

# The IRD Program

## In-Country Recruitment Database

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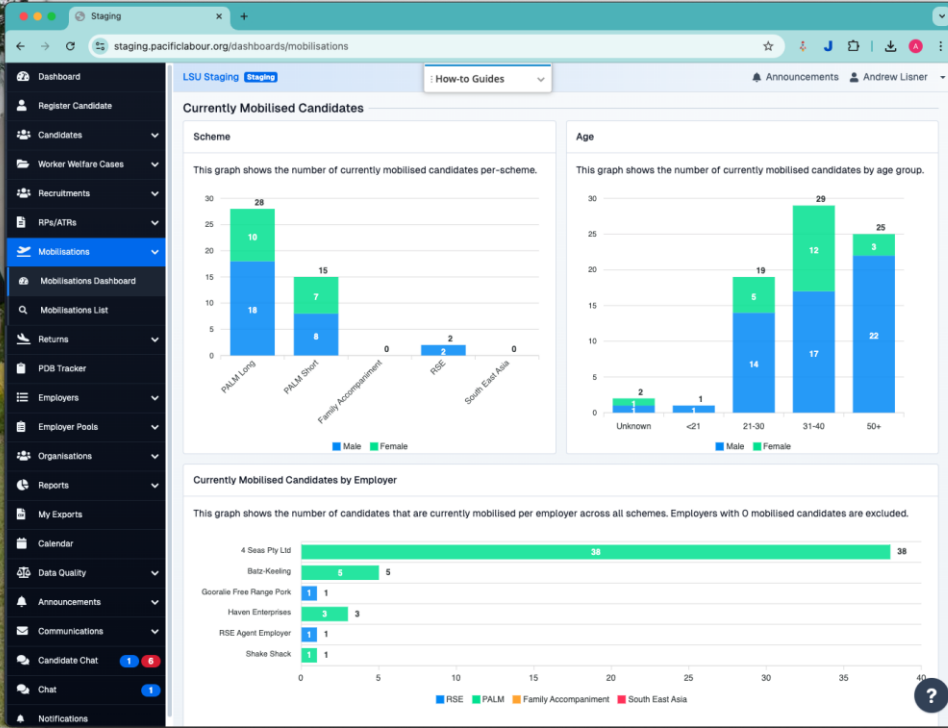


Australian Government





# A project of people, processes and platforms





# Welcome

Topics for today:

- The background setting for the IRD.
- The structure and objectives of the IRD program.
- The case for technology investment in development projects.
- Key patterns for success, and pitfalls to avoid (The Dos and Don'ts).



