# **Introduction**

Developing an appropriate Information Management (IM) system can:

* help you deliver a timely response
* improve the ease at which you can deliver your rental assistance programme
* help you monitor your programme to make management and programmatic decisions and changes

These can all contribute to you achieving the intended outcome of your programme by increasing its effectiveness.

Systems will never be perfectly setup from the start and will need to develop over-time, however it is useful to try to develop it relatively comprehensively from the beginning and to adopt a system that has the flexibility to be developed easily. The programme manager should reach out to Information Management colleagues as early as possible for support with exploring and establishing an appropriate Information Management system.

Tools and examples from the toolkit, that may be useful to assist include:

* 2.2.2\_Example\_EspoCRM\_1pager\_20220425\_RentalAssistance.pdf
  + Introduction of EspoCRM as a software application, with explanation of functionality.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_PolandSlovakia\_IMArchitecture\_20230322\_RentalAssistance.jpg
  + Overall information management architecture of the information system designed and used in the Ukraine response in both Poland and Slovakia in 2022.
* 2.2.3\_Example\_FlowChart\_Slovakia\_ProgrammeData\_RentalAssistance
  + Flow chart showing how the different IM forms work in relation to the programme processes.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_RegistrationForm\_RentalAssistance.xlsx & 2.2.2\_Example\_RegistrationFormLayoutEspo\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + First form used in the Ukraine response 2022 in Slovakia and Poland for the initial registration of those applying to the rental programme, it was completed with the applicant directly into the case management system at either a RC branch office or a RC staffed humanitarian service point (HSP). Note that a number of the forms used on this programme were common for both rental and host family assistance.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_VerificationForm\_RentalAssistance.xlsx & 2.2.2\_Example\_VerificationFormLayoutKobo\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + Second form used in the 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia and Poland for the check of the accommodation condition, this was undertaken by an RC staff member during a visit to the property for rent.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_ApplicationForm\_RentalAssistance.xlsx & 2.2.2\_Example\_ApplicationFormLayoutEspo\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + Third form used in the 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia and Poland for enrolment of the tenant into the programme once the checks of condition and tenancy agreement have taken place. This form allows payments to be made to the tenant. This form was completed by the tenant with an RC staff member at a RC branch or staffed humanitarian service point.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_MonitoringForm\_RentalAssistance.xlsx
* 2.2.2\_Example\_ApplicationForm\_RentalAssistance.xlsx & 2.2.2\_Example\_ApplicationFormLayoutEspo\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + Third form used in the Ukraine response 2022 in Slovakia and Poland for enrolment of the tenant into the programme once the checks of condition and tenancy agreement have taken place. This form allows payments to be made to the tenant. This form was completed by the tenant with an RC staff member at a RC branch or staffed humanitarian service point.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_MonitoringFormLayoutKobo\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + Monitoring form used in the 2022-2023 Ukraine response in Slovakia and Poland for monitoring the occupancy of the rental property each month before the next rental payment is made. This form was completed by the RC staff member either through a phone-call or through a visit to the property.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_EXTRACTPenetrationTestEspoCRM\_UkrOp\_2023\_RentalAssistance.pdf
  + Extract of penetration test looking at ability for the IM system to resist exploitation from attack (actual penetration test results are sensitive and not included).
* 2.2.2\_Example\_IFRCtoNS\_DataSharingAgreementTemplate\_Apr2023\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + An example of a data sharing agreement that can be signed by IFRC and the RCRC National Society. Something similar could be drafted for sharing with other humanitarian partners.
* 2.2.2\_Tool\_PrivacyNotice\_April2023\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + A template for sharing information about data retention and privacy to be shared with people before registering for a programme.
* 2.2.2\_Example\_DraftDataDisposalProtocols\_RentalAssistance.docx
  + Draft protocol for the disposal of data. Note that this document is still for review.

## **Different Types of System**

### **Excel “database”**

Most practitioners will use something that they have used or seen in the past as a base. For many in 2023 this is still a Microsoft Excel “database” often with [Kobotoolbox](https://www.kobotoolbox.org/) being used for various forms and then manual copy and paste of imports from Kobo. While this obviously has functionality limitations and data-protection risks, this is still a valid approach, especially when there is no Information Management technical support available, where access to data can be limited and data-protection risks can be managed, and where the programme is small.

