's (APDRC) embrace of VR technology marks a significant innovation in disaster preparedness. This technology creates immersive, realistic scenarios, enabling participants to safely experience and react to potential crises. This methodology not only enhances the training's effectiveness but also makes it more relevant to real-world situations. The success of this initiative is heavily reliant on strategic collaboration and communication. APDRC has formed partnerships with various entities, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), educational institutions, and national societies. These partnerships are pivotal in

pooling expertise and resources, ensuring the VR training modules are comprehensive and versatile. The effectiveness of APDRC's program is significantly boosted by its distributed network. This network facilitates the broad dissemination of VR training modules, ensuring wide-reaching access and fostering an environment for continuous content improvement through feedback and shared experiences.

Before the disruption caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Centre (APDRC) had distributed its Virtual Reality (VR) training content. The initial two VR modules were disseminated across seven National Societies and 18 Headquarters and Chapters within the Asia Pacific region. This distribution extended beyond South Korea to include the Philippines, Mongolia, Singapore, Nepal, Vietnam, and Thailand. During this period, 47 VR devices were allocated and utilized in a total of 439 events. These events ranged from the AP Regional Conference to the AMCDRR in Mongolia and other venues. As a result of these efforts, a remarkable total of 16,010 beneficiaries were reached through the program in 2018 and 2019.

In 2023, the APDRC resumed its VR training project, further expanding its reach. The program newly incorporated Malaysia, alongside continuing its operations in the Philippines, Mongolia, Nepal, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, and South Korea. This expansion signifies the ongoing commitment of the APDRC to enhance disaster preparedness and response capabilities across a wider range of societies in the Asia Pacific region, leveraging the educational and immersive potential of VR technology.

While the initiative has shown promising success, there are areas requiring attention:

- **Refined Content Targeting:** Tailoring content to meet the specific needs of various disaster scenarios and learner profiles remains a priority.
- **Financial and Technological Stability:** Securing consistent funding and continuing technological investments are essential for the program's expansion and sustainability.

The APDRC's VR-based training initiative is a significant advancement in the field of disaster preparedness and response training. By leveraging innovation, VR technology, and a distributed network, the program not only bolsters individual skill sets but also plays a crucial role in building resilient communities across the Asia-Pacific region. Addressing challenges like content targeting and financial stability is vital for the continued efficacy and growth of this impactful program.

CASE STUDY



CONSIDERATION FOR THE PRODUCTS LIFECYCLE

If it is determined that a product/service should scale, here is further guidance across key lifecycle points.

IMPACT / COST / BUSINESS MODELS

- **Determining the business case:** a clear agreed upon product development framework- when does a project become a product? And, what are the decision-making steps throughout the lifecycle? What is the digital maturity of the users, including the digital readiness of the processes and teams?
- **Creating tangible impact:** there are challenges to create real, tangible impact and moving beyond mere engagement with technology solutions. There is a difficulty of driving the rollout of projects and meeting the actual needs and outcomes they set out to achieve.
- **Scope:** clarity of scope of both system and implementation/usage expectations of said system is key. Keeping a good handle on scope and sequencing (and being clear about where things are at) enables moving swiftly to scale.
- **Financial sustainability:** the importance of long-term financial sustainability must balance the incoming and outgoing funds, explore alternative funding sources, and consider leveraging volunteerism and open-source platforms to manage costs effectively.
- **Open source and co-creation:** Open-source solutions and co-creation are mentioned as strategies for scaling and developing products. There is value with digital public goods, reusable components, and the ability to adapt and repurpose technology solutions based on specific needs. The network should explore the benefits of open-source development, collaboration, and sharing resources within a global network, including innersource and open source program office options.

- **Collaboration and resource sharing:** the importance of collaboration and resource sharing among national societies to overcome limited capabilities and sustain digital technologies. The need for a coordinated approach, a shared pool of resources, and collaborative roadmaps.
- **Breaking even:** is achieved by revenues/funding equalling costs. Focus needs to be put on being creative in revenue generation, but also on controlling costs and not over-engineering / over-burdening solutions, leading to large ongoing support costs.

2 DESIGN

- People are/should be central to the design process. It's vitally important to design with (not for) them, incorporating the perspectives and needs of various groups such as community members, volunteers, staff, and external partners.
- Language localization is absolutely critical for wider adoption of systems by field-level NS staff members and volunteers, and doesn't come for free. This needs effort to maintain ongoing and test when system changes are made, even if one can crowd-source initial translations.
- The design process needs to be practical and not theoretical in a conference room.
- The research and design phase should provide insights into people's needs, but we should also (already in this phase) pay attention to what people's expectations from the digital solution are (and manage those expectations).
- This is also how you create buy-in from your colleagues or people affected; based on a good and realistic understanding of what the tool is going to do for them.
- But as important as an elaborate collection and analysis of needs is, it's not always easy to do.
- It is often time-consuming and costly, with a need for travel to remote areas, so there is a need to use a (more standardized) diverse set of research methodologies, including remote ones (such as a survey).
- It is also witnessed that too often, we ask questions based on our own perspective and based on what we are trying to achieve within a project, leading to community members not always being able to express their needs properly.