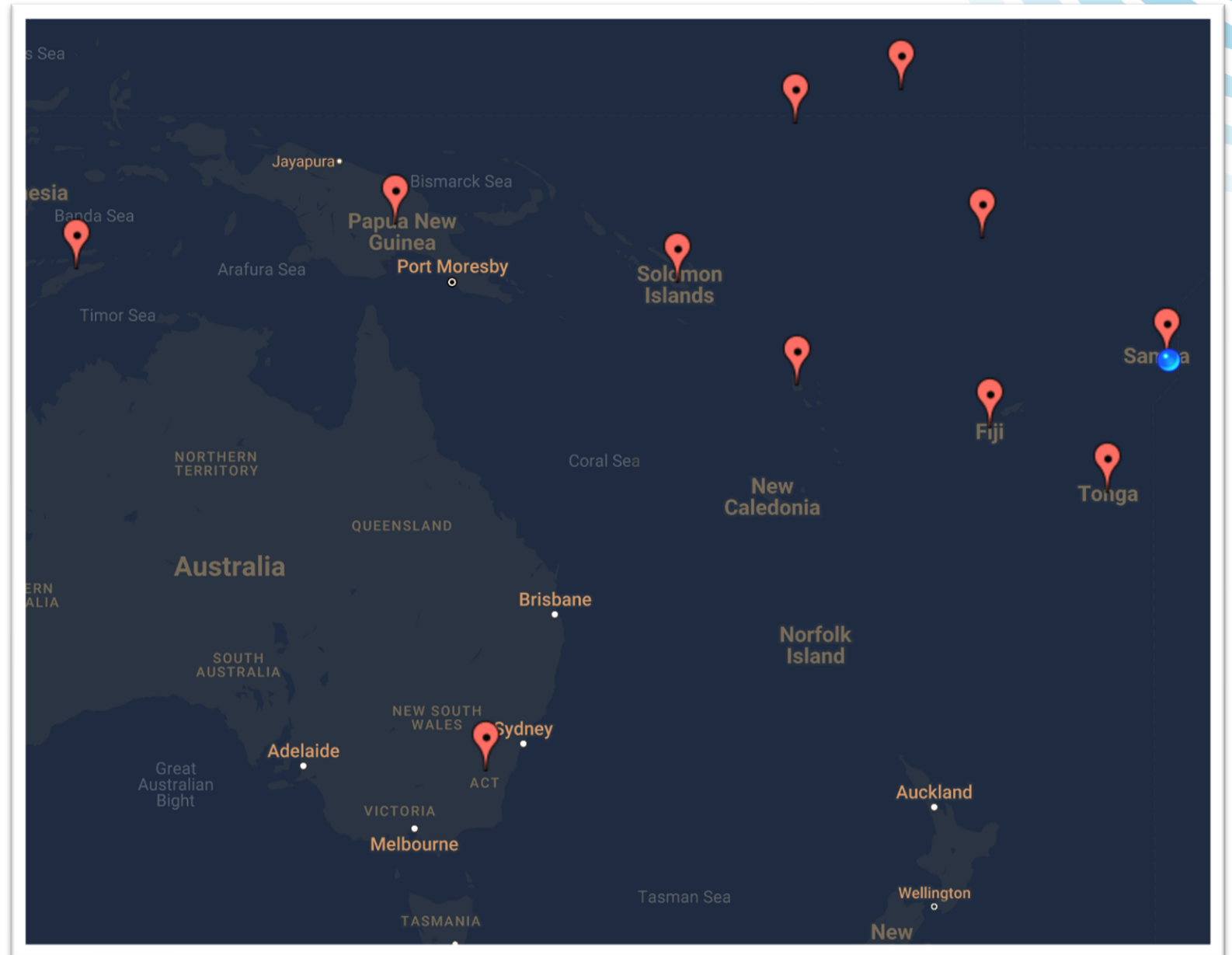
# About me

- Serves as CIO of Pacific Labour Facility as a consultant.
- Designed and oversaw several programs of works including PALMIS, the PALM Approved Employer Portal, and IRD.
- Over 15 years of delivery in enterprise and government software.
- The last 5 years have been focused on international development.
- Motivated by aligning technologies with investment strategies to drive impacts and outcomes.



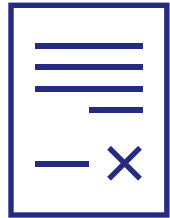
# About the IRD

- Australian Government funded initiative through DFAT who partners with the PLF to support PALM sending country Labour Sending Units (LSUs)
- Custom-built software platform for labour mobility management
- Deployed across 10 countries
- Empowers countries with accurate worker data fed by LSU operations and PALMIS in Australia

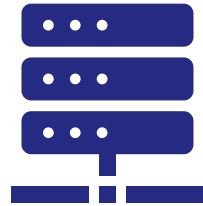


# The four parts of the IRD program

The IRD is an ambitious program made up of:



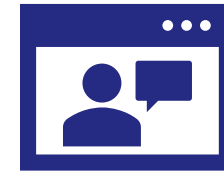
MOUs/  
Agreements



Infrastructure



Training



Custom  
Software

Add Selected Candidates to Shortlist

# IRD Benefits to Participating Countries

(to name a few)



