Introduction

St. John Ambulance, Kenya - Head Office (hereby referred to as ‘St. John’) was given a grant of **USD 9,500** to develop a Volunteer Management System (VMS); to better manage its volunteers – who are spread across its nine regions in the country, as well international ones and donors.

The grant was as a result of an application made by Mr. Davis Onsakia, a member of the ISOC Kenya Chapter as well as ISOC global, who is the current Chairman of the ICT Committee at St. John.

VMS implementation technologies

The ICT Committee members and St. John agreed that the to-be implemented VMS must be developed based on open source software and technologies. This was to ensure continuity and sustainability of the implemented system: where we didn’t envisage St. John being demanded to pay for license fees for any of the base systems or technologies that the system will be running on. This was due to the fact that the grant was for rollout of the system and not necessarily support. In addition to the above, there is not better technology than open source systems and technologies since these allow you to have access to the source code for manipulation and customization as and when required by a user. This is not the case in proprietary/commercials applications and systems.

Procurement

Sourcing for the developer of the system was done by advertising this tender on the St. John website as well as communicating the same to a wider audience via channels like:

- KICTANET – the country’s main mailing list in regard to ICT issues;
- ISOC – ISOC Kenya Chapter member mailing list;
- Skunkworks – the technical team mailing list in the country;
- ISOC Kenya Chapter Facebook page and group and
- Communicating directly to prospective developers.

Bids were received and evaluated by the ICT Committee Members and St. John staff.

Developer

Out of the evaluation exercise, the team identified **MS. OpenWorld Limited** as the most competitive firm to carry out the implementation of this system for St. John.

Implementation phases

An Implementation Committee was formed to oversee the implementation of this system, it comprises of the following members:

1. CEO of St. John – as the Project Sponsor
2. CEO of OpenWorld – as the Project Director
3. Project Manager – from OpenWorld
4. Project Manager – from St. John
5. 3 officials from St. John
6. 2 volunteers from St. John, Nairobi Region
7. 2 members from the ICT Committee

This project was made possible in part through a donation from the Internet Society
8. 2 developers from OpenWorld

First phase
The first implementation phase was demonstration of understanding of the system and user requirements by preparing an Inception Report. This was done and the same was shared with the St. John Team and approved by the CEO, witnessed by the ICT Committee Chairman.

Second phase
Currently, we’re in the second phase of the implementation, where the developer was expected to come up with a prototype of the system which once approved by the implementation team, they were to fine tune and hand over to St. John.

The prototype of the system is available at the following links:

- Front-end – viewable by the public: http://112.196.33.85/solitaire/demoui/eblueKenya/updated/
- Back-end – for administrative purposes: http://112.196.33.85/solitaire/demo/eblue/admin/

Ms. OpenWorld are currently working on this phase and soon we expect them to handover the system to St. John, ready for rolling out to the public (its volunteers).

Third phase
This phase will include UAT (User Accepting Testing) where identified users will be provided with the necessary credentials to access the system and test the functionalities. If they will be satisfied, then we will move to the phase of training users and administrators of the system.

Training Phase
At this phase, we’ll train all potential users and administrators of the system. We’ll use an approach of Trainer of Trainers (ToT), where some key users will initially be trained in Nairobi and then these users can further train others, at the regional level as well as later trainings on usage of the system.

The initial technical and user training will be conducted by the developer and thereafter St. John Team will carry out subsequent trainings.

Handover phase
At this phase, the developer will formally handover administration and management of the system to St. John.

The system is expected to be hosted at the sub-domain of the St. John domain name. The proposed sub-domain is http://vms.stjohnkenya.org.

Due to the fact that the system will be hosting sensitive personal data of the volunteers, we’ve proposed to procure an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificate to that access of this system will be more secure.

Support phase
We agreed with Ms. OpenWorld that they will provide support for the implemented system for a period of at least one year.

Expenditure
So far we used KES 233,690.12 which is approximately USD 2,800 for the project. The invoice of this amount is attached.
**Way forward**

Once the developer finalizes on the system, we’re planning to open it up to some restricted number of volunteers who can test it out and if there are any identified hitches, these will be resolve by the developer. Once all the identified issues have been resolved, the system will be opened to the public.

Also, we would like ISOC Global to send the second tranche of the funding so that once the developer is done with the development milestone, St. John can be in a position to honour their invoice.

**Challenges**

The non-technical nature of the staff at St. John has meant that we have taken longer than usual to be able to answer queries from the developer, but this has since been resolved – the developer can communicate directly with any ICT Committee Member for any technical clarification that might be needed.

**Appendix**

- Invoice from Ms. OpenWorld for Milestone 1
- Inception Report