Digital Good Platform for Public Giving & SDG Youth Engagement (Final Report)

8 January 2019

Excellency,

**Subject: Final Report: Project "Post-2015 Development Platform (Digital Good)- Phase1"**

Reference is made to the contribution agreement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UNDP for the project "Post-2015 Development Platform (Digital Good)- Phase1" effective 10-Feb-2015, when funds were transferred to UNDP.

We are pleased to submit the Final Report and the Interim Financial Report. The final narrative report summarizes the progress of the project as of 31-December-2018, and provides an overview of the achievements, challenges, lessons learned, interim financial status and way forward.

Please note that while the online platform for individual giving remains fully operational, given that the projects funds from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been expended, in line with UNDP rules and regulations, the project should be closed operationally and financially in UNDP's financial system. As part of the project closure and in accordance with the signed cost sharing agreement, "Article VI. On Equipment", we recommend that the assets be transferred to UNDP for the continued operation and support to the online platform. A list of assets for the project is attached.

Thanks to the Kingdom's ground-breaking investment in the Digital Good pilot, for the first time in UNDP's history there is a state-of-the-art individual giving platform for citizens from around the world to contribute to the SDGs. We thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its continued support to UNDP and look forward to strengthening our partnership in support of the SDGs.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Mourad Wahba
Assistant Administrator & Director
Regional Bureau for Arab States
UNDP

Ulrika Modéer
Assistant Administrator & Director
Bureau for External Relations & Advocacy
UNDP

His Excellency
Mr. Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
to the United Nations
New York

# FINAL REPORT

United Nations Development Programme
*Post-2015 Development Platform (Digital Good)- Phase1*
*31-December-2018*

| | |
|---|---|
| Reporting Period | Feb-2015 → Dec-2018 |
| Donor | Kingdom of Saudi Arabia |
| Country | Global |
| Project Title | Post-2015 Development Platform (Digital Good) (Phase1) |
| Project ID<br>(Atlas Award ID)<br>Outputs<br>(Atlas Project ID and Description)<br>Strategic Plan and/or CPD Outcomes | 00086947<br><br><br>00094104<br><br><br>Growth and development were made inclusive and sustainable |
| Implementing Partner(s) | UNDP |
| Project Start Date | 10-Feb-2015 |
| Project End Date | 31-Dec-2018 |
| Work Plan Budget | $2,000,000 USD |
| Total resources required | $2,000,000 USD |
| Revenue received | • Regular (UNDP) US$322,986[1]<br>• Other<br>o Donor (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) US$2,000,000<br>• Total US$2,322,986 USD |
| Unfunded budget | $0 USD |
| UNDP Contact Person | UNDP Resident Representative<br>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia<br><br>Ulrika Modéer<br>Assistant Administrator & Director, BERA New York<br><br>Mila Rosenthal<br>Director, Communications, BERA New York |

**[1] When the project funds were expended in April 2018, UNDP contributed US$322,986 of its own funds to continue the project until 31 December 2018.**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, UNDP's Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA) started a special initiative to design and launch a new UNDP-managed global funding mechanism to channel voluntary contributions from individuals. In November 2016, Digital Good became UNDP's first innovative web-based giving platform through which philanthropists and ordinary people around the world could provide cash contributions to UNDP in support of SDG implementation. Since launching, the pilot has solicited $284,726 in private contributions for the SDGs and built an audience of 170,000 subscribers while generating millions of media impressions and significantly boosting traffic to UNDP's websites and digital properties. The Digital Good pilot program has successfully demonstrated "proof of concept" that this type of funding mechanism can work at UNDP and can be successfully scaled in alignment with our new Strategic Plan.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a major provider of development assistance and has been a partner in global development with the United Nations and countries around the world for over five decades. Cooperation between UNDP and the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs has evolved in this period, with an increased focus on the expanding role and potential of the Kingdom in leading global development efforts through contributions to UN and UNDP global initiatives in countries around the world. One of these examples is through the partnership on Digital Good, an initiative to "empower people around the world willing to make a difference."

Thanks to the Kingdom's ground-breaking initial investment in the Digital Good pilot, for the first time in UNDP's history there is a state-of-the-art platform to provide access to philanthropists and citizens from countries around the world to contribute to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. This marks a major milestone to involve youth in the SDGs around the world.

