Stemming from the core of our principles for innovation and technology in development, our vision at UNICEF Innovation has been to have a common platform powered by a free & open source software for running mobile services in international development. This is why we are excited about RapidPro.

In September 2014, DFID, NORAD, UNICEF, and the governments of Nigeria and Korea announced the need for increased collaboration within the international development community in deploying common, tested, and proven mobile services across organizations and countries. **They see RapidPro as the platform for this "app store for good".**

While UNICEF and its partners have already started to use RapidPro, many of you have asked us for clarification on RapidPro and how you can start using it. Here are some answers for you.

What EXACTLY is RapidPro? RapidPro is a software product that allows you to visually build the workflow logic for running mobile-based services. This software includes features for managing your users' contacts dynamically, graphically analysing the data your service receives, connecting to multiple communication channels (ie SMS, voice, USSD, and social media), sending messages in multiple languages, and interoperating with external systems. The RapidPro software can be hosted as a service on your servers locally or on the cloud - similar to how UNICEF uses it today.

Is RapidPro open source? RapidPro will be released under an open source license on December 1, 2014. The software will have an AGPL license. This license ensures that modifications made to the RapidPro software are freely available to the public- allowing RapidPro to continue growing in service of development needs while remaining a public technological good. More information and developer resources will become available about the software on December 1, 2014.

RapidPro looks similar to TextIt. What's the difference? RapidPro was created in collaboration between UNICEF and Nyaruka, a Rwandan software firm. It is built on Nyaruka´s experience in developing mobile-based solutions. RapidPro has been developed and branded for UNICEF to host and build its own services and applications internally and together with its partners. Once RapidPro is open sourced, there will be a marketplace of other branded versions of RapidPro services – including TextIt – that you can choose from to host your RapidPro application.

Tell me more about this Marketplace? The RapidPro service marketplace will be a portal for you to view and select the service provider you would like to host your RapidPro application. The portal will have information on the service provider, their software contribution to the RapidPro community, and how much their service costs. While you are still at liberty to get RapidPro hosted wherever you like, the Marketplace will provide you with a one-stop shop for evaluating vendors that best meets your needs for building and/or hosting your mobile service.

Will there be a RapidPro user community? Yes! We are working hard to making www.rapidpro.io the portal for RapidPro users to learn, share, and stay connected with other RapidPro users. An extensive knowledge base, user forum, and resources for scaling your mobile services will be available at www.rapidpro.io. Expect this site to be up and running by December 1, 2014.

You keep saying "We". Who are "You"? We are the UNICEF Global Innovation Centre. We work with UNICEF's global network of innovation offices and labs to scale innovative processes and products - like RapidPro - throughout UNICEF. We also share our work and lessons learned with the greater development community. While we look to forge partnerships between UNICEF and other organizations around similar initiatives - like mHERO - the UNICEF Global Innovation Centre only supports UNICEF programs and offices; no one else.

How can I demo RapidPro until it is open sourced? UNICEF is offering non-profit development organizations a space to demo RapidPro. Please send a request at join@rapidpro.io. This is strictly for exploring RapidPro and its features and not meant for you to run pilots on. We will not provide active support to demo spaces unless it is for a UNICEF program or office. UNICEF will also not be liable for the information collected by non-UNICEF organization. All non-UNICEF demo spaces will be disabled from UNICEF's hosted service on December 31, 2014. Non-UNICEF users can go to the Marketplace to get a service powered by RapidPro or independently use the RapidPro software at this time.