

# Helping more people to claim rights through digital transformation

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Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

NRC is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee, working in crises across 31 countries and providing life-saving and long-term assistance to millions of people every year.

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## The Context

“Without an identity document, you don’t exist”

Aisha and her mother-in-law fled from their home and community following an attack by armed group that systematically killed all men in her neighbourhood – her husband a victim of the assault. After days of travelling - having her ID confiscated along the way, they arrived at an IDP camp seeking refuge and assistance. On her second day at the camp, Aisha gives birth to a baby. Unable to prove through a death certificate that her husband has passed away, she cannot request a birth certificate for the baby. Aisha doesn’t really know how to solve what would otherwise seem as a simple bureaucratic step and her inability to access information tailored to her specific hurdles has become yet another factor of vulnerability for her and her family.

Aisha’s story is a fictional one, but it could have been one of the many cases the Norwegian Refugee Council’s (NRC) Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) program in Iraq encounters every day and it representative of the one of the many challenges faced by displaced populations across the globe.

Today more than 65 million people have been displaced globally. Many of them had to leave their identity and other documents (such as identity cards, birth and marriage certificates) behind when fleeing violence, conflict and disasters. While many have lost their existing documents, others did not have such documents prior to their displacement and being displaced has introduced new hurdles to having new documents issued.

Obtaining documents when you are not in the country or town where you officially reside is a considerable challenge. It may prevent displaced persons to access services, such as education shelter/housing, refugee status determination and access employment opportunities. To respond to these needs, NRC developed a legal technical programme or Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA). In addition to legal identity, ICLA focuses on the following other thematic areas: housing, land and property (HLP) rights; IDP registration; employment laws and procedures; and legal stay, refugee status determination and migration.

Legal and institutional frameworks, whether statutory, customary or religious, can either provoke or perpetuate displacement and discrimination or serve as instruments of protection and empowerment. The ICLA activities support people affected by displacement to understand, interpret and navigate these frameworks through the provision of information, counselling, and legal assistance services so they can claim and exercise their rights.

ICLA operates in 22 countries and, in 2017 alone, has served 992,204 people, making NRC the leading humanitarian organisation trying to address these issues. The potential demand for these services, unfortunately, greatly supersedes NRCs

ability to respond. This is due to the limited funding available but also to the fact that the current approaches are heavily reliant on a person to person approach. This limits NRC's ability to take services to scale or provide services in hard to reach areas or in urban contexts where displaced populations are dispersed across densely populated areas making establishing touch points substantially more challenging.

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## A snapshot of the need

Two examples of instances where the scale of the need vastly outstrips the ability of more traditional face to face approaches of delivering ICLA services can be seen in the country snapshots below:

### **The Need in Ukraine:**

More than 1.5 million people in Ukraine are displaced, and 3.4 million are in need of humanitarian assistance

There are 1.2 million crossings per year through 5 checkpoints between government areas (which NRC can access) and non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) of Ukraine

There are 1.2 million registered pensioners in NGCA, of which only 477,000 continue to receive the pensions they are entitled to. An estimated 67% of children born in NGCA and 90% of children born in Crimea do not have a birth certificate issued by the Government of Ukraine.

### **ICLA in Ukraine:**

Capacity of approximately 25 lawyers;

In the first half of 2018, NRC reached over 20,000 of Ukraine displaced people with ICLA services.

### **The Need in Iraq:**

More than 8 million people in Iraq still need protection and humanitarian aid in Iraq in 2018

According to NRC's research, 55% of displaced people need identification documents

Estimated 4.8 million displaced people need ICLA assistance in relation to legal identity matters, including civil documentation.

### **ICLA in Iraq:**

Capacity of approximately 100 lawyers in 2018, across 8 offices;

In 2017, NRC reached over 24,000, or about 0.5% of Iraqi displaced people with ICLA services.

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## Innovation and the digital transformation of ICLA Services

The traditional approaches of delivering ICLA services to target groups are limited by time, resources available, access constraints and geography. These limitations leave many of those in need of the counselling and legal assistance services without a channel to obtain those services. Digital innovation has the potential to create solutions that can overcome the obstacles currently faced by our ICLA staff. NRC has begun the process of designing the future vision of ICLA program service delivery where the power of digital and innovation serve to enhance its humanitarian efforts – specifically, by developing solutions that can act as a force for revolutionising and multiplying ICLA services across the countries where we work.