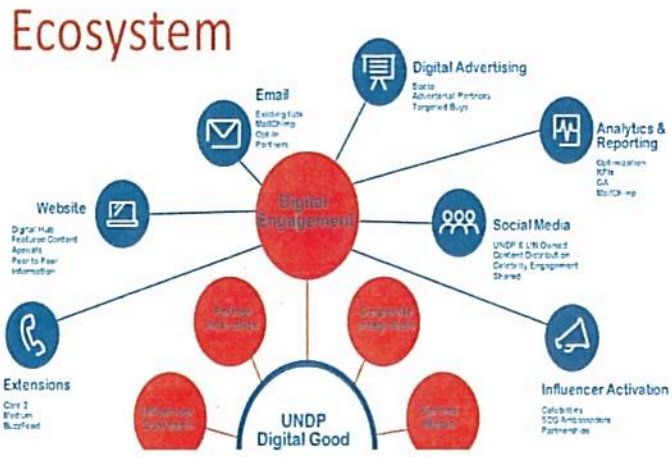
## 3. PROGRESS REVIEW

**Project Background and Development**

From February 2015 through April 2016, BERA focused on laying the groundwork for an individual giving program and assembled the necessary components to build a professional program – including the recruitment of global fundraising expertise, procurement of a digital marketing agency, and achieving critical internal support and buy-in from key teams and units across the organization. During this time BERA launched Digital Good as provisional platform, capable of

capitalizing on opportunities to fundraise in a limited capacity. The program saw some success fundraising against emergency appeals during this provisional stage – for example, raising support for earthquake relief in Nepal ($16,521) and Ecuador ($27,483). These funds were channelled through the respective UNDP Country Offices supporting the national relief efforts demonstrated early indication that an individual giving program was viable at UNDP. By May 2016, Digital Good had the critical elements to develop a professional fundraising program:

*Fundraising Expertise*: Two global fundraising and digital marketing experts were recruited to provide professional guidance and oversee development of the pilot. These experts brought more than 15 years of experience in building, managing and scaling global fundraising programs, with millions of dollars raised from individuals via digital and traditional channels (e.g. email, online, social media, and mobile).



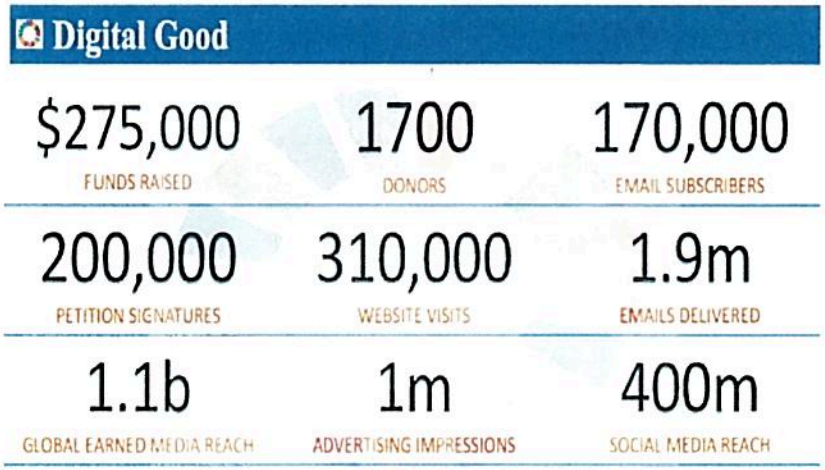

*Secondments from Saudi Arabia*: Two seconded Saudi experts joined the team to provide critical insights and expertise and participated in the development of the programme.

*Digital Agency*: A digital agency was engaged to devise a professional creative strategy and build digital elements necessary for the program. Together with Digital Good program experts, agency consultants conducted in-depth market research to gain insights that helped shape the core conceptual building blocks for Digital Good, including segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies. The agency then assisted the Digital Good team to develop of visual branding elements as well as digital assets.

*Internal Support*: Digital Good worked with key staff and managers from across UNDP to establish critical internal support on behalf of the pilot's strategic, operational and managerial goals and outcomes. In particular, UNDP's Communications Group committed substantial resources, expertise, and collaboration to achieve the global outputs of the program. The Communications Group also committed to supporting Digital Good through media promotions during its first year of operations, which proved critical to the early success of the program. By late 2016, a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy had been devised in line with audience research and industry best practices.