### **EspoCRM**

For rental assistance and host family support programmes in Poland and Slovakia in 2022/ 2023, [Netherlands Red Cross 510](https://www.510.global/) supported the IFRC Ukraine and neighbouring countries operations by helping to set up a system that utilised [EspoCRM](https://www.espocrm.com/). This is an open-source (i.e. free or very low cost) customer relationship management software. See annex for example of the data management architecture. The tool has the following functionality:

* Flexible customization of fields, layouts and models, making it easy to tailor to the specific needs and workflows of the user
* 2 step-authentication for access to reduce data security risks
* Application Programming Interface (APIs ) with:
  + Financial service providers or cash platforms (such as [RedRose](https://www.redrosecps.com/) and [121](https://www.121.global/)) for the information management related to the cash payments and which can send cash payments via financial service providers (FSPs) that RedRose has agreements in place with such as Moneygram for example. Note that there are still approvals from cash and voucher (CVA) and finance colleagues in this process.
  + [Twillio](https://www.twilio.com/) which can send SMS/Whatsapp messages and makes calls or send emails. Other communication platforms can also be used with this software.
  + [Kobo](https://www.kobotoolbox.org/) which can be used for off-line forms which can then be uploaded when connectivity allows with the information being seamlessly transferred into EspoCRM.
  + For the response to Ukraine, the feedback coding framework was included to facilitate the monitoring and visualisation of the feedback collected.
* User management functionalities, to assign different user permission levels
* Real time reports and analytics/dashboards to keep track of the progress of your program

There are many different types of IM system that can be used. You should seek Information Management colleagues support to ensure you have a system appropriate for your programme.

See: 2.2.2\_Example\_EspoCRM\_1pager\_20220425\_RentalAssistance.pdf

## **Data Protection**

Managing the Data protection risks are likely to be a key consideration in any system adopted. This will relate to the IM system you adopt, the data you collect, the training of staff, and how you inform and work with the people you are supporting.

For more information see: <https://www.ifrc.org/document/data-protection-overview-and-best-practices> this resource is also very useful and practical: [IFRC (2021) Practical Guidance for Data Protection in Cash and Voucher Assistance](https://www.ifrc.org/document/practical-guidance-data-protection-cash-and-voucher-assistance). Further information can also be found here:

Regional Focal Points can be found [here](https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/sites/DataProtectionToolkit2/SitePages/Regional-Focal-Points.aspx) or you can contact: [Dataprotection@ifrc.org](mailto:Dataprotection@ifrc.org)

Key considerations include:

* IFRC will always strive to comply with national legislation, even if as per our status agreement as an International Organisation (where this exists) we do not to have to specifically comply. This may have an impact as to how data is collected, stored and managed. For example the location of servers related to an IM system may have to be moved from their default.
* We will often be the “Data Controller” where we are determining what data is collected, how it will be processed, and how it will be stored. This means we will have specific responsibilities.
* The legitimate basis in many rental assistance programmes will be informed consent, so when collecting data, we must tell people in simple terms:
  + Why we are collecting the data
  + What we will do with the data
  + How it will be stored and when it will be deleted.
* We should always try to minimise the data we collect to that which we really need for the function of the programme.
* Generally, if we are sharing data we need to both ask the consent of those whose data we may share, and also have a data sharing agreement in place.
* We may test our system to check data security (for example through a penetration test), this can often involve using a third party and we may need to budget for this. The Global Service Centre, Budapest, IFRC can advise on this. Contact IFRC IT Security (currently under Digital Transformation Department).

## **Expected costs for IM support**

**Scenario 1: IM needs of the program correspond with existing EspoCRM data models**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Estimation of required hours** | **Costs** |
| Support with identifying and mapping IM needs | 20h |  |
| Development of system (adapting existing model to context | 60h |  |
| User training | 10h |  |
| Maintenance and technical support | 8h per week (during lifespan of the program, example: 6 months = 208h) |  |
| Travel costs in-country visit |  | €10000 |
| Total | 298h |  |

**Scenario 2: IM needs of the program do not correspond with existing EspoCRM data models**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Estimation of required hours** | **Costs** |
| Support with identifying and mapping IM needs | 20h |  |
| Development of system (adapting existing model to context | 240h |  |
| User training | 20h |  |
| Maintenance and technical support | 8 hours per week (during lifespan of the program, example: 6 months = 208h) |  |
| Travel costs in-country visit |  | €10000 |
| Total | 488h |  |

+ Please allow 10,000 CHF for penetration testing (2 rounds)

# **Designing the Information Management System**

1. Ask the IFRC IM Coordinator for support in this process:

Where no IFRC IM Coordinator exists or even when they exist and we may write to the following for support:

1. Write to Netherlands RC 510: [support@510.global](mailto:support@510.global)
2. Surge Information Management Support (SIMS) to request assistance.

