

## OUR CAPABILITIES IN THE DEMOCRACY/GOVERNANCE SECTOR



# Enhancing Governance Through Digital Innovation

Across the democracy/governance sector, two of the greatest barriers to project success are time and cost. The rapid, global growth of mobile & web access is creating new opportunities for faster, more affordable project delivery—but few implementers have in-house digital expertise, and few software companies have hands-on knowledge of the governance field.

SoukTel bridges this gap: We're former democracy/governance project managers *and* software development specialists. Since our start, we've leveraged this unique skill profile to build award-winning, custom digital solutions for more than 50 USAID, DFID, and UN projects in the governance, stabilization, and civic engagement domains.

Our bespoke mobile and web platforms help monitor electoral fraud at polling stations from Tunisia to Kenya. They also help 200,000+ mobile subscribers learn about constitutional reform, basic legal rights, and local government.

The game-changing potential of digital technology in the governance sector is significant: in 2015, NDI research found that Zambian civil society groups were able to leverage Facebook to share election results with 159,000 voters—an audience comparable to the country's largest print newspapers—for less than \$30.

In 2014, for the first time, Libya's election commission registered 1.6m voters for the national assembly election via SMS. Previously, the commission relied on 1,300+ registration stations, many of which were forcibly closed due to bombings, threats of violence, and protests.

ICTs also offer new possibilities to “give a voice to the voiceless”, and promote citizen participation in daily local governance. From Egypt to Brazil, mobile apps and basic hotlines now let residents submit reports to local authorities on crime, air quality, or road potholes—and get real-time updates on government responses.

Choosing the right blend of ICT solutions to deliver this sustainable, scalable impact in the governance sector can be a challenge. SoukTel makes the process effortless—leveraging 10 years of expertise to design and deliver custom digital solutions that boost project reach and quality, at low cost.

SoukTel's platforms offer “up-to-the-minute information, so that [implementers] can take quick and informed decisions about what to do”.

**Valerie Amos**  
UN Under-Secretary General,  
(2010 – 2015)

### WHAT MAKES SOUKTEL DIFFERENT

With our mix of sector experts, best-in-class software developers, and former mobile network staff, SoukTel is uniquely positioned to deliver high-impact digital solutions for funders and implementers.

Our core strengths include:

- **Customized, agile solution design** including in-person scoping, iterative software development, and full support for service launch, sustainable delivery, and handover to local partners.
- **Multi-channel service delivery**, integrating web, mobile audio, mobile messenger (eg. WhatsApp), SMS and apps to reach smartphone users and basic mobile users.
- **Strategic mobile operator partnerships**, partnering directly with networks like Orange, Etisalat, MTN, and Airtel to build dedicated gateway connectivity, and secure optimal pricing agreements.
- **Broad geographic reach**, serving 250,000+ mobile users in 30+ markets across Africa, Asia, and the Americas.
- **10+ years of market leadership in the tech & development sector**, advising donors like DFID, USAID, and MasterCard on digital strategy, publishing strategic insights for MIT Innovations Journal and ODI—and building alliances between funders, implementers & mobile networks to launch complex digital services.

# Our approach and solutions

Souktel's M&E solutions provide "robust, credible and independent data, in a consistent and easily accessible manner".

**Thokozani Mwenyekonde**  
Project Director – CARE Malawi

## OUR APPROACH

We know the challenge of delivering value to communities and funders—on time, and within budget: Over 75% of our staff have worked directly for donors and implementers, at home offices and in the field.

Our design approach reflects this experience. From storyboarding to software development, we apply a user-driven model which plans for scale and sustainability from Day One.

Instead of asking our clients "What product do you want?" we ask "What problem do you want to solve?" It's a small but crucial difference: By focusing on collaboration and big picture impact, every solution we build meets the direct needs of local users.

## DESIGN

Souktel's design process starts with an on-site discovery phase. We lead user-centered needs assessments, focus groups, and user story modeling to ensure that the solutions we build respond directly to local needs.

Our design work also includes technical scoping, launch preparations, and sustainability planning. Before we write a single line of code, we work directly with your project team to co-create roll-out timelines and handover scenarios, so that your custom solution is sustainable from the start.

## DEVELOPMENT

Our agile software development process is rooted in rapid prototyping: We share progress and seek your feedback on an ongoing basis—so that the finished product meets your exact requirements. We also work directly with mobile networks to complete connectivity, secure optimal pricing, and coordinate on launch.

Once your prototype solution is ready, we work with you to run small-group pilots with users. Building on pilot results, we make final updates and run quality assurance tests.

## DELIVERY

When your solution is ready for launch, we advise your team on go-to-market strategies that maximize impact and reach. We also develop training resources and prepare user tutorials—for delivery online, via mobile, or in person.

Post-launch, we offer cloud hosting and support for all software components, and provide rich data analytics that let you track the real-time impact of your technology at work.