Following six months of design and development, Digital Good was launched with an integrated and scalable technology suite which enabled an array of program activities, including donation

processing in over 140 currencies, advanced campaign development and management tools, peer-to-peer fundraising campaign capability, mobile, and advanced donor management capabilities.




**Key Outcomes of Activities**

At its roll-out in November 2016, Digital Good, in consultation with its Steering Committee and based on the framework outlined by the Project Document, had established four objectives for its first year of operations: raise USD $100,000, grown an audience of 100,000 subscribers, spread awareness of the SDGs, and initiated roll out of at least three local versions of Digital Good for UNDP Country Offices to pilot. Digital Good exceeded each of these objectives.

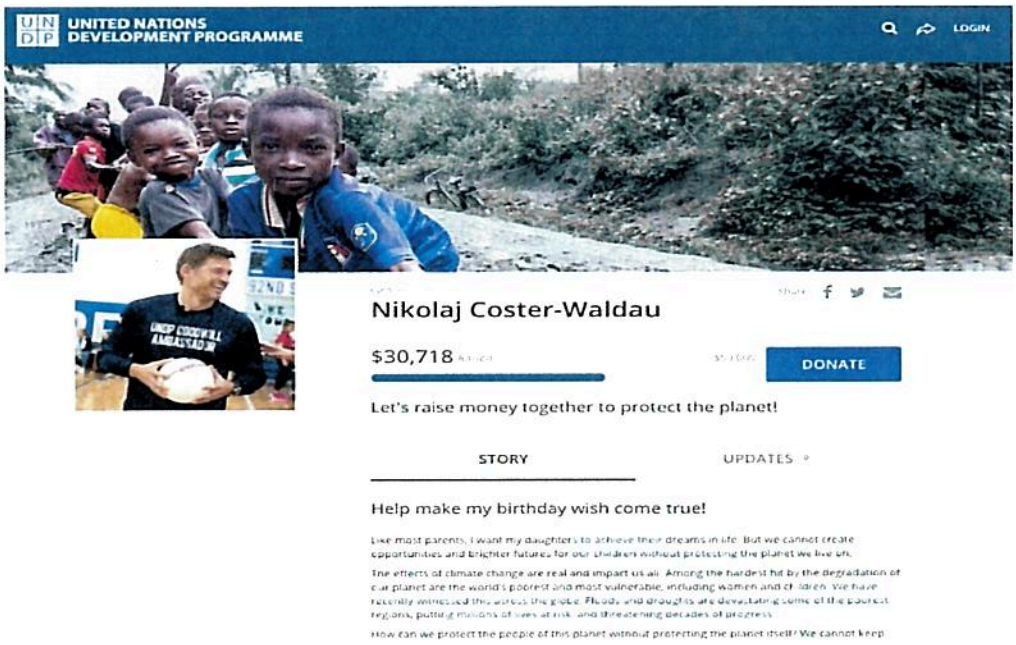
*Show Proof of Concept for Individual Giving*: Originally projected to raise $100,000 in the first year, Digital Good has outpaced all projections, raising $284,726 by end of 2018 from more than 1,700 donors. These were strong overall returns for the program at this early stage and provided a clear indication that, given the proper investment, income-generating activities could have been effectively scaled.

*Audience Growth*: As of April 2018, the program counted 191,000 new subscribers and 82,000 prospective donors (with distinct physical addresses) representing more than 190 countries and territories. The pace of growth is an indication that Digital Good has strong potential to scale. Comparable organizations in the international development and relief category count as many as 1,000 email subscribers for every 329 Facebook fans, or 1,000 email subscribers for every 211 Twitter followers. Based on its current UNDP social media following, Digital Good can project a high ceiling for growth through this channel; with proper investment the program could grow to more than 2.5 million and as high as 5 million subscribers over the next five years. This type of growth could be critical as

industry benchmarks show that for organizations in UNDP's category and size, the share of individual giving attributed to email cultivation can be as high as 39% of all online revenue. Digital Good's ability to grow a robust file of email subscribers is key to unlocking sustainable future revenue streams as the program scales.