**Typical time frame: 1 - 2 day**

Ask Information Management colleagues for support

Dfdfd

1. Together with IM colleague, for every step in the programme process chart (application, housing standard verification etc.) list out the information management needs (e.g. application form, selection, etc. ) at each step.
2. List out the fields of information that we will need (essential for the programme to function, ignore that which is just nice to have) for each step.
3. Map out who (what profiles) needs to have access to what data and systems.
4. Consult internally with key stakeholders such as Finance, Logistics, Ops Management related to their IM needs.
5. Budget for IM support – financial & human resource
6. Recruit IM officer if needed.

**Typical time frame: 1 - 2 days to 2 months (incl. recruitment)**

Map and plan IM system needs against the programme steps

Initial Development of IM System

1. Ideally IM colleagues will lead on this step. Based on the defined IM needs, either a new data model and set-up can be created or a modification or repurposing of a previously used model.
2. In some situations, Shelter and Settlement practitioner or Cash colleagues may lead on development of the system.

**Typical time frame: 1 week to 2 months**

1. Test the functionality of system with test cases etc. Make sure that tests are undertaken with different types of users (e.g. officer, manager, person affected in case of self-registration)

**Typical time frame: 1 - 2 day**

Testing of system

1. Train all those who will use the system. Multiple teams might need to be involved in the training. For example, CEA team to train staff and volunteers in feedback management.
2. In some instances, some aspects of testing of the system can also be incorporated as part of the training.

**Typical time frame: 1 - 2 day**

Training on IM system

1. Establish a communication channel (e.g. WhatsApp or Teams chat for example) with users of the system (e.g. users in the branch) and programme lead to answer questions
2. Set up communication channel with IM colleagues and programme lead to request for technical support
3. Ensure to budget for IM support for maintenance during the all months the system will be used (in case the system is not hosted by the National Society)
4. Ensure you regularly check in with users as to what modifications are required for the smooth running of the profile.
5. Where selection is undertaken using the IM system it is likely that eligibility scoring may need to be revised to ensure there is adequate and appropriate enrolment on the programme

Ongoing modifications / development and maintenance

1. Consult with data protection focal point on IM system. See: <https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/sites/DataProtectionToolkit2> for list of focal points. Or email [DataProtection@ifrc.org](mailto:DataProtection@ifrc.org), if you can not access this
2. Undertake a data protection impact assessment (DPIA)
3. Schedule and budget for a penetration test if required from discussions with the data protection focal point. Circa 10,000 CHF at 2023 costs.

**Typical time frame: 1 day to 1 month (incl. penetration test)**

Data Protection

1. IFRC and the NS may already have a data sharing agreement in place review and update this, in light of the different staff, IM systems and data that will need to be shared when running the programme.
2. Any agency that the RC intends to share data with will require a data sharing agreement to ensure that data is properly managed as to what those sharing data (the recipients for example) have consented to, and that the data is protected.
3. Engage with data protection focal points as early as possible since agreements take time.
4. Financial Service Providers (FSPs), Governments, NGOs/CSOs for referrals etc. may all require agreements to be in place.

Data Sharing Agreements

1. Some data may need to be held for legitimate business purposes. For example, audit purposes. Consult with legal and finance regarding this and timeframes. This may be specific to the laws of the country of operation, and also be determined by IFRC policy.
2. Destroy data that is no longer required.
3. In general, even if data does need to be kept for audit purposes it may be possible to code and data in such a way that identifiers of recipients are not able to be seen except through accessing a file that matches the code with a name and other contact information, with this file only available to select staff members.

Close down

See the Tools and Examples in the Toolkit related to a number of the areas above.

**Data Management Architecture for Rental Assistance and Host Family Support Programme in Slovakia and Poland, 2023. Ukraine and Neighbouring Country Response Programme 2022 – 2024.**

