# Digital Innovation Consultation: Identifying Digital Solutions for Legal Needs to Enhance Access to Justice in South Africa

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# Aim and Objectives

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) are committed to pioneering digital solutions that enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of legal support for forcibly displaced and stateless individuals in South Africa. This project serves as a foundational assessment, aiming to:

**Step 1: Baseline Assessment**

* Legal Needs Analysis: Systematically catalogue and prioritize the legal challenges faced by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, identifying potential digital interventions that could address these challenges effectively.
* Digital Proficiency and Access Survey: Evaluate the digital literacy and accessibility levels within the target demographics to tailor digital solutions that are both feasible and impactful.
* Stakeholder Engagement: Engage with key legal service providers to gather insights and align the digital solution development with real-world applicability.
* Service Mapping: Conduct a comprehensive mapping of existing digital and legal services both within South Africa and globally, assessing their applicability and success in similar contexts.

## Step 2: Development and Advocacy Potential

* Innovation Scoping: Determine the scope for innovation in the digital space, identifying opportunities for the development of new solutions or the enhancement of existing ones.
* Collaborative Framework Development: Develop a strategic plan for fostering collaboration among legal stakeholders to advocate for and implement digital solutions nationally.

# Research Methodology

To ensure a robust and comprehensive analysis, our methodology incorporates:

**Mixed-Methods Research Design**

* Desktop Research: Utilize advanced data aggregation tools to perform desktop research, visually mapping key legal organizations and their services across targeted regions.
* Quantitative Data Collection: Deploy a structured survey using Google Forms or equivalent platforms to gather quantitative data on legal issues, service awareness, and digital gaps.
* Pilot Testing: Implement a pilot phase for the survey to refine questions and methodology based on initial feedback, ensuring the relevance and clarity of the survey items.

## Qualitative Insights

* Focused Interviews and Group Discussions: Conduct detailed interviews and focus groups in key locations (Cape Town, Durban, and Gqeberha), utilizing digital platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp when necessary. These discussions will employ a participatory ecosystem mapping approach to visually capture and analyze the interaction of various factors impacting legal service accessibility.
* Linguistic Inclusivity: Prioritize the translation of surveys and the hiring of multilingual interviewers to ensure effective communication across South Africa's diverse linguistic landscape.

## Participant Engagement Strategy

* Diverse Recruitment: Leverage civil society networks and collaborate with UNHCR and LHR to engage a broad spectrum of participants, including those not currently accessing legal services.
* Inclusive Sampling: Draw participants from a range of sources, including legal service providers, refugee-led groups, and NGOs.

# Ethical Considerations

* Informed Consent: Adhere strictly to ethical guidelines for informed consent, with continual attention to the sensitivities involved in working with vulnerable populations.
* Data Protection: Ensure stringent data protection measures, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of participant data.

## Analytical Framework

* Data Analysis: Utilize coding and thematic analysis to extract insights from qualitative data, supported by software tools where appropriate. Perform statistical analysis on quantitative data to identify trends and correlations.
* Thematic Mapping: Use MIRO Mind Mapping Tool for a dynamic visualization of data, facilitating a deeper understanding of the ecosystems and potential interventions.

# Detailed Survey Summaries

## Table 1: Survey for Legal Service Providers

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| --- | --- |
| Category | Details |
| Background Information | Organisation type, Years of service to displaced/stateless people. |
| Client Needs and Challenges | Legal issues (Documentation, Employment, Housing, Child Law, Family Law, Criminal Justice, Statelessness, Other), Access challenges (Awareness, Language, Cost, Fear of deportation, Identity proof, Documentation access, Other). |
| Resource Gaps | Missing resources/info, Examples needed (e.g., translated documents), Helpful support (training, funding). |
| Digital Solutions | Interest in digital resources (Yes/No), Desired digital features (Multilingual info, Legal aid directory, Templates, Q&A forum, ID/Citizenship process info). |
| Additional Comments | Any additional insights or feedback. |

## Table 2: Survey for Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Details |
| Background Information | Identification (Refugee, etc.), Duration in SA, Origin, Documentation status. |
| Legal Needs | Legal issues faced (Immigration, Employment, Housing, Child Law, Family Law, Criminal Justice, Healthcare, Other), Help sources (Lawyer, NGO, Gov't), Reasons for not seeking help (Knowledge, Cost, Language, Fear, Statelessness, Other). |
| Access to Information | Access to info, Preferred info sources (Gov't, NGOs, Online, Friends, Lawyers, Other). |
| Specific Needs of Stateless People | Challenges and issues specific to statelessness. |
| Digital Solutions | Smartphone access, Interest in digital tools (Yes/No), Desired digital tool features (Specific rights info, Aid directory, Templates, Q&A, Multilingual support, ID/Citizenship info). |
| Additional Comments | Any further comments on legal needs/experiences. |