*Development/Testing Prototypes for Fundraising Campaigns and Appeals*: New subscribers come via a mix of referral mechanisms, including dedicated and temporary promotions on UNDP websites, blog and media stories, celebrity ambassador shares and promotions, social media campaigns, advertisements, and sponsored campaigns on affiliate sites. All new subscribers receive professionally-designed and strategic messaging from Digital Good in the form of stories, appeals, interactive quizzes, and educational material – as part of a broader cultivation strategy designed to build a virtual relationship with subscribers and turn them into supporters that are informed about and committed to helping achieve the SDGs. Email, in this context, is an important channel for advocacy and education. In addition to these ongoing donor cultivation and stewardship activities, Digital Good has carried out several high-profile campaigns that have done a great deal to raise awareness on the SDGs, including:

- Celebrity Birthday Campaign: UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Nikolaj Coster-Waldau dedicated his birthday to fundraising for the SDGs via Digital Good. The campaign was held through July and August 2017 and reached millions of fans and followers, raising over $26,000. Coster-Waldau promoted the campaign on social media, including his own 500,000+ followers and in media interviews, including in CNN, People, Marie Claire, Women's Wear Daily, Jimmy Kimmel Live, reaching a global audience of 450 million.




• Campaign for Four Famine Relief: In May 2017, Digital Good ran a campaign to bring greater attention and critical support to people suffering from famine in Africa and the Middle East. This campaign was promoted by UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Connie Britton, who authored and endorsed a pledge on Care2. Among other media coverage, Us Weekly ran a story about the campaign, generating millions of media impressions and helping the petition attract almost 70,000 signatures and more than 20,000 new subscribers for Digital Good.

*Country Office Pilots*: A key goal of the initial pilot for Digital Good was to prove that the tool is both globally relevant and able to be localized for different country SDG needs and different national marketing contexts and audiences. To that end, Digital Good identified UNDP Country Offices in different regions that met the criteria for pilot tests, including appropriate country-specific fundraising market conditions, sufficient capacity within the offices, and legal and tax regulations allowing Digital Good to operate. As of April 2018, there were initial pilots in Thailand, Maldives, and Palestine.

*Youth Engagement*: As a key objective in the Project Document and design of the pilot programme, Digital Good has shown strong early success in engaging youth on awareness, fundraising, action and solutions on SDG implementation. A key element was the interaction with higher education students from different academic fields to raise awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals and collaborate on Digital Good platform and campaign development. The Project engaged hundreds of students in 12

groups from a variety of universities. These interactions led to research and discussion papers, creative design presentations, and campaign prototypes. Additional youth action included, collaboration with Amsterdam University to sponsor Global Goals Jams for youth innovators to gather together to create new SDG implementation ideas in their own countries. In 2017 more than 40 Global Goals Jams were held in countries including Peru, Brazil, Colombia, India, Ghana, Malaysia, Philippines, Japan, Canada and Ukraine, attracting more than 1200 youth participants. Demographic analysis of both the email subscriber file and the Digital Good website traffic shows that the Digital Good audience continues to skew youth-ward, as intended, with 30% of the audience under 25 and more than 60% under 35. Digital Good explored a partnership with the education program of UNA-USA, which reaches 20,000 youth and students specifically with educational material and actions on the SDGs, although the Digital Good project funds concluded before this partnership got underway. Together, these activities and collaborations with universities and strong engagement with youth audiences will have continued to scale if the project continued.

## 4. PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES

**Updated project risks and actions**

Project Risk 1: UNDP's image and brand are damaged due to events beyond the influence of the project. Potential donors are not interested in contributing to UNDP's work.
*Actions taken*: To ensure this never occurred, the Fundraising & Engagement team conducted specific communication campaigns. Branding and communication around the digital giving platform takes into account and addresses any concerns related to a damaged brand.

Project Risk 2: Contributions to UNDP are no longer tax exempt.
*Actions taken:* In the case that this were to have occurred, the Fundraising & Engagement team identified relevant partners through which tax-deductibility could be achieved.

Project Risk 3: Funding to support the project beyond the two-year period will not be mobilized endangering the sustainability of the platform.
*Actions taken:* Extensive efforts were made to expand the funding base. Unfortunately, additional funds could not be mobilized from partners. UNDP is now looking to invest its own corporate resources as part of its digital strategy in 2019 to build on the solid work of the Project.

