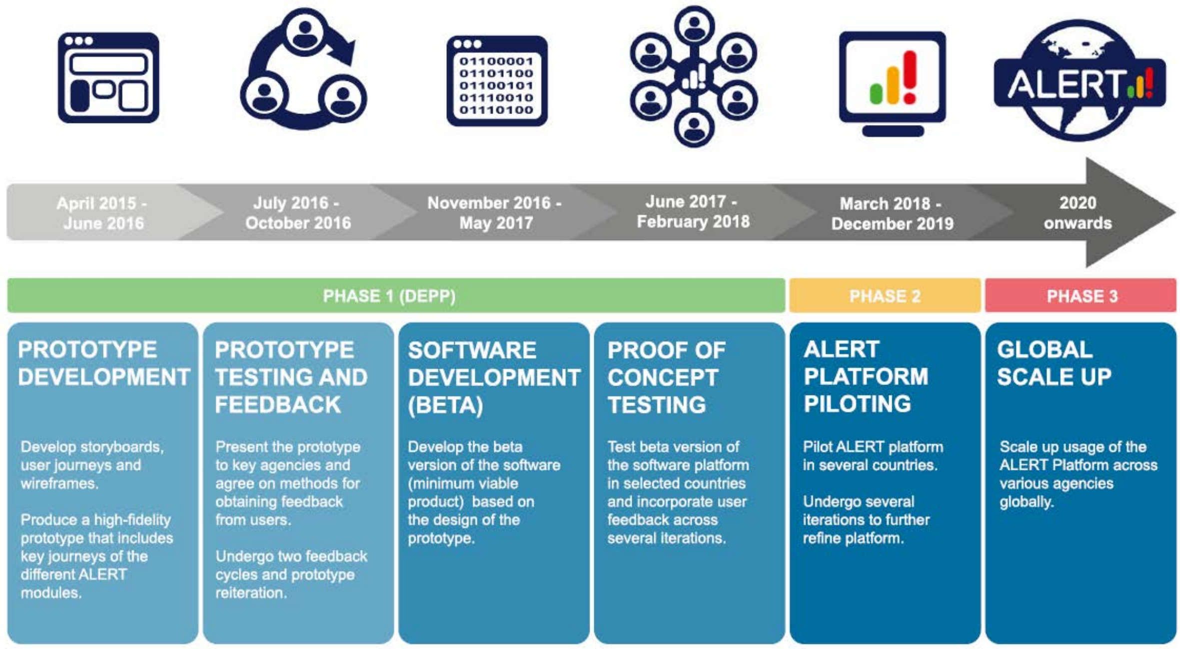
Preparatory Reading: ALERT Prototype Launch

Where we are now: The ALERT prototype is complete and allows users to explore the ALERT experience visually and perform simple functionality. The prototype is a tool to gain feedback from users, and to solicit further understanding of ALERT preparedness across the humanitarian sector.

The purpose of the Prototype Launch meeting is to introduce and explore the ALERT prototype (including how using the system can also support with CHS compliance) and agree a process for feedback. The meeting is an opportunity for agency staff to 'get inside' the prototype, visualise using it, ask questions and discuss how it'll work. It is also an opportunity for the ALERT team to gain some top line feedback. Each agency will agree with ALERT a suitable format to provide more detailed feedback to inform the next re-design, and how ALERT can support them in this process.

What happens after this meeting? Between July and October, Agencies will be introduced to the ALERT prototype in 1-2-1 sessions and will then test in their country offices, and provide feedback on the ease of use of ALERT, their understanding of it, the concepts included, and their preferences and recommendations. After October, the feedback will be analysed to inform the specification for the development of a 'minimum viable product' (MVP) for the ALERT software. There are two other feedback loops taking place, simultaneously with the prototype feedback; the revision of preparedness actions in relation to CHS; and an agreed template for the response planning element of the software.

ALERT project timeline:



Anticipated outcomes of the Prototype Launch meeting:

- Agency staff understand how the ALERT system will work, and how it can support them in their work. They have clear answers to their concerns and questions.
- The ALERT team understands more about how agency staff are seeing ALERT, including their needs, concerns and areas to address.
- There is an agreed process to provide feedback, and a date for a follow-up meeting if needed.

