Capacity Building Fund (CBF)
Report

Please submit the report in electronic copy to CBF.office@ifrc.org by the deadline specified for your initiative.
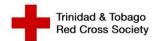*In addition to this form, we welcome photos, short videos and any other material for the following purposes:*

- *illustrating the progress and outcomes of your initiative*
- *highlighting any learning derived from the initiative, especially learning that you are applying or that may be of value to other National Societies*

Such material may be used in communications by the Fund, including public communications. Please ensure you have any necessary authorization from individuals appearing in photos and videos.

1. Name of National Society	
Trinidad & Tobago Red Cross Society	
2. National Society focal point	
Name: Stephan Kishore	
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3. IFRC focal point (country/cluster delegation)	
Name: Marisa Clarke Marshall	
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4. Title of initiative	
Digital Transformation Strategy Plan 2022-2026 (Phase 1)	
5. Total amount of grant in CHF	
50,000	
6. Category of the approved initiative	
☐ Integrity, Transparency and Accountability	
☐ Financial Sustainability	
☐ Youth and Volunteering Development	
☒ Systems Development and Digital Transformation	
7. Report date	
1 MARCH 2023	
8. What concrete results were achieved through implementation of this initiative?	

The CBF project aimed to support the TTRCS achieve the deliverables of phase one of its Digital Transformation Strategy. In this phase the organization focused on upgrading all computer hardware at its Headquarters and its three Branches as well as its server storage capacity. The out-of-date equipment previously used by staff on a day-to-day basis posed many challenges with productivity and downtime when equipment failed and data was lost. The old computer equipment also did not meet the requirements of today's software demands where integration and collaboration in shared spaces was needed. A total of 32 new devices which included 17 desktop computers and 15 laptop computers were purchased to ensure all staff had an upgraded machine which met their specific processing needs for the tasks they would have to perform. These machines were

purchased after an internal assessment of capacity needs was done by the internal TTRCS team to ensure new machines would meet the current processing requirements as well as be future proof to upgrade operating systems as well as software for the next three to five years.

One of the other major challenges identified in the Digital Transformation Strategy was the lack of integration and collaboration between the Departments of the organization as processes and physical systems did not allow for seamless teamwork. Ad hoc approaches meant greater challenges in teams working together coupled with the low digital capacity with some staff to understand how to immediately use new software tools. To fix this gap, all machines should be integrated onto its server, which would house the archived documents and digital history of the organization. Once the server was optimally utilized, all files and working documents was set up in an easily understandable hierarchy with user permissions referenced based on a need-to-know basis and workspaces created to ensure seamless collaboration of teams within the organization. The use of the server also meant that file management would be improved and the risk of loss of data would be reduced to almost zero since the entire system is backed up in multiple spaces as well as in the cloud.

With a modern IT hardware infrastructure, TTRCS needed to improve its digital capacity of its staff to function effectively and get the most out of the new technology. A Change Management Consultant was recruited to support the long-term development of the TTRCS staff which included a skills assessment, targeted training, and a roadmap to ensuring skills were improved in the long-term as more advanced digital resources will be implemented over the next five years. During the timeframe of the project the Change Management Consultant had initial meetings with the TTRCS management and staff to conduct the initial assessment and chart an implementation plan moving forward. Some key institutional highlights that will be worked on over the next few months include enhancing digital literacy of all staff, development of a local intranet to make information sharing internally more accessible and improving the usability and functionality of the website and social media accounts to reach more people.

One key outcome of the project was the onboarding of an inhouse IT support officer. This proved to be one of the most useful elements of the CBF project since it ensured immediate IT support to personnel who needed it, but also reduced downtime by over 95% and significantly improved productivity since the TTRCS did not have to outsource IT support which usually meant weeks of downtime for a machine to be sent to an offsite IT contractor for repairs. Moving forward the TTRCS will ensure continuity of this position.

