MOBILE SOLUTIONS FOR LAND & RESOURCE RIGHTS

USAID has launched a new program to expand its successful Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST) initiative. MAST is a suite of innovative technology tools and inclusive methods that use mobile phones and tablets to efficiently, transparently, and affordably map and document land and resource rights.

MAST helps people and communities define, map, record, and document their land and resources. It provides a simple mobile platform to capture the information necessary for securing land rights, such as names and photos of people using and occupying land, details about what the land is used for and whether it is held in customary arrangements or through formal legal channels.

MAST combines an easy-to-use mobile phone application with training and a participatory approach that empowers citizens in the process of understanding their rights to land and resources.

WHY MAST?

MAST provides a low-cost, flexible alternative to traditional land administration services. It can be used in areas where traditional land administration services are unavailable due to factors such as high costs, low capacity, or remote geographies. MAST can provide communities in these locations with a flexible, basic, and effective means of recording and documenting their land and resource rights. The MAST application runs on readily available Android phones, and can be translated into different languages and customized for local needs. MAST can be used in rural, peri-urban, or urban areas.

MAST has a track record of success. In Burkina Faso, MAST has been used to successfully map and issue 2,638 land certificates in four months. It has saved considerable amounts of time over existing land surveying methods, while maintaining similar data quality and accuracy standards. In Tanzania, after a successful pilot in three villages, MAST is now being scaled by a large Feed the Future program. USAID is working with traditional leaders in Zambia, using MAST in 150 villages to document and certify customary land rights.

WHY DOES LAND MATTER?

Few development challenges are as pressing as land ownership. Millions of people around the world lack documented land rights, often due to weak land governance systems or limited land administration services, continuing to trap many in poverty.

Strengthening land tenure and property rights is critical for:

- Preventing and mitigating conflict of land and resources
- Creating incentives to improve agricultural productivity, reducing hunger and poverty
- Promoting gender equality and enabling women's economic empowerment
- Enabling more responsible land-based investment
- Creating incentives to manage natural resources efficiently and sustainably
- Improving resilience to shocks and disasters

Due to the cross-cutting nature of land and resource rights, MAST can be used in a variety of programing contexts:

- Feed the Future
- Democracy and Rule of Law
- Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment
- Conflict Mitigation and Management
- Economic Growth
- Environment, Biodiversity, and Natural Resource Management

HOW TO ACCESS MAST

USAID's E3/Land and Urban Office has launched a new program, Land Technology Solutions (LTS), that is designed to refine MAST and support its expansion into new countries. LTS is an integrated knowledge transfer, capacity building, and technical assistance program that helps eligible countries rapidly deploy a customized version of MAST either as a stand-alone pilot project or an integrated activity supporting an existing program.

SERVICES OFFERED BY LTS

- Technical assistance in designing specialized land mapping or registration pilots or activities;
- Assistance in supporting the creation of a country-specific, customized version of MAST that is adapted to local needs;
- Training and capacity building at the national, regional and local levels; and
- Ongoing technical assistance and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation support for sustaining interventions or for future scaling by host countries.

MORE INFORMATION

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LTS is implemented by SSG-Advisors in conjunction with Tetra Tech

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