Enhanced Recruitment Process



Ownership and control of data



Real-time data and reports



Increased team efficiency



Improved internal and external communication



Staff capacity and capability development



New Data on Workers from the Australian Government

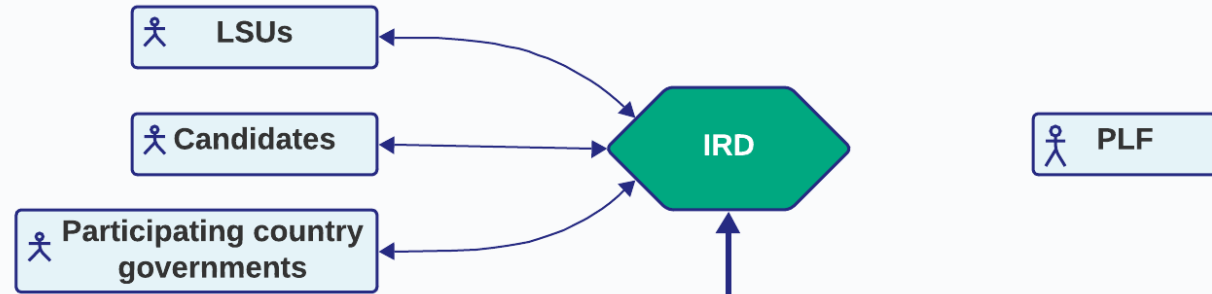


Tools that improve data quality and consistency

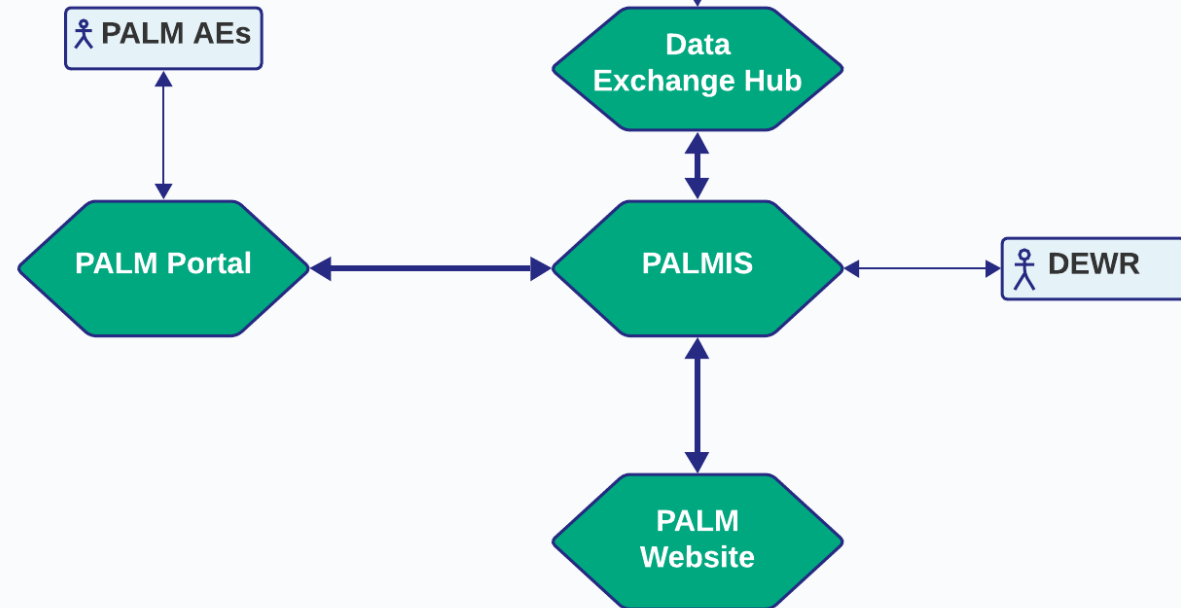
# IRD as a part of the PALM Ecosystem

- Data flows from Supply and Demand sides of LM market.
- PIC consents to data sharing, and only shares minimum required data (e.g. only candidates to be sent to a given Employer).
- IRDs now hosted in 10 PIC Government Ministries, with infrastructure in-country run and owned by their ICT Ministries
- Underpinned with MOUs for management, security, data sharing