NRC believes there is a great potential to improve the service experience for people receiving assistance through our ICLA programs and increase its reach beyond the people it currently serves. Through the processes of innovation and digital transformation, NRC aims to mitigate and address the pain points commonly raised by current beneficiaries, including:

- Time and money wasted due to lack of information or inaccurate information (for example, on procedures or when to pick up documents)
- The need to travel and/or pay for transportation to access information or counselling services often needing to leave children behind and unattended
- Lack of timely and real-time updates on legal assistance cases or on changes in procedures, for example
- Long waiting times before being able to receive information and tailored counselling from NRC

Leveraging new solutions into its programmatic approaches will enable NRC to:

- Change outreach modalities from face to face to ones which enable remote contact and self-service – particularly for hard to reach beneficiaries
- Increase the speed at which information and tailored counselling is delivered
- Enhance the timeliness and accuracy of information and counselling with real-time analysis and updates
- Utilize advanced/predictive analytics for trends and patterns that affect or have the potential to affect beneficiaries
- Change the culture of assistance to one of legal and information empowerment and continuous engagement/learning
- Develop new mechanisms to access information and streamline delivery while being responsive to the needs of diverse beneficiaries
- Improve the efficacy and efficiency of case management enabling NRC to assistance to more individuals with the same level of resources

- Through efficiency gains, create additional space for teams to focus on removing legal obstacles faced by beneficiaries rather than overcoming operational constraints

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## Project Background

In 2018, NRC began working with NetHope, Microsoft, and Accenture to re-imagine ICLA digitally under the Dream Design Deliver initiative. Following an initial “Dream” workshop which landed 3 high-level concepts, NRC worked with Accenture/ADP’s design and innovation specialists at Fjord to carry in a user-centred design process. This design process engaged NRC ICLA staff at all levels of the organization with a principle focus on field staff that carry out the day to day on the ground work of providing services to beneficiaries. Beyond looking at internal dynamics, NRC staff in Iraq and Kenya carried out user research activities including focus group discussion, interviews and quantitative surveys. Through these activities, the project sought to identify key pain points and drivers for beneficiaries within the process of obtaining legal identity documents – both pain points that arise in the process of receiving assistance from a service provider and those that arise in absence of specific counselling and legal assistance services.

The outcome of this research and design phase has been the creation of a high-level design package which proposes a system architecture, design guidelines, a platform sitemap design and accompanying clickable prototypes as well as a future state service blueprint. Given the contextual variations for ICLA programmes globally, the current design of the digital components seeks to balance flexibility with standardisation allowing for products to be used at scale and for the new ways of working to be replicable across NRC country programs. While exploring the beneficiary-user side of the design, a feedback from end users consistently highlighted the concern that human interaction is entirely sacrificed to remote solutions, and the need to design hybrid, nuanced solutions such as proximity desks, community information points, towers, digital kiosks, or smartscreens with NRC stewards, just to name a few traditional options.

To date the design work has remained technology agnostic; NRC has sought to define what the ideal state would be rather than seek to fit the design within a pre-determined technology stack. Being high-level, the design package requires further detailing and there remain substantial areas where innovation will be required in order to deliver on the current vision. Understanding that the process of digital transformation is not set in stone and there are ideas, concepts, and solutions which fall outside of the current design package, NRC remains open to innovative solutions which address the needs and pain points of our beneficiaries and staff but which fall outside of the current design thinking.

Since the inception of the project, NRC has received additional support from Innovation Norway and Cisco Foundation. With this support, NRC is seeking to open the process to the community at large, consulting with a broad range of actors in both the non-profit and private sector. Through this process, NRC will seek to refine the functional and performance requirements of the design package and identify

components of the package which can be addressed either with off-the-shelf products or pre-commercial products and potentially identity components which will require further innovation and development. In parallel to the information sessions, NRC will open a process of engaging in bilateral conversations around solutions and potential partnerships. Based upon internal requirement and input/feedback from both the information sessions and consultations, NRC will develop one or more RFQs which it will launch in mid-2019 with final vendor/partner selection targeting end of Q3 2019.

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## Information Sessions, Concept Note and Bilateral Consultations

Throughout June 2019, NRC will hold information sessions, group consultations and bilateral consultations. The intent is fourfold. The first is to inform interested parties about NRC, the ICLA core competency and project vision. The second is to answer questions in relation to the needs, users, constraints, opportunities, the design work to date or any of the materials shared prior the sessions. The third is discuss and share ideas and possible solutions and enable NRC to refine the functional and performance for both the software solution and first mile solution. Lastly, the process will help us better understand what products are currently available in the market, what products are currently in development and what aspects of our design to date are not currently met either of these.

### 1.1.1 The Information Sessions and Group Consultations

The information sessions will start with a discussion around the key drivers and challenges for the ICLA core competency staff and NRC clients/beneficiaries in our country programmes. Following this there will be a brief presentation of the design work done to date and in particular the functional and performance requirements of components to deliver on vision. We would then seek to engage the participants in a conversation about existing solutions and pre-commercial release solutions which meet functional and performance requirements and areas where existing solutions are unable to meet functional and performance requirements and innovation will be necessary to achieve requirements. A question and answer session will follow, the outputs of which will be shared with all.