## 5. LESSONS LEARNED

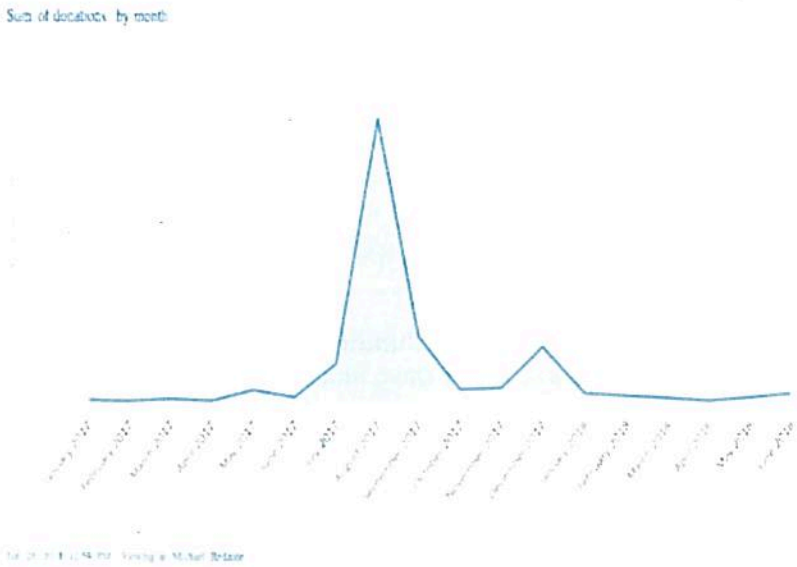
**Key Project Lessons Learned:**

1) Email growth is key to donation growth: There was a direct correlation between email growth and donation growth. As the email subscriber pool increased we had more prospective donors. Based on this fact, we focused heavily on growing our email file by conducting multiple petition campaigns as well as surveys to grow our email file.

2) Converting subscribers to donors takes up to 15 touch points: With a combination of emails (Thank-you, Stories, Surveys, Videos, Educational content, and Campaign Updates), and repeated Social Media ads (Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter), it requires up to 15 points of contact between UNDP and a prospective donor to get them to donate.

3) Personalization matters more than design: We introduced the character of "Hana" who was the correspondent from UNDP who our donors and subscribers would interact with. The emails and communication made with our subscribers were informal and personal, creating a

relationship that subscribers felt was a 1-to-1 relationship and therefore sincere and meaningful. This strategy outperformed one in which we used a more formal, institutional messaging, with multiple graphics used in email.



4) More testing equates to higher engagement: The key to maintaining high engagement was testing email subject lines, content, images, sending times, and length. This was done cyclically for all campaigns to ensure we were adapting to our subscribers' behavior.

5) Reinforcing the UNDP brand should be done regularly: The most popular content was that which displayed results of UNDP programmes, however, most of our subscribers when joining our email list had little idea of who or what UNDP was. This was a key barrier to overcome when new subscribers joined. We sprinkled in content on a regular basis that educated at a very basic level what it was that UNDP strives to accomplish.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

With immense gaps between the world's ambition for transformative change under Agenda 2030 and the current funding and expertise to achieve it, Digital Good offers great potential to contribute two key pieces to close that gap: unlocking and directing significant new sources of funding from individuals to support implementation of the SDGs, and mobilizing considerable youth engagement in applying their energy and creativity to new solutions and approaches to the Goals.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has already led the field in new thinking in this area, following a youth-led agenda to initiate this digital approach to funding and supporting the SDGs. UNDP has met this challenge and carefully stewarded KSA's initial investment by designing a cost-effective cutting-edge pilot programme which in order to continue requires taking the pilot test and investing in scaling it up to global reach and impact.

