PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

The following set of principles represents a concerted effort by donors to capture the most important lessons learned by the development community in the implementation of technology-enabled programs. Having evolved from a previous set of implementer precepts endorsed by over 300 organizations, these principles seek to serve as a set of living guidelines that are meant to inform, but not dictate, the design of technology-enabled development programs.

ONE: DESIGN WITH THE USER

- > Develop context-appropriate solutions informed by user needs.
- Include all user groups in planning, development, implementation, and assessment.
- > Develop projects in an incremental and iterative manner.
- > Design solutions that learn from and enhance existing workflows, and plan for organizational adaptation.
- > Ensure solutions are sensitive to, and useful for, the most marginalized populations: women, children, those with disabilities, and those affected by conflict and disaster.

TWO: UNDERSTAND THE **ECOSYSTEM**

- > Participate in networks and communities of like-minded practitioners.
- > Align to existing technological, legal, and regulatory policies.

THREE: DESIGN FOR SCALE

- > Design for scale from the start, and assess and mitigate dependencies that might limit ability to scale.
- Employ a "systems" approach to design, considering implications of design beyond an immediate project.
- > Be replicable and customizable in other countries and contexts.
- > Demonstrate impact before scaling a solution.
- > Analyze all technology choices through the lens of national and regional scale.
- **>** Factor in partnerships from the beginning, and start early negotiations.



FOUR: BUILD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- Plan for sustainability from the start, including planning for long-term financial health, e.g., assessing total cost of ownership.
- Utilize and invest in local communities and developers by default, and help catalyze their growth.
- > Engage with local governments to ensure integration into national strategy, and identify high-level government advocates.



FIVE: BE DATA DRIVEN

- > Design projects so that impact can be measured at discrete milestones with a focus on outcomes rather than outputs.
- > Evaluate innovative solutions and areas where there are gaps in data and evidence.
- > Use real-time information to monitor and inform management decisions at all levels.
- **>** When possible, leverage data as a by-product of user actions and transactions for assessments.



SIX: USE OPEN DATA, OPEN STANDARDS, OPEN SOURCE, **OPEN INNOVATION**

- > Adopt and expand existing open standards.
- > Open data and functionalities, and expose them in documented APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) where use by a larger community is possible.
- Invest in software as a public good.
- **>** Develop software to be open source by default with the code made available in public repositories and supported through developer communities.



SEVEN: REUSE AND IMPROVE

- > Use, modify, and extend existing tools, platforms, and frameworks when possible.
- > Develop in modular ways favoring approaches that are interoperable over those that are monolithic by design.

EIGHT: ADDRESS PRIVACY & SECURITY

- > Assess and mitigate risks to the security of users and their data.
- Consider the context and needs for privacy of personally identifiable information when designing solutions and mitigate accordingly.
- > Ensure equity and fairness in co-creation, and protect the best interests of the end-users.

NINE: BE COLLABORATIVE

- > Engage diverse expertise across disciplines and industries at all
- > Work across sector silos to create coordinated and more holistic approaches.
- **>** Document work, results, processes, and best practices, and share them widely.
- > Publish materials under a Creative Commons license by default, with strong rationale if another licensing approach is taken.

For more information, visit DIGITALPRINCIPLES.ORG