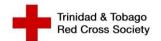| 9. Did you face any of the risks identified during the planning phase? What actions did you take in this respect? |
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There were several bottlenecks encountered during the implementation of the project, namely due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic and the limitation of suppliers to have capacity and resources to provide timely responses. Noting that over 78% of the budget of the project specifically focused on tangible hardware and software procurements, the TTRCS had to ensure that the right equipment was being procured which meant several consultations both locally and regionally. After the initial mapping of capacity needs the TTRCS created a draft tender proposal which was sent to the local IFRC Cluster Officer to review by their IT consulting specialist. After local approval, it was sent to the IFRC Regional Office in Panama for a second round of scrutiny was well as approval from the Senior Procurement Officer to ensure all legal terms were clear for the launch of the tender. During the first round, over 12 suppliers were invited to bid with only four having the capacity to deliver options based on our specifications. Upon review, however, none of the offers met our requirements or were financially reasonable. A second round of tendering was needed to ensure we met our basic requirements and could acquire the items within the budget. We were successful on the second tender with a supplier being able to exceed our requirements and was very cost effective. After review the TTRCS was able to procure nine additional machines based on the savings it realized.

10. Did you have to change anything in your plan? If so, what changed, and why?

The original plan was maintained throughout the project and this was possible because the implementation was guided by the Digital Transformation Strategy and plan which clearly guides the processes for digital capacity enhancement. The only changes were related to the timeline as an extension had to be applied for due to the inability to acquire the computer equipment on the first tender.

11. What was the impact of the initiative? What changed within the National Society as a result of carrying out this initiative?

The TTRCS has a solid foundation for future digital capacity enhancements which are guided by the Digital Transformation Strategy. The equipment will ensure that the TTRCS is able to operate effectively without major computer related issues for at least the next three to five years once the proper maintenance schedules are implemented. The initial training received and future training pathways developed for each department and for each based on the projected digital enhancements moving forward already solidifies the roadmap on how the TTRCS will achieve its digital capacity objectives over the next four years. Some secondary impacts relate to the improved efficiency of the staff to provide valuable services to the communities we serve, including easier communications with them via social media and improved engagement and the ability to receive better feedback. Overtime we anticipate seeing more commercial opportunities come to the Business Unit of the TTRCS as we can

also communicate to our clients more effectively. It is also anticipated that there will be enhanced analysis of data to deepen our engagement and evidence-based strategies.

12. What did you learn in carrying out this initiative?

The TTRCS has struggled with digital transformation for many years partly due to financial challenges, but largely due to the technical capacity of staff which has been a hinderance in seeking concrete actions to resolve digital issues that may compound effective implementation and actions. However, the organization realized its ongoing challenges in doing business and meeting the demands of the communities who were also advancing digitally. To maintain relevance, it had to face the possible risk and take steps to improve its digital maturity. The approach however was the most important as to not create a "shock" to the culture of the organization. The staff reluctancy towards change while perceived inevitable, the phased approaches for change management is taken more palatably and a realistic learning pathway was created to ensure staff understood what capacity building was required over the coming years as the organization progresses with digital transformation.

13. If you were to carry out this initiative again, what would you do differently and why? What advice would you give to others planning to do something similar?

Digital transformation is one of the key actions an organization can take to ensure it remains relevant and can meet the demands of the rapidly growing digital world. Even in the most remote areas, communities are counting on digital means to access information, conduct daily household business activities and make digital payments. As an organization that has put up many barriers to change, the process involved commitment of the management and staff to embrace the change. From the strategic approach, it also meant creating an implementation plan that was not too drastic to create a culture shock, but to start with a thorough participative assessment of the individuals who would be required to adapt to the new systems and identify their individual weaknesses and shortcomings. The next step will require developing a capacity building plan tailored to each person to ensure, not only the technical skill gaps are addressed but the root cause of why the "fear" of digital transformation exists. TTRCS recognizes the importance of engagement and the involvement of our staff, as ultimately they are the ones who will fuel and sustain the momentum of the digital space. The internal positive change that is required will take time, training and further investment in our staff and in our interconnectivity, to realize true success of digital transformation.

14. Financial Report: please annex your financial report using the provided template.