

MISSING PERSONS DIGITAL MATCHING (MPDM) TOOL

LONG-TERM MISSION

“By leveraging digital technologies responsibly, we offer new ways to help reconnect family members separated by armed conflicts, disasters and other violence. The MPDM tool shortens response times, so families find out the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones faster.”

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

For transparency and to protect the persons we are trying to help.

A technology infrastructure put in place that supports the ICRC's and National Societies' missing person search process.

Parts of the ICRC's and National Societies' search and matching process automated.

Scope of searchable pool of internal and external data maximized.

Tracing workflows and data used by teams in the field optimized.

More cases solved faster, leveraging the power of data for humanitarian action.

WHY MPDM?

Addressing pain points

The backlog of missing person cases is constantly growing across the Movement – now more than 200,000 cases. Core issues:

- repetitive, time-consuming manual tasks
- limited scope of searches and non-exhaustive searches
- local alphabet and language variations leading to cases “lost in translation”
- lack of time or limited availability of staff and volunteers
- sensitivity of data and security issues
- overall process taking too long.

HOW DOES THE MPDM TOOL HELP?

A search engine in which databases are integrated and queried according to specific rules and data protection protocols.

Name and date matching algorithm for a fully automated search. The algorithm detects partial similarities across languages and alphabets.

A matching platform on which users analyse and organize match results, with data protection and Central Tracing Agency safeguards.

Advanced integration with internal case management platform – more efficient and user-friendly system for ICRC and National Societies.

A **console** for managing searchable databases and setting match-sharing options.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Evolutionary and scalable – beyond known data sources



Human-centric, continually building knowledge



Iterative, incremental approach



Data protection by design and default



Modular and user-friendly

KEY OUTCOMES

MPDM tool incorporated into ICRC work in 2023:

- **66 delegations** using MPDM tool
- **175+ duplicated cases** found, and many cases pending confirmation
- **Nine families** put back in contact thanks to MPDM tool
- Early adopters: “The algorithm works. It is easy to use and an impactful tool. This is not only because of matches but also because of the clean database (duplicates are identified).”

Interested to know more?

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