## 7. INTERIM FINANCIAL STATUS (see attached)

**United Nations Development Programme**
**Interim Financial Report to the Government of Saudi Arabia**
**As of 31 December 2018**

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Contributions reference no.** | |
| **Country:** | **UN Development Programme** |
| **Project description:** | **Post-2015 Development Platform** |
| **Project:** | **00086947** |
| **Output description:** | **Post-2015 Development Platform** |
| **Output:** | **00094104** |
| **Output status:** | **Operationally Closed** |
| **Fund:** | **Programme Cost Sharing** |

(in United States dollars)

| | Prior years (1) | 2018 (2) | Cumulative to 2018 (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Income/Revenue** | | | |
| Contributions[a] | 2,000,000.00 | - | 2,000,000.00 |
| Other Revenue[b] | 123.00 | - | 123.00 |
| Transfer to/from other funds | - | - | - |
| Refunds to donors | - | - | - |
| **Total - Income/Revenue** | 2,000,123.00 | - | 2,000,123.00 |
| **Expenses** | | | |
| Staff and other personnel costs | 935,767.03 | 69,426.21 | 1,005,193.24 |
| Supplies, commodities, materials | - | - | - |
| Equipment, vehicle and furniture including depreciation | 8,756.83 | 1,935.15 | 10,691.98 |
| Contractual services | 559,470.20 | 24,202.58 | 583,672.78 |
| Travel | 52,194.19 | 1,578.38 | 53,772.57 |
| Transfers and grants to counterparts | 20,000.00 | - | 20,000.00 |
| General operating and other direct costs | 155,575.83 | 5,407.25 | 160,983.08 |
| Subtotal | 1,731,764.08 | 102,549.57 | 1,834,313.65 |
| Programme support costs[c] | 138,460.12 | 8,200.74 | 146,660.86 |
| **Total Expenses** | 1,870,224.20 | 110,750.31 | 1,980,974.51 |
| **Balance[d]** | 129,898.80 | 19,148.49 | 19,148.49 |
| **Future Expenses[e]** | | | |
| Balance of un-depreciated assets & inventory purchased | 22,462.90 | 19,148.49 | 19,148.49 |
| Commitments | 67,825.00 | - | - |
| Subtotal | 90,287.90 | 19,148.49 | 19,148.49 |
| **Receivable[e]** | | | |
| Less: Contributions receivable from donors | - | - | - |
| **Available Resources[f]** | 39,610.90 | (0.00) | (0.00) |

a. Contributions represent recognized revenue from donors based on the payment schedule in signed agreements.
b. Other Revenue represents revenue resulting from miscellaneous activities.
c. Programme support (indirect) cost is calculated based on the expenses excluding amounts of foreign exchange gain/loss.
d. Balance in column (2) is inclusive of balance in column (1).
e. Future expenses and Receivable - amounts in column (2) are the balances outstanding as of the report date which are included in the available resources. Amounts in column (1) are shown for information purpose only.
f. Available resources - balance after future expenses, and contributions receivable from donors (i.e. amounts past due) have been accounted for.

This is to certify that the above statement of revenue, expenses and available resources is correct and that the expenses were incurred in connection with the approved projects for which funds have been received.

Name: (Date)
Title:

**United Nations Development Programme**
**List of Assets for Digital Good Project**
**As of 31 December 2018**

| TAG Number | Serial Number | Model | Location | Acquisition Date | In Service Date | Cost,USD | Net Book Value | Quantity | Department | Impl Agency | Donor | Project | Fund code |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 113621 | C02R816VG8WM | MACBOOK PRO 15" | DC1-1944 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 2,929.00 | 1,921.91 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113625 | D25R71DCGQ17 | iMAC 27" | DC1-1944 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 3,848.00 | 2,524.92 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113626 | D25R71DBGQ17 | iMAC 27" | DC1-1902 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 3,848.00 | 2,524.92 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113620 | C02R816YG8WM | MACBOOK PRO 15" | DC1-1921 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 2,929.00 | 1,921.91 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113627 | D25R71DAGQ17 | iMAC 27" | DC1-1919 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 3,848.00 | 2,524.92 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113624 | C02R65L0FVH8 | MACBOOK PRO 13" | DC1-1919 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 2,499.00 | 1,639.75 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113622 | C02R816ZG8WM | MACBOOK PRO 15" | DC1-1902 | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 2,929.00 | 1,921.91 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113623 | C02R816XG8WM | MACBOOK PRO 15" | DC1-1912A | 3/29/2016 | 3/29/2016 | 2,929.00 | 1,921.91 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| 113651 | C02S90XAG8WM | MACBOOK PRO 15" | DC1-1944 | 8/26/2016 | 8/26/2016 | 3,168.00 | 2,246.36 | 1 | 04016 | 001981 | 00210 | 00094104 | 30000 |
| Totals | | | | | | **28,927.00** | **19,148.49** | | | | | | |