Hosted by the Participating Country



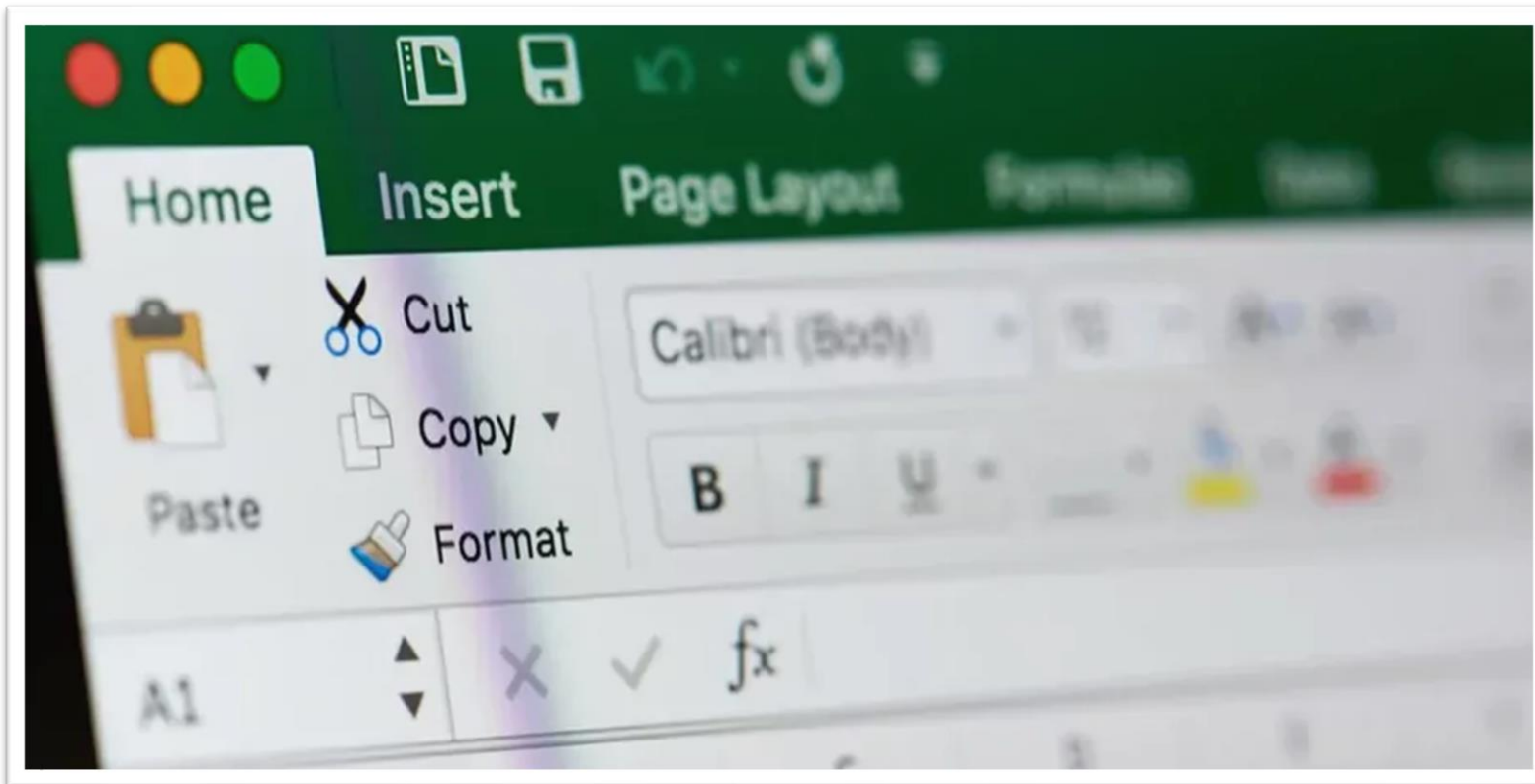
Hosted by DEWR





# Before we started building

Early consultations taught us that PICs leaned on Excel to manage all these difficult areas of LM operations, with its many functional limitations and issues compounding as the scale and demands of LM grew.



- Difficulties collaborating.
- Limited data QA.
- Tendency to share Excel files insecurely (inc. Passports and Medicals).
- Difficulty in relating separate documents to excel records.
- Impossible to scale.



# Consultation is Key

Countries shaped the system, infrastructure,  
agreements and training

# Building an approach that empowers countries



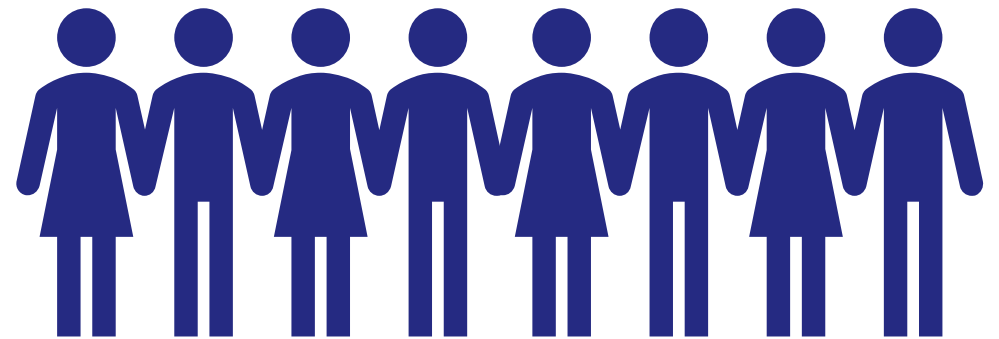
The goals of the IRD program are:

1. Empower countries by giving them control over their systems.
2. Creating value, independence, and meeting donor policy goals.
3. Support worker welfare and positive recruitment outcomes.
4. Support the sustainable growth of Labour Mobility across the region.
5. Facilitate monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement for all stakeholders.
6. Enable streamlined and workflow-driven data collection, clear business processes, auditing/transparency, one central system of truth and build resiliency of delivery in PICs.
7. Achieve long-term sustainability and capacity building in PICs, with lasting effects and independence from external support after the program ends.