Draft indicative agenda (2 hours. Please note that the meeting has been reduced to 1.5 hours for some agencies)

10 mins	Welcome and introductions
80 mins	How will ALERT work? How will it enable us to better prepare and respond? ▪ Walk through the prototype ▪ Questions, clarifications, discussion
25 mins	How will we test it and give feedback? How will ALERT support this? ▪ Agree the process and timeframe
5 mins	Wrap up and close

Feedback Channels:
The following feedback channels are available to users. During the meeting we will discuss and agree on the most appropriate channels for the users in your agency to adopt.

1. Feedback Emails
   We have set up an email address for users to provide free written feedback on any element of the ALERT system featured within the prototype. We urge all users to feedback anything that comes to mind when using the prototype. Please also include your job title when you feed back.
   We're interested in hearing about: anything that confuses you, anything that impresses you….

2. Online questionnaire
   There are particular elements of the software that we need feedback on. These elements are captured in a questionnaire. It should take you no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Please also make use of the free text box.

3. Exploratory Interviews
   With follow up meetings, either in person or remotely, we would like to conduct interviews with key users who have tested the prototype.

4. Focus Groups
   Further down the line of the process, we would like to invite users to take part in a Focus Group Discussion as a means to iron out any contentious issues arising from initial feedback.

Pre-meeting exercise:
It would be useful for users to try out the prototype before the launch meeting so that we can get the most out of the demonstration.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please find the extended list of FAQs on the ALERT website.

Will ALERT be "free" software?
Answer: The intention is to make the software freely available to any humanitarian agency anywhere in the world irrespective of its size or mandate. In the piloting phase ALERT will be hosted in the "*Cloud*" and agencies will be given free access and use of the software.[1]

We don't do or want to do everything that is in ALERT.
Answer: ALERT will have a number of configuration and setting options giving agencies flexibility when using the software. Agencies will be able to opt in and out of ALERT modules.

When will partners get access to ALERT?
Answer: Partners can be given access to the ALERT software through the country office (we encourage this practice as it helps with planning and collaboration) which is accessible by longing in online. The advantage of the online version is that all users automatically enjoy updates and improvements as soon as they are applied. ALERT will eventually be available as a static desktop application (this will be the second version of ALERT, after the piloting phase). Partners can be given access to the ALERT platform in their own right once the piloting phase is complete.

What else comes with the ALERT software?
Answer: There is a training package developed by Coventry University that accompanies the software. The training package includes:

- An Emergency Preparedness Process textbook complete with real emergency experience stories & scenarios.
- A workshop-training module.
- A basic ALERT software user guide.

Will my data be protected and private?
Answer: ALERT is designed to store information but much of the information is not sensitive information. Sensitive information such as Staff contact details and data is secure and cannot be obtained from anyone outside your agency. Any documents uploaded can be posted as 'public' or 'private' documents. The plan at the moment is that only two users who will have access to ALERT across multiple agencies; The Country Director can access the preparedness of peer agencies BUT only those in the same country; Donors will be able to access headline information about preparedness of any agency in any country.

How many languages will ALERT be available in?
Answer: The importance of multilingual platform cannot be underestimated especially for southern NGOs but it is also expensive to develop and we have insufficient funds to develop it in the first MVP. The first MVP will be in English but the desire is to offer ALERT with a number of appropriate languages in future versions

[1] However, we are not yet certain how free hosting will be provided beyond the pilot phase.

Proposed CHS Preparedness Actions

Action		Evidence
1. Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.		
1.1	Context specific needs assessment template is available in relevant languages and staff are trained on how to use them.	• Needs assessment templates in all relevant languages Staff training attendance list
1.2	Contingency/response plans have been prepared in consultation with national (including relevant government) and international stakeholders and including a sample of local communities. There is clarity on role of the organisation within national contingency plan.	• Approved scenario based response plans (in ALERT) • List of stakeholders and consultation method
1.3	Updated analysis report of the country context including local communities, culture, livelihoods, vulnerabilities, gender, age, and diversity that inform the contingency/response plan.	• Context analysis report
2. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.		
2.1	Preferred suppliers with relevant supply chains for in-kind and cash programme have been appointed in line with our contingency/response plans	• List of suppliers and contact details • MoUs and Agreements
2.2	Update decision making procedure document and share with staff. Our contingency plans reflect our ability to respond to different priority hazards	• Decision making procedure document
2.3	Plans exist to scale up staff in a way that doesn't undermine the capacity of other humanitarian actors.	• Staff scale-up plan (in ALERT)
2.4	Risk Analysis that identifies constraints (logistical, political, security, economic, staffing) specific to the context have been identified and necessary measures to mitigate or anticipate them have been taken.	• Completed risk matrix