## OUR SOLUTIONS

Digital strategy? Tech-enabled delivery? Or both? Souktel's custom software and services help you drive innovation across your project's life cycle:

- **Digital Content Delivery:** Design and hosting of text, audio, and web content platforms for large scale project campaigns. Includes messaging/brand/content creation, strategic launch planning, software development, and network connectivity. End-to-end campaign management also available.
- **Interactive Communities:** Custom platforms that connect users with groups of peers in specific topic areas, through messaging via app (eg. WhatsApp), SMS, and/or web—with rich analytics and management interfaces. Users send questions/comments to hotlines, and all group members receive the message on their mobile. Members reply to the whole group or an individual peer, promoting knowledge sharing and mentoring. An analytics platform lets implementer staff create groups, track and tag messaging trends, and initiate discussions in real time.
- **Personalized Matching:** One-on-one mobile supply/demand matching platforms that link citizens with local government services, or students with training/job opportunities. Users create mini-profiles with their basic information (location, services sought/offered) via mobile device. A proprietary algorithm pairs service seekers and providers who have similar profiles, enabling real-time information exchange.
- **Integrated M&E and Analytics:** Custom solutions for mobile web-, text- and audio-based monitoring/evaluation. Options range from full M&E database system build-out to bespoke analytics: Custom interfaces allow for one-touch analysis of field data—in addition to public "report-back" features for sharing results with communities. Optional add-ons include auto-generation of reports on data sub-sets, and multiple permission levels for varying user types (field staff, grantees).
- **Digital Strategy:** Strategic advising and process mapping that help you integrate technology seamlessly into your project. Includes software, hardware, and connectivity scoping, user experience design, and creation of process flow storyboards and mockups. Recent projects include the creation of a first-ever mobile outreach strategy for a global financial education provider, with roll-out in 8 countries.

# Our track record



## Leveraging Mobile to Share Constitutional Information with 150,000+ Somalis

To strengthen its Somali Constitution Making Support Program, UNDP contracted Souktel to deliver mobile information services, in cooperation with fellow media partner BBC World Service Trust. Across the Horn of Africa, Souktel delivered democracy/governance related content to mobile subscribers--in addition to reaching Somali diaspora communities in Kenya, the US, the UK and Canada. In each of these regions, mobile subscribers received weekly IVR and SMS updates on constitution-related news, along with reminders about upcoming TV and radio programs on constitutional issues. While viewing/listening to these programs, mobile subscribers were able to text in their real-time comments and feedback—which were sent directly into TV/radio studios and read on the air. An audio hotline supplemented these services, allowing mobile subscribers to call in at any time to learn more about the new draft constitution: Callers chose “frequently asked questions” from touch-tone menus, and then listened to pre-recorded answers free of charge. With 21,000+ active service users and over 150,000 mobile subscribers reached, these mobile components have helped UNDP broaden the scale and scope of its program outreach dramatically—providing real-time, trackable direct-to-beneficiary communication.

## Promoting Civic Dialogue in South Sudan, Through Interactive Digital Services

Since early 2010, Souktel has provided mobile media outreach services to the US State Department’s Sudan Radio Service and the Darfur News and Information Service. For both radio services, Souktel’s simple IVR and SMS-based technology lets project staff send weekly questionnaires to listening audiences for the signature civic education program “Road to Peace” and “Let’s Talk,” shows that explains the structure and function of the peace process, the government, and the elections process. Incoming responses and message delivery statistics are fed into a web-based report analysis panel, and used by project staff to optimize program delivery for audiences across the region. Souktel’s mobile tools are also utilized to send large-scale Public Service Announcements to community members’ mobile phones, with content ranging from information about upcoming elections to breaking news. In addition, Souktel launched an “audio library” service for the Sudan and Darfur radio networks. Here, low-literacy listeners can call a toll-free number and access pre-recorded short audio clips—which range from instructional content to radio broadcast excerpts. After listening, audiences can give their feedback by leaving voicemail messages which project staff can view and address.

“Souktel’s solutions have helped us ensure that families across Gaza could get information ...quickly and directly, without putting themselves at risk”.

**Siobhan Parnell**  
Past Gaza Program Director –  
World Vision



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# About Souktel

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Founded in 2006 by Harvard and MIT fellows, Souktel develops and delivers digital solutions that help international development implementers boost outreach and impact—quickly, affordably, and at scale. From hubs in North America and the Middle East, Souktel changes lives in developing countries across the globe, providing its services to the projects of 30+ leading funders and implementers—including USAID, the US State Department, DFID and UNDP.

Souktel's pioneering work has been featured by the New York Times, Fast Company and PBS, among others—and has been cited as a best practice by the World Economic Forum, the World Bank and Accenture. In 2015, the Wall Street Journal named Souktel's core product suite "One of Five Apps Bringing the Next Billion Online".

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