# The IRD Community of Practice

## What makes a Community of Practice (CoP)?

- Common strategic interests
- Transparency and active knowledge sharing
- Collaborative problem solving



The IRD CoP Engages 20 Targeted Stakeholders in 10 Countries



# The IRD Community of Practice

## How do you create a CoP centred on technology?

- Develop personal leadership and courage in department representatives
- Deliver training on software in the different personas of their users
- Create time, space and channels for them to engage
- Ensure their leaders understand the importance of the CoP
- Build links between CoP members to enable growth

# The IRD Community of Practice

## What does the IRD CoP look like?

- IRD Coordinators and Officers in each country (around 20) who are embedded in the PIC department
- Training activities are delivered:
  - Digitally, fortnightly
  - In-country every 3-6 months
  - Through twice-yearly workshops in the Pacific
- Typically, CoP members will reach out digitally when they need ad-hoc assistance

# IRD Security, Privacy and Ownership

Each country fully owns and controls its data



Security of the  
IRDs, access  
and  
infrastructure  
protection are  
critical



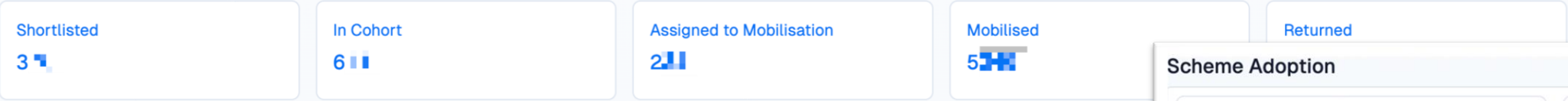
Privacy and  
consent is taken  
seriously



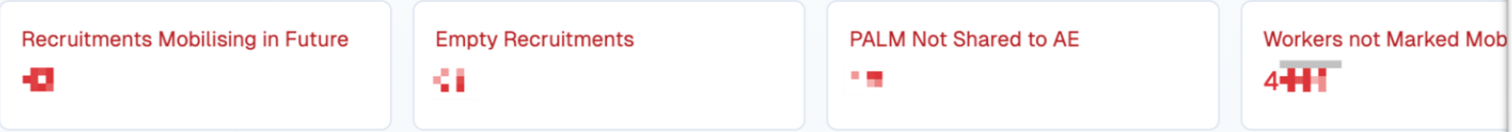
Ownership of  
the IRD and the  
data sits with  
the country

# Reporting as an Engagement Tool

## Candidate Statuses



## Data Quality



## Workload Management

RECRUITMENT CONTACT	CURRENT RECRUITMENTS	TARGET WORKERS	SELECTED WORKERS	MOBILISATIONS NEXT 7
[Icon]	4	30	36	0 / 0
[Icon]	2	11	10	0 / 0

