RedRose Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

1. **What is RedRose?**

RedRose is a data management platform that integrates with data collection tools such as ODK/Kobo to manage data (e.g. beneficiary details, market price monitoring, post-distribution surveys) and with payment mechanisms (e.g. mobile money, remittance, e-voucher) to distribute cash assistance and enable automated reconciliation in a secured and auditable manner. The platform provides monitoring and reporting capabilities and is also applicable for other assistance types such as in-kind and services.

1. **What are the benefits of RedRose?**

The RedRose data management platform processes data securely, facilitates scale-up of operations, increases speed of operation, ensures quality programming so more of the affected communities are assisted faster. It supports decision making through analytics and reporting capabilities and improves auditability and accountability to communities and donors. The use of the system increases efficiency and eliminates reliance on error prone, labour-intensive, paper-based manual processes.

1. **How can I use RedRose in my National Society?**

RedRose can be used by the NS in their cash preparedness to develop data management competencies and to prepare for emergencies. Beneficiary data from risk prone areas could be setup and updated (including pre-existing vulnerabilities and beneficiary profiles). Distribution plans could be prepared based on different scenarios, and Financial Service Providers integrated to allow for fast disbursement of cash.

During an emergency, RedRose could be used by NS to manage data for response and recovery. It could also be used for bilateral programmes with other partners not just IFRC. In addition to being a programme management tool, RedRose can be used to strengthen accountability and transparency through audit and reporting functions.

1. **What is the difference between ODK and RedRose?**

ODK is a data collection tool and RedRose is a data management platform that integrates with different data collection tools, such as ODK and Kobo. Data collection tools are useful in collecting data through surveys, for example. But once collected, data is typically extracted in excel and managed in a manual way. With RedRose, once data is available regardless of the tool used to collect it, data is processed to enable quality programming (e.g. create distribution plans, define and allocate entitlements, integrate with Financial Service Providers, reconcile transactions, etc).

1. **How does the use of RedRose promote capacity building when it seems like we are outsourcing work to third parties?**

RedRose is a software as a service with a dedicated support and maintenance. The tool and the support staff from RedRose will not do the work of the National Society. They simply provide a support service function to make sure the tool works according to the needs of the National Society. Therefore, no work related to programming is outsourced to the third party.

1. **What is the minimum requirement for using RedRose in terms of IT?**

For the general use of RedRose, it is important to have internet access to use the web portal and Android mobile devices to install the app and the survey forms. Data collection and cash distribution in the field using mobile devices is possible with no internet connectivity. Data can be uploaded and managed once there is access to the internet.

1. **How does RedRose ensure data protection?**

There are multiple layers of data protection put in place when using RedRose. On the technology itself, there are levels of encryptions both when data is at rest and when data is being transmitted from the mobile devices into the platform. The system provides end-to-end encryption. There are various layers of access rights built into the system. Contractually, there are specific data protection clauses that the IFRC has drawn with the RedRose company. RedRose is GDPR compliant, the new European Union regulation for data protection. However, it should be noted that data protection is a joint responsibility of both the programme users and the technology provider. How data is used, shared, and accessed should be done responsibly by authorized users. See the IFRC’s [Data Protection policy](https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/ourifrc/about-the-federation/ppp/ifrc-policy-on-the-protection-of-personal-data/) and [Information Security policy](https://fednet.ifrc.org/informationsecurity).

1. **There’s been negative publicity with RedRose, how does IFRC and NS’s ensure risks are mitigated?**

Data protection and IFRC’s reputation are taken seriously by the organization. When these news came up in 2017, an investigation was immediately conducted with the vendor. There was no security breach to IFRC system and data. The incident was due to a competitor having exploited weak user credentials of another RedRose client, and therefore was able to get in, not because the security of RedRose was vulnerable nor that the RedRose platform itself was compromised. This was investigated and resolved by conducting a technical audit of the solution. One thing that this issue did highlight was that the security put on the technology side is not enough. And that the responsibility and vigilance of its end users are equally important. It was important to remind IFRC staff of the [Information Security policy](https://fednet.ifrc.org/informationsecurity) and our shared responsibility to ensure we keep our data safe.

Before going into a contractual relationship with the RedRose company, the IFRC conducted a series of due diligence audits on the company’s technical solution and governance, working closely with our legal and audit departments to help ensure risks are identified and mitigated.

During the competitive bidding process, the company also strongly met evaluations requirements including legal aspects, data protection, security and financial due diligence. The IFRC IT department conducted a technical evaluation of RedRose solution for end-to-end security. Conducting this level of due diligence with multiple external audits was necessary before the Federation could get a good level of assurance and before it could advocate to other Movement partners.