Important:

- All attendees must pre-register to attend
- Registration for Nairobi and San Francisco close on the 12-June-19.
- All information session will be held in English.

Date:	Time:	Location	Content
7-June-2019	09:30 to 11:30	Oslo, Norway	Presentation and Q&A
11-June-2019	13:30 to 15:30	Oslo, Norway	Presentation and Q&A
12-June-2019	15:00 to 17:00	Full Webinar	Presentation and Q&A
17-June-2019	09:30 to 10:30	Q&A Webinar	Q&A Only -
18-June-2019	18:00 to 19:00	Q&A Webinar	Presentation video

			available prior to session
The following two sessions will only be held if registration exceeds 15 participants. If participant numbers do not exceed 15 participants, a final webinar session will be held on one of the dates/times below.			
20-June-2019	Not Set	SF, California	Presentation and Q&A
25-June-2019	14:00 to 16:00	Nairobi, Kenya	Presentation and Q&A

### 1.1.2 Concept Note Submission and Bilateral consultations

Following the information sessions, NRC invites all vendors who believe that they have a viable solution strategy to submit a brief a concept note outlining the strategy. The template for submission will be available at following the launch of the first information session. The concept notes will be evaluated on a rolling basis and every vendor who submitted a concept note within the deadline will be invited for a bilateral follow up meeting. The purpose of the concept notes and bilateral meeting is for us to learn more about potential solution strategies. The learning generated will be used to scope the RFP requirements. NRC will accept concept notes that present:

- Designs and solutions responding to entirety of digital product suite and/or hardware solution
- Designs and solutions responding to distinct component of digital product suite or hardware solution
- Designs and solutions which address functional and performance requirements but do so in with an approach that differs from current design

#### Concept Note Information:

- Template
- NRC will accept concept notes from the 7-June-2019 until 5-July-2019

#### Bilateral Consultations

- Bilateral consultations will be scheduled with all of those that submit a concept note.

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## 2 The Software Solution Vision

The design work that has been carried out to date has created a future state service blueprint which maps out both the digital and non-digital interactions between NRC and beneficiaries. In order to bring this vision to fruition, NRC seeks to create a platform solution that encompasses both a beneficiary facing digital application and an internal content and process management application supporting the delivery of both digital and non-digital services. High-level site maps and prototypes have been created for both the internal platform – currently called Galileo – and the beneficiary facing application – currently entitled DC-app.

## 2.1 Galileo – The internal platform

The internal application is envisioned as being accessed through a desktop and mobile/tablet application. Given that connectivity can be an issue in many of the contexts where NRC works, access to application features and functionalities while offline will be critical to ensuring that the platform is adopted by staff members and functions cross diverse contexts. While the desktop application will have full access to all components of the platform, the mobile/tablet version of the applications would only need to have access to a limited number of components/functionalities, such as case management. For the initial phase of platform development, NRC will focus on the two most critical components required to enable the process of digital transformation with others added at later stages. In the ideal state, these two components plus others, such as tasks and workflow management, would be housed under a unified landing Galileo home page allowing for the majority of ICLA work to occur in one environment.

It should be noted that the lists of functionalities that follow are not exhaustive but rather highlight some of the most important functionalities that came out of the design process to date.

### 2.1.1 The 4C's – Content Creation, Curation & Communication

The 4C's platform component is perhaps the most critical of the platform components explored to date and it is the component that will be prioritized amongst the others for development. The 4C's is where local field teams will create and curate the ICLA content that beneficiaries seek out. The 4C's tool will enable teams to fully digitise general information content and the localised decision trees which generate personalized process recommendations for users. The tool will enable improved consistency and accuracy of information regardless of the channel access chosen by the beneficiary. It will be the one source of information for digital access points (mobile application/web), face to face counselling sessions, interactive voice response systems, SMS and call centers/hotlines. For the 4C's component, NRC needs a comprehensive solution that:

- Enables simple and intuitive creation, editing, approval and publishing of dynamic decision trees and recommended process pathways based upon those decision trees.
- Enables decision tree content to be created and published in multiple-languages.
- Enables AI-assisted monitoring of both tagged and non-tagged sources for potential changes in information and alerts NRC staff to those changes.
- Enables human-assisted ML for chatbot functionality through tagging of live chat and chatbot queries to specific full decision trees, process recommendation and/or general information content contained with the knowledge base.
- Enables user comments/feedback on discrete pieces of information provided in the public facing decision tree and process recommendation.
- Includes task management and approval processes for management of 4C content.