Scheme Adoption

PALM Long Candidates mobilised in this period

PALM Long Recruitment Managers

PALM Short Candidates mobilised in this period

PALM Short Recruitment Managers

## User Activity

# Active Users per Day

New Users

User Engagement Rate  
77.94%

## Estimated Income Analysis

01/01/2024

 → 

31/12/2024

Average Min Weekly Hours  
34.37

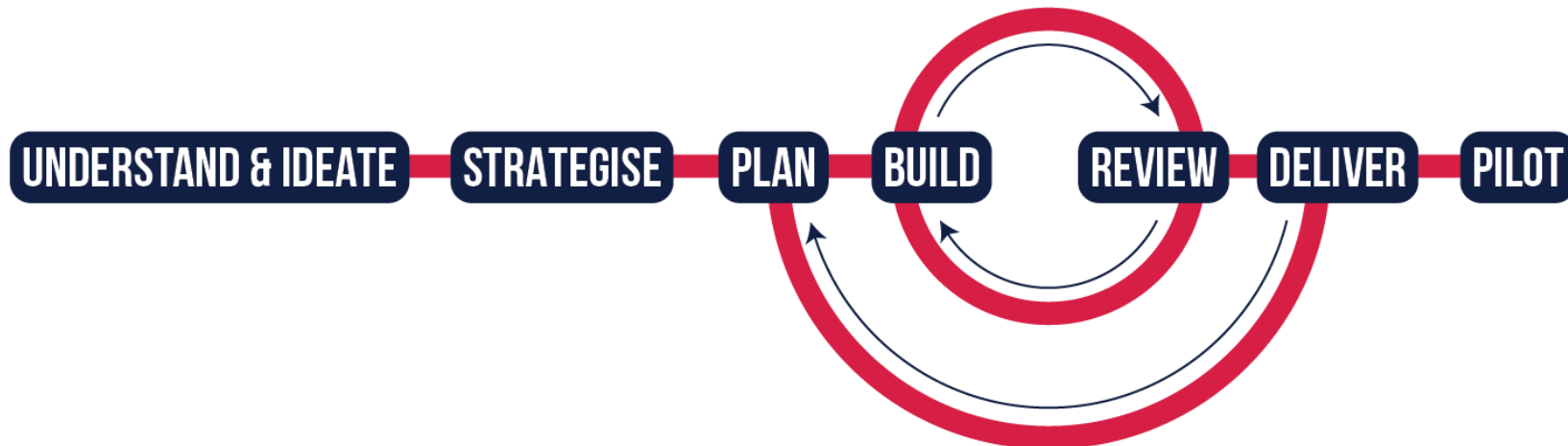
Average Hourly Rate  
1.15

Estimated Total Earnings  
\$1,150.00



# Flexibility in Technology Projects

- Technology projects require a willingness to adapt or simplify. Pilot mini versions as the first attempt at an idea.
- Scrapping or refining processes takes time but is essential for success.
- Abandoning a first attempt to try something different is not “lost effort” if you learned something you otherwise would not have learned. This is a feature of adaptive and iterative delivery.
- We based our methods on agile, and adjusted them to our environmental realities.



# Technology as an amplifier of other investments

- Technology amplified other investments such as education, governance and infrastructure.
- Scrapping or refining processes takes time but is essential for success.
- Enhances transparency and accountability in government processes.
- Facilitates economic development by improving workforce management and employability.
- Supports faster decision-making through real-time data.
- Creates long-term efficiencies by automating manual processes and focusing on high value activities.
- Selection of the technology approach (in this case custom) is important.



# Myths of tech programs in international development



## Myths

- It is cheaper and less risky to buy an off-the-shelf technology solution.
- The success of a technology program depends solely on the “techy” people. The “business people / operations people” are the customer and “IT” is the service provider.

## Realities

- Off-the-shelf solutions are costly to implement and adapt to your organisation. Value-for-money suffers when business needs are constrained to adapt to technology instead of the other way around. Ongoing licenses impact sustainability and can be too expensive for PICs to fund.
- The success of technology programs is driven by good governance and engagement with stakeholders of all levels. Business and IT are responsible for the quality of the product. The software should become the customer’s day to day and the business/operations tool for management.

# The “Dos” of tech programs in international development

- Invest in stakeholder engagement and flexibility.
- Build long-term capacity, not dependency.
- Prioritise training and ongoing support.
- Design with sustainability in mind.
- Design software specifically for the user, the processes, policies, and operations they go through every week.
- Be optimistic. Inspire, build a vision and share it early, be realistic with stakeholders, and make them part of the journey.
- Constantly adapt.
- Focus on adapting and engaging stakeholders at every level, understanding politics and culture.





# The “Don’ts”

- Ignore cultural and political nuances.
- Let infrastructure issues limit your imagination.
- Assume technology will solve all problems.
- Underestimate the need for continuous monitoring and improvement.
- Overcomplicate the solution – keep it user-friendly.
- Assume a generic or off-the-shelf solution will work.
- Try to rush digital transformation.
- Assume generic or typical project practices will work just because they have in other contexts and industries.
- Assume technology infrastructure limitations should prevent innovation.

# The scale of IRD

10

Countries using IRD

600+

Users

969,662

Documents uploaded

78+

Releases

9,020

Recruitments

23,000

Candidates mobilised per year

250,000

Candidates registered

6286+

Changes

Note: some statistics have been rounded for simplicity

# Adoption Timeline

**2019**  
Pilot,  
consultation and  
principles

**2021**  
Rollout to new  
Countries

**2023**  
7 countries deployed and connected  
Data sharing with DEWR PALMIS

**2020**  
Early Adopting Countries  
Expansion of product

**2022**  
Ongoing consultation,  
training and adoption

**2024**  
10 countries  
deployed and  
connected. Phase 2  
pilots commenced





## Q&A and Discussion