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# EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION (ERC)

Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (MAST)

Lessons Learned Report: Executive Summary

JUNE 2016

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the genesis, implementation and outcomes of the Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (MAST) Pilot project. MAST was implemented in three villages in Iringa District in Tanzania between 2014 and 2016. The original goal of the project was to provide a “proof of concept” that mobile technologies could be provided to community members, along with training on land laws and rights, in order to efficiently and effectively capture land rights information. Rather quickly, the pilot transformed into a collaborative experiment with the Government of Tanzania to work with rural villagers and the District Land Office in Iringa Rural District to formally document rights to land, in this case by providing Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCROs).

The pilot developed a software application suite that includes a mobile data collection application and a web-based database to store collected land rights information. District Land Officers validate the collected data and use it to generate reports and issue Adjudication Forms and CCROs – thus helping the government achieve a key development goal of titling properties to secure tenure and enhance the enabling environment. The pilot also developed a robust implementation methodology that trained local women and men on the provisions of Tanzania’s land laws and specifically, on women’s rights under these laws. The project helped, as needed, to establish local governance institutions and to provide specific training for members of the Village Council and Land Adjudication Committee members on their roles and responsibilities under the laws. Villagers learned about the process of land adjudication and the likely benefits and challenges of the process on a hamlet-by-hamlet (or “hyper-local”) basis. This deep engagement at the village level helped to improve buy-in to, and support for, this new process.

The pilot trained local literate youth – women and men – to use the mobile data collection application to map and record the land rights of their neighbors. These youth, called “Trusted Intermediaries” also received training on the land laws and the land adjudication process, and then proceeded to map all parcels in the three villages in which MAST operated. In addition, Trusted Intermediaries from Village 1 (Ilalasimba) helped to train Trusted Intermediaries in Village 2 (Itagutwa) and those from Village 2 helped to train Trusted Intermediaries in Village 3 (Kitaway). The project aimed for a gender balance among Trusted Intermediaries and on Land Adjudication Committees.

Early observed results from the pilot include:

- Working with local youth, the pilot mapped 3,927 parcels in three villages;
- The pilot has, to date, delivered over 2,000 CCROs to villages in Ilalasimba and Itagutwa – CCRO delivery for Kitaway will take place over the next two months;
- Approximately 50% of all CCROs were delivered to women;
- Women felt more empowered as a result of trainings on land rights and as a result of acquiring formal rights to land;
- Women felt that the land rights of their children would be more secure as a result of having the children’s names listed on CCROs;
- Some villagers noted that they would now invest in cash crops, such as tomatoes, for sale in markets;
- Youth felt as though they made a positive contribution to their community by serving as Trusted Intermediaries;

- Youth felt encouraged and empowered by the capacity building experience using the mobile technology;
- Villagers felt that some conflicts would be avoided in the future given that land rights were clarified and secured; and
- Villagers felt that they were less likely to be expropriated or wrongfully lose land rights.

Key lessons learned from this pilot include the following:

- Regular engagement with the national Government was important for integrating the MAST technology and implementation approach into the rural land adjudication process;
- Partnering with the national Government at the operational level helped to facilitate implementation at the district and local levels;
- District land staff have the expertise to survey and map lands using the MAST technology;
- Adopting a “hyper-local” approach to advocacy and training helped increase knowledge of land laws and adjudication practices among villagers and increased buy-in and support;
- The Trusted Intermediary model worked to capture land rights information in a timely manner;
- Youth were enthusiastic and engaged in this process and effectively served as mentors to others;
- A strong focus on women’s land rights and the rights other vulnerable groups has helped increase security and promote gender equality; and
- Geospatial resources and tools were easily adopted by project beneficiaries.

However, experiences from the pilot also highlight some key challenges which include:

- A lack of sufficient, dedicated funding from the national government constrains efforts to systematically register land rights at the district level;
- The District Land Office needs additional staff with appropriate capacity to manage a process of systematic registration in a timely manner;
- Cumbersome practices to print, record, issue and deliver CCROs are a significant bottleneck in the delivery of land rights documentation;
- The high sunk costs associated with the use of “crested paper” and other required stationary makes the delivery of CCROs expensive;
- The expectation that government staff and village leaders will receive per diems to support land adjudication work creates financial pressures on project resources;
- Lack of accurate mapping data create ambiguities in the formal land adjudication process and reduces efficiencies in mapping and data collection;
- Limitations related to land use planning processes have the potential to exclude vulnerable groups and increase disputes;
- Costs associated with internet services, geospatial resources and tools and cloud-based databases need to be factored into government budgets if the MAST approach is expanded; and
- The Government needs to identify real demand for CCROs among citizens, and price delivery of land administration services appropriately to create a revenue stream to support systematic land adjudication.

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