National Societies expressing concern should be aware of the actions that the Federation has done and will continue to do to minimize risks.

1. **RedRose is not open-source, how does it fare with open-source products?**

There are pros and cons for selecting a commercial or open-source solution. For the IFRC, three key criteria for selection were practically important: functional fit, ready for use, and support & maintenance. RedRose is a commercial solution. There are no open-source alternatives yet at the time of the evaluation in 2017, and other commercial solutions were not sufficient in meeting our Movement requirements for cash. RedRose is also ready for use with minimal configuration since it’s already being used by other organizations and have demonstrated speed and scale of delivery. Furthermore, RedRose comes with dedicated support and maintenance, which is one of the challenges with open-source solutions. It is also noteworthy that despite being a commercial solution, RedRose integrates with open-source products such as ODK/Kobo for data collection, Kibana for data visualization, and Pentaho for business intelligence, and RedRose provides support and maintenance for these integrated tools.

1. **What steps were taken before the IFRC decided on RedRose data management?**

IFRC has attempted to build its own data management solution in 2013 using open source technology. However, the project was not successful due to different reasons including costly customizations and need for dedicated support and maintenance. Attempts to partner with other humanitarian actors that built data management systems were also not successful.

In 2017, the Cash Peer Working Group Group (CPWG)–the technical cash specialists of the Movement-whose membership comprises American RC, British RC, Canadian RC, Austrian RC, German RC, Kenya RC, Philippines RC, ICRC, IFRC, Swiss RC, Turkish RC, Netherlands RC, Danish RC and Spanish RC has identified the critical need for data management. And based on a number of key aspects of required functionality, a systematic evaluation of out-of-the-box solutions was undertaken and RedRose came on top with regard to matching the needs of our membership.

The IFRC subsequently conducted a competitive tender in which RedRose was selected not just based on functional fit, but also after evaluating technical, legal, and financial fit. Furthermore, a series of due diligence was conducted to ensure confidence in the solution for the IFRC to recommend to our members. The Global Framework Agreement between IFRC and RedRose was signed in 2018. Movement components are able to join this agreement to benefit from global discounted rates and negotiated terms and conditions.

In 2018 the IFRC has piloted RedRose in emergency contexts in Vietnam, Philippines, Kenya, and Pakistan.

1. **What languages are supported by RedRose?**

RedRose currently supports all four official languages of the IFRC: English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. It is possible to customize to support other languages. Portuguese was just implemented to support the emergency operation in Mozambique.

1. **Can I use biometrics with RedRose?**

Yes, RedRose supports biometrics use.

1. **Are we locking ourselves to one product by using RedRose (making it difficult to move to other products)?**

Data can easily be imported and exported out of RedRose. The data management competencies developed using RedRose will be similar for comparable solutions, as evident during the evaluation of the various data management tools by the CPWG. There is also No exclusivity in using RedRose. The IFRC and National Societies are open to consider another solution if a better one presents itself.

1. **How come the IFRC does not build their own data management solution?**

The IFRC has attempted to build its own data management solution before in 2014, but was not successful due to high costs and lack of capacity for sustainable support and maintenance. The IFRC has also been implementing its cloud strategy where software as a service that is fit for business purpose is seen as a benefit, lowering upfront investments and accelerating productive use. In 2018, RC2 Relief using ODK X technology was developed by the IFRC Americas Regional Office and released in late 2019; it is currently being tested for cash use cases.

1. **Is RedRose only for cash distribution? Seems too much of an investment especially if our NS’s cash coverage is low?**

RedRose can be used for all types of assistance whether you are managing data for cash, in-kind, or services. It can be used for cash for work and other conditional programmes, also. Having one platform that can accommodate various types of assistance and different modalities including vouchers, enables a comprehensive way of providing assistance therefore maximizing investments. RedRose’s added value is the ability to integrate with Financial Service Providers and hence it’s recommended for cash.

1. **How does RedRose ensure auditability, transparency?**

RedRose has functionalities that can enable tracking and recording of every transaction and activity. Audit logs can be made available to show what data has changed, who changed them, and when they were changed. RedRose integrates financial controls and segregation of duty in the approval of funds to be disbursed. The system can also automate some procedures such as assigning entitlements based on household size, or targeting based on predefined vulnerability criteria.

1. **Does having a data management solution mean our National Society is cash ready?**

Having a data management solution is an important component of being cash ready. Data readiness complements cash readiness but that alone does not mean that the National Society is cash ready. See Cash Preparedness Guidelines for more details.