2.5	Our contingency /response plans have identified the sectors and geographical areas where we have the capacity and expertise to respond. The document attached is a summary of our current sector capacity and geographical coverage.	• Your sector capacity and geographical coverage summary (in ALERT) • Response plans
3. Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.		
3.1	Potential negative effects of humanitarian response with respect to people's safety, security, dignity and rights, SEA, culture, gender and social and political relationships, livelihoods, the local economy, the environment have been identified and documented (Attached)	• Document with identified negative effect factors
3.2	Conduct capacity mapping exercise inclusive of government and civil society	• Capacity mapping report
3.3	Social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities have been identified, using existing risk assessment tools and our contingency/response plans take these vulnerabilities into account. The risk assessment report is attached to this action.	• Risk Assessment Report
3.4	Develop and update MoUs with relevance community based organisations and groups which define roles and responsibilities with community based organisations and groups.	• MoUs with community based organisations & groups
4. Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.		
4.1	The diversity of country office staff is representative of the context in which it operates in regards to communication, language and gender.	• Annual diversity staff report
4.2	Updated key communication material including a message library and have all relevant messages tested, verified and translated into relevant languages	• Sample of key messages

4.3	Gender and age sensitive policies and tools in regards to community engagement and feedback are readily available and our staff and partners have been trained appropriately to implement these policies.	• Gender and age sensitive community engagement and feedback policy • Community engagement tools and Staff training attendance list
4.4	Preferred media channels of various target groups in the population are identified and documented (attached) and included in our contingency/response plans	• Preferred media channels document
5. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.		
5.1	A) A Code of Conduct exists and has been explained to and signed by all staff and volunteers. B) The relevant parts of the code of conduct have been explained to partners, preferred suppliers and communities	• Code of Conduct and sample of staff signed CoC
5.2	A 'safe complaints' handling process is developed involving local communities and is known to staff and local communities.	• Complaints procedure/process
6. Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.		
6.1	Conduct activity and capacity mapping of other humanitarian stakeholders including National Disaster Management Agency, civil society and international stakeholders.	• Activity and capacity mapping report
6.2	There are designated staff members that are attending appropriate coordination meetings and share appropriate information.	• List of coordination meetings, regular dates and staff member(s) attending
7. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.		
7.1	The Country Office has identified staff and evaluators with knowledge of the context and the relevant sector expertise as detailed in our contingency/response plans.	• List of response staff and their respective sector/context expertise
7.2	The Country Office has documented lessons from experiences relevant to the context and region and applied them to the current contingency/response plans. Attached	• Summary of key lessons learnt over past 3 years

	summary of key lessons learnt over past three years.	
7.3	The Country Office has an appropriate and trained M&E capacity, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	• Sample of most recent staff training documents • Document of staff roles and responsibilities
8. Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.		
8.1	A) Country Office response staff are aware of the emergency response manual and have been trained on the required procedures according to their respective roles. B) The Country Office has prepared standard job descriptions for response deployments	• Documents of most recent training for staff • Standard job descriptions for response deployments
8.2	Develop (or update) contextually appropriate induction package for staff and volunteers who will join the emergency team	• Induction package contents page
8.3	Security is constantly monitored by an appointed focal person who is responsible for security planning and regular staff updating and training.	• Most recent security document
8.4	Develop staff skill set list which allocates the deployment options of staff in an emergency response.	• Staff skill set list. • Attached table represents the key skills of the response team specific to their deployment during a response.
9. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.		
9.1	Internal control systems are in place to prevent and identify fraud and corruption and staff have been trained on these systems.	• Evaluation report of most recent training offered to staff and partners involved in the response.
9.2	Country Office departments [logistics, communications, HR and IT], have established procedures, systems and protocols in place for emergency response which has the capacity to be scaled up during a response to increased departmental needs.	• Capacity scale up plan for each department