- Analytics on most frequently accessed content, most common decision tree process outputs, most commented on content.
- Enables management of community and NRC generated tips and recommendations
- Enables content pushes to users based upon app usage history

### **2.1.2 Case Management**

The case management aspect of the digital platform will be critical to the success of the transformation of ICLA service delivery. NRC is in the process of internally developing this system on a commercially available CRM platform. As such the information sessions and consultations will not focus on this aspect of this platform except where NRC wishes to highlight the interoperability and connectivity to either the 4C's or the DC-App.

## **2.2 DC-App - Digital Counselling**

The DC-app is the envisioned software solution through which our clients will both self-service their information and counselling needs and follow their legal assistance cases being managed by NRC staff. The application is one of the means by which NRC will seek to mitigate pain points expressed by our beneficiaries during the user research. Through this channel beneficiaries will be able to access tailored process recommendations based upon their personal profile, provide feedback or ask questions on specific content presented and get responses via chatbot and messaging functionalities, share tips with others in their community, and be able to track their personal tasks related to navigating an administrative process. Access to ICLA legal information and counselling services will no longer be bound by the physical presence of ICLA staff and reduce the need to travel to and/or attend face-to-face information sessions. For those beneficiaries that are receiving legal assistance services from NRC, there will now be a place where they can view progress on their case at their convenience, know what steps are coming next and what the case process may require from them in order to move it forward and see time estimates on remaining time for case resolution. The DC-App will rely on content pulled from the 4C's tool and the case management component of Galileo. The current functionalities for the DC-app are as follows:

- Online/Offline access to localized text, image, audio and video content
- Online/Offline access to localized decision tree navigation leading to pathway/process recommendations for most common issues and profiles
- Ability for application to pull discreet OTA content updates with minimal data draw or receive pushed to app via SMS/MMS
- AI assisted search when data connection is present
- Ability to track existing legal assistance process and manage personal task list related to a process
- Support the process of form completion, giving tips and advice on form completion, common errors and, if completed digitally, error/missing information checks.

- Tips – Present localized tips created by NRC and provide recommended Tips that NRC can curate and post
- Feedback mechanism/comments on discreet chunks of provided information and counselling
- Embedded chat and voice message functionality
- Chatbot functionality
- Appointment creation and contact request

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### 3 First mile digital access challenge

While the focus of the design work done to date has been in relation to the software components of the digital transformation, one of the main concepts that has come out of NRC's discussions with affected populations and staff in the field has been the need for a first mile digital access solution. While feedback from end users consistently highlighted the desire for human interaction in the provision of information and counselling this was juxtaposed against the desire for more consistent and permanent access to the information provided through the face to face interaction that is now the norm. The ICLA team in Kenya entitled this concept the 'Jua Desk'. This first mile solution is an as of yet undefined hybrid solution possibly combining things such as proximity desks, community information points, towers, digital kiosks, or smartscreens with NRC stewards, just to name a few of the ideas that arose during consultations.

While the number of conflict-affected populations that have access to internet enabled devices is growing, there remain significant disparities in access. The Jua Desk hybrid model is the concept envisioned as a potential means to help to overcome some of these access hurdles enabling beneficiaries to self-serve their needs for information and counselling services. The solution would need to provide access to the same dynamic information and decision tree content provided in the DC-app. Due to the fact that NRC works at times in remote locations with varying levels of connectivity, unreliable power, harsh climatic conditions and potentially limited local capacity to maintain, these Jua Desk solution would need to be robust, secure, and able to operate off the grid.

NRC seeks to engage with the humanitarian sector, innovators and the private sector to help us define the functional and performance requirements for such a 'kiosk'. We are interested in better understanding what solutions exist in the market already and what solutions might currently be in development but not yet available commercially.

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### 4 Procurement of services

Building upon the outcomes of the information sessions, concept notes and consultations, NRC will launch a process to procure the services to deliver on the digital transformation vision. The procurement process may be split into separate calls or launched as a single call. NRC reserves the right to not move forward with any

or all above components of the vision should circumstances deem a change in direction is in the best interest of NRC or our beneficiaries. For procurement that does proceed, NRC will engage in either of the below processes. Which process or mix of processes will be followed, is going to be determined by a thorough review of the consultation input.

1. PPI – The consultation process has resulted in the identification of existing or near-market products that either meet the need directly or will meet the identified requirements with modifications/adaptations or integrations.
2. PCP – The consultations have identified specific areas where existing or near-market solutions do not meet the requirements and will not be able to do so even with modifications/adaptations or integrations. In this case, NRC will engage in a pre-commercial procurement process. Through this process NRC will run a process that involves competitive development phases with the most promising solution or solution proposals. This process will build upon the design work done to date and engage in parallel collaborative processes with solution providers from detailed design, prototype development, solution testing and procurement of end product.