1. **Is RedRose GDPR compliant?**

Yes, RedRose is GDPR compliant.

1. **Can I use RedRose to track beneficiary feedback and complaints?**

Yes, RedRose has this capability and is beneficial when linked with the beneficiary profile.

1. **What does it mean for my National Society to join the IFRC’s RedRose Global Framework Agreement?**

The IFRC’s Global Framework Agreement with RedRose allows Movement components to join the agreement and benefit from the global discount rates and negotiated terms and conditions by signing a Supplementary Agreement. This saves time and effort for NS to do their own full tendering process and negotiating separately with the vendor.

There are also global tier discounts, meaning if we as a Movement spend based on the agreed thresholds, we all benefit from additional discounts. We are also constantly looking for ways to negotiate prices given the volume of the Movement’s use of the platform. Any new discounts will be passed down to all members under the agreement.

There is also non-exclusivity in the use of the platform and it’s pay per use. If you would like to use other solutions, there are no restrictions. If your NS do not use it to distribute, there is no cost to you. There is no cost to sign up for the Supplementary Agreement either. After joining the agreement, all financial dealings will be between the NS and RedRose.

For more details, please contact the IFRC cash focal point in your region or the Geneva cash team.

1. **What is the cost involved in using RedRose?**

The costing for RedRose is a pay per use model; meaning that the system can be put in place but payment to the vendor (RedRose) is only made when an actual distribution is done with beneficiaries. The main cost is for the service fee, which is different for cash and in-kind. For cash, it’s a % of the total cash disbursed (actual disbursement not what was planned). For in-kind, it’s the volume of transactions based on a tiered costing model (also actual disbursement not planned). The service fee includes the full use of the platform and all functions (including feature upgrades), initial setup (including ODK forms and dashboards), hosting, backup, remote support and maintenance.

Other costs based on need include: hardware (e.g. mobile phones, biometric readers, smartcards, receipt printer), on-site training and support, and customization. There is no licensing fee or recurring monthly fees (unless related to disbursement). For detailed rates, please contact the IFRC cash focal point in your region, the Geneva cash team, or IFRC logistics.

1. **What sustainable mechanisms are available for paying RedRose costs?**

Use of RedRose data management could be included in the DREF or Emergency Appeal budget as an operational cost. A template could be provided to help estimate the costs.

For use of RedRose with other partners besides IFRC or for programmes not funded by the IFRC, a fundraising strategy with donors such as Partner National Societies (PNS) will be needed. Kenya RC and Lebanese RC have managed to get buy in from their partners/donors so they are able to run bilateral programmes using their own RedRose instances. At the end of the day, donors want to ensure their projects are implemented with the highest quality and full transparency and accountability (traversing funds going directly to beneficiaries). Demonstrating these through the use of RedRose and giving dashboard access to donors, so they can monitor the implementation of the program and not just wait for the final report/expenditures, builds trust and confidence.

1. **Is RedRose only for one-time operation use? What happens after the emergency operations are completed?**

The benefits of data management are realized when it is part of the day-to-day business. Capacities are not built for one time use only, and the same goes for data management. The more data management is used during preparedness, the better the response will be.

After an emergency operation where RedRose has been used, data will be available to the programme team including dashboards and reports. After a while if there’s been no activity, RedRose will ask if the programme team would like to archive the data. Check the data retention requirements of your audit and finance departments.

1. **How do we know as a National Society that RedRose would be the best data management solution for our operations? Does it depend on scale?**

RedRose is a complete data management solution. It is customisable to the different needs of the National Society and scale of operation.

In certain cases where volume is small and there’s strong capacity to manage data using Excel where principles of data integrity and auditability are strongly observed, then there may not be a need for a fully integrated solution such as RedRose. However, if there are many small volume programmes or more frequent disbursements, or there’s a possibility of scale up, then it would be best to start with a robust data management solution.

For medium to large scale response, our piloting has shown huge benefits to ensuring quality and efficiency in programming using RedRose.

1. **How long does it take to setup RedRose?**

It depends on the requirements of the operation. If most of the needs are out-of-the-box then it could take one to two weeks to setup. Customizations such as integration with Financial Service Providers could take a few weeks, therefore recommended to do as part of Cash Preparedness.

1. **How can I get help in setting up RedRose for my National Society?**

Contact the IFRC cash focal point or IT in your region for support. Otherwise contact the Geneva cash team.

1. **Are there any RedRose training materials I could use?**

Please see the Cash Hub RedRose Toolkit. Other online RedRose resources are also available on <http://training.redrosecps.com/>.