



Mobile Money Consultative Group Meeting Highlights

The introductory meeting of the Mobile Money Consultative Group (MMCG) initiated and hosted by USAID's Mobile Solutions Technical Assistance and Research (mSTAR) project was held on August 27, 2014 at FHI 360's Bangladesh Country Office. A total of 21 participants from 10 organizations from the development and donor community participated in the meeting, including USAID, DFID, Dnet, WorldFish, BRAC, Chars Livelihood Programme, English in Action, HelpAge International, Business Finance for the Poor in Bangladesh, and FHI 360.

The aim of the meeting was to set the foundation for the group, with an overall goal of facilitating the creation of a more inclusive mobile financial service (MFS) ecosystem in Bangladesh. The group will serve as a platform through which stakeholders can share their experiences about using mobile money, as well as to identify opportunities for new product innovations and barriers that may exist in effectively using existing products to reach remote and underserved populations. The key discussions of this meeting are summarized below.

Regulatory Issues and Growth of MFS Industry in Bangladesh

Participants discussed the dependency of MFS providers on mobile network operators (MNOs) and the need for increased coordination among MFS providers and MNOs to better serve communities they are working in. As MNOs are regulated by Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and MFS providers are regulated by Bangladesh Bank, increased coordination between the two regulatory bodies can help to mitigate any issues that arise between MNOs and MFS providers.

MFS Product Innovation

Participants discussed the fact that there are very few savings products available through MFS. This is a challenge for organizations working with underserved communities that intend to promote savings habits within these communities. It was observed that the expectation mismatch between the development community and MFS providers reduces development organizations' interest in adopting mobile payments in their project operations. Participants shared that financial inclusion could be accelerated if MFS providers offered more innovative mobile financial products, such as microcredit disbursement, loan repayment collection, and automated loan disbursement.

Creating Demand for Mobile Financial Services

Several participants noted the need for the development community, donors, and MFS providers to create demand for MFS at the community level. Increasing awareness raising initiatives and advocacy with different stakeholders to promote the benefits of using mobile money were shared as possible ways to increase demand. Participants expressed the need to share learning documents, [such as those produced by mSTAR](#), to enable them to apply a best-fit approach in their respective projects in creating demand for MFS at the beneficiary end.

Conclusion

All participants recognized the potential for connecting underserved communities to the formal banking system using mobile money. It was decided that MMCG will act as a platform to share ideas with each other, as well as with the central bank, MFS providers and other stakeholders.

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