



## Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST)

### What is MAST?

MAST is an efficient, inclusive approach to **mapping resource rights** and **securing land tenure**. MAST leverages easy-to-use mobile phone applications to help citizens understand their rights and document their land and resources.

The MAST approach is **faster** and **less expensive** than traditional land administration methods. It also promotes participation and leadership of **women** and other marginalized groups in project activities. It has been successfully used in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, and Zambia, and is being expanded to additional countries such as India.

### USAID's MAST approach can help to:

- reduce conflicts over land and resources,
- create incentives to improve agricultural productivity,
- ensure inclusion of women and vulnerable populations in securing land tenure, and
- improve resilience to shocks and stresses.



The MAST approach can support resource identification, boundary harmonization, land use planning, documentation of customary land rights or land certification. On-the-ground training and participatory methods ensure the MAST process is transparent and inclusive, while building the capacity of communities. MAST allows citizens to map and document their land and resources faster, *and* at less cost than traditional technologies and approaches.

This makes USAID's MAST approach a powerful framework that can be adapted to a variety of contexts to empower citizens in the process of understanding, mapping, and documenting their land and resource rights.

## WHY MAST

Hundreds of millions of people around the world lack documented land rights. At the same time, demand for land is rising, fueling competition, conflict, and increasing barriers to access for disadvantaged groups.

MAST provides a **lower-cost, flexible alternative** to traditional land administration services. It can be used in areas where traditional land administration services are unavailable or not functioning because of lack of capacity, funding, or political commitment.

The MAST application is **technology-agnostic**; the approach can be combined with many types of mobile tools, including USAID's previously developed [MAST-related technology](#). It can be translated into different languages, **customized for local needs**, and used in rural or urban areas – even in areas without cell or internet connections.

In **Zambia**, the time from demarcation (marking of boundaries) to customary documentation **decreased from 550 to 100 days** during MAST implementation.

In **Tanzania**, the cost for mapping land parcels was around \$40 using traditional methods. MAST **reduced costs on a per parcel basis** to under \$8. **Women's land ownership also increased** from a national estimate of 25% to 50% in targeted villages.



## MAST IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Strengthening land and property rights creates incentives that promote resilient societies and enhance food security and economic growth. Due to the cross-cutting nature of land and resource rights, **MAST can be used in a variety of programming contexts**, including economic growth, food security and agricultural productivity, gender equality and women's empowerment, democracy and rule of law, conflict mitigation, climate change, and natural resource management.

To learn more about MAST, visit [www.land-links.org/mast](http://www.land-links.org/mast)  
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