- Then the solution/technology first approach creeps in, while the intention is to listen, understand and co-design first.
- When we do collect insights about people's experiences, challenges and ideas, we should find a more effective way to document these so that they can be reused across projects.
- Too often, digital tools themselves are also seen/experienced in a specific project context, and they don't become part of everyday life.
- This means uptake is minimal, and the tool stops being used altogether when the project ends.
- People need to connect with the solution you provide, that's why both design and research are important.
- As a best practice, the solution needs to be flexible as people's situations, needs and emotions change (whether it's people working at an NS or people affected by disasters and crises).

DEVELOPMENT



- **Technical considerations for scaling:** The importance of technical considerations when scaling products includes building a technical framework for scalability, cost considerations of tools used, load testing to ensure system capacity and ability to configure / modularity for adapting and expanding the product.
- **Agile development and timelines:** network-centric resources benefit from agile methodologies and tight timelines for product development. The benefits include working in small iterations, sticking to timelines, and avoiding lengthy discussions that can delay progress.

IMPLEMENTATION



- **User Adoption:** key components required to ensure a high degree of user adoption include:
 - Digital maturity of organization/digital literacy of user
 - Sensitization & Training
 - Managing Expectations

- Transparency & Guidance
 - Giving users a role in development & improvement of the tool
 - Collecting and analyzing feedback and acting on it
 - Reinforcement of new Behaviors
 - Reflect on experience & Knowledge Management
- **Leadership Support & Sponsorship** is critical to a successful implementation, including:
 - Partner with local organizations to have a strong network
 - Involve leaders of the local community
 - Ensure availability of resources
 - Highlight benefits of project
- **Technical readiness** is 'table stakes'. Without this, any implementation is a non-starter
 - Test system properly
 - Technical infrastructure
 - Data protection

5 DEVELOPMENT

- Need to have a buy in from the users / understand their needs
- Pre-sales support - and ongoing user support - when NSs are deciding whether to adopt a platform and how to adopt that platform.
- Technical capabilities, subject-matter expertise, and IT infrastructure at the NS level are critical to success.
- Design and coordinate agreements for centralised or hybrid service models for maintenance and support.
- Who helps in deciding the more appropriate configuration/module setup. Working through the NS current processes and seeing which bits of a new platform/piece of tech are needed and how the new platform/system should be configured/set up.
- Setup a service level agreement – determine from the start who is responsible for upgrading. Ensure that upgrading of software does not result in the need to purchase newer hardware.
- Skill transfer from provider of product to NS hosting/using product
- Consultant business models can be used to ensure continuity.

- Utilizing user data to understand the success of a solution, and the areas for future development.
- Community of practice – peer to peer support. For example Kenya Red Cross to provide first line support to other NS's in the region.
- Ensure NS co-develop the product where possible. e.g. Kenya Red Cross builds new features in the 121 platform. Pull Request is sent to the team at 510 before the new feature is accepted in the product. These new features are deployed to all other users.



ANNEX 1

Workshop Designs and Interview Questions

- Does your NS develop home-grown digital solutions, such as for Volunteer Management and Community Engagement?
- Has your NS developed such (home-grown) digital solutions for use by other NS?
- Do you believe we (IFRC, NS, ICRC) should develop digital solutions that are scalable with the IFRC network?
- Do you believe we should organize “centralized” (“Shared”) Support “entities/hubs” for such scaled digital solutions, to service NS that adopted these solutions?
- Would your NS be ready to work through such “centralized” (“Shared”) Support “entities/hub”?
- Would your NS in principle be ready to pay for using such “centralized” (“Shared”) Support “entities/hub”?

ANNEX 2

Participants

The following individuals and/or organizations were engaged in this activity. Note we did not track participant names for the workshops at the IFRC Global Innovation Summit and/or Connect Conference. We encourage people to add their names if they elect to be cited.

Connect Conference, about 40 people in total from IFRC and 20 National Societies.
Scaling for Impact Session (80 expressed interest), about 30 participated in person.
Failing to Scale Session (113 expressed interest), about 40 participated online and in person.

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NATIONAL SOCIETIES

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COLLABORATING AND DELIVERING DIGITAL PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS AT THE IFRC

