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## MOBILE SOLUTIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & RESEARCH PROGRAM (mSTAR) BANGLADESH

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

**TA RECIPIENT:** THE WORLDFISH CENTER  
MAY 2014



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# mSTAR Bangladesh Technical Assistance Report

## **Request from: The WorldFish Center**

### **Overview of Technical Assistance Request**

WorldFish requested help from mSTAR Bangladesh to operationalize using mobile money with field-level staff on WorldFish's Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN) project.

### **Challenges Transitioning to Mobile Money**

WorldFish has been experiencing resistance to the proposed transition from cash to mobile money from a few field staff, especially those from the Khulna division. Until their field staff are fully convinced of the benefits of mobile money, it will be difficult for WorldFish to transition from cash to mobile money. The WorldFish Center head office staff have been thus far unable to convey the advantages of using mobile money to their field staff.

### **Description of Technical Assistance Provided by mSTAR Bangladesh**

WorldFish requested mSTAR Bangladesh's technical assistance to help them conduct training workshops in four locations in the Khulna division to address field staff resistance. mSTAR Bangladesh's role was to facilitate the workshops and to educate participants about the wide benefits of using mobile phones, particularly for mobile payments. Participants included WorldFish's Extension Facilitators, Field Supervisors and Technical Specialists. The aim was to teach participants that mobile phones can be used for multiple purposes, not just to make calls. The locations of the workshops were determined by participants' commutes, and were selected by Quazi Kudrat E Kabir, AIN Project Manager, under the guidance of the Regional Manager.

### **Participant Profile**

The participants primarily came from one of three groups: Extension Facilitators, Field Supervisors and Technical Specialists. Technical Specialists are regular AIN project staff employed by WorldFish to oversee the training of Extension Facilitators, and conduct necessary project activities and oversight. Extension Facilitators are non-regular, contracted staff who directly train farmers. Field Supervisors are full-time employees who monitor quality and farmer training attendance.

There were a total of 139 participants at the workshops, including 125 Extension Facilitators, 9 Field Supervisors, and 5 Technical Specialists. All of the participants own a mobile phone, and more than a quarter of the participants are already using mobile money. See Annex A for further details on the mobile usage profile of the workshop participants.

## Snapshot of Major Mobile Usage Findings

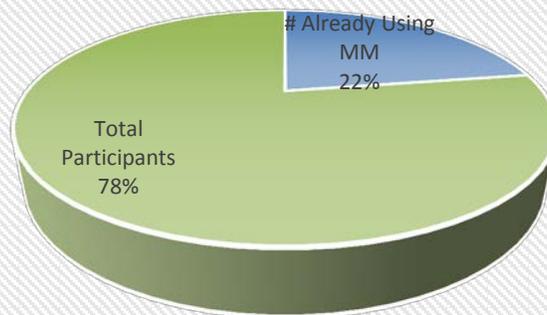
Active SIM card penetration	192%		
Mobile money account holders*	27%	Using mobile internet	9%

\* The majority of mobile money accounts have been used for over-the-counter transactions only, not for transferring money or making purchases

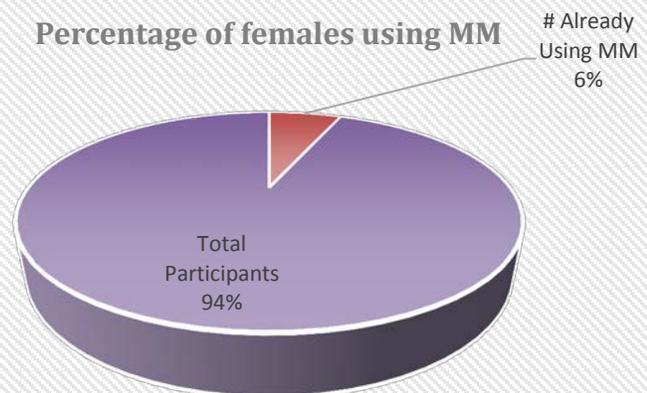
*Existing Mobile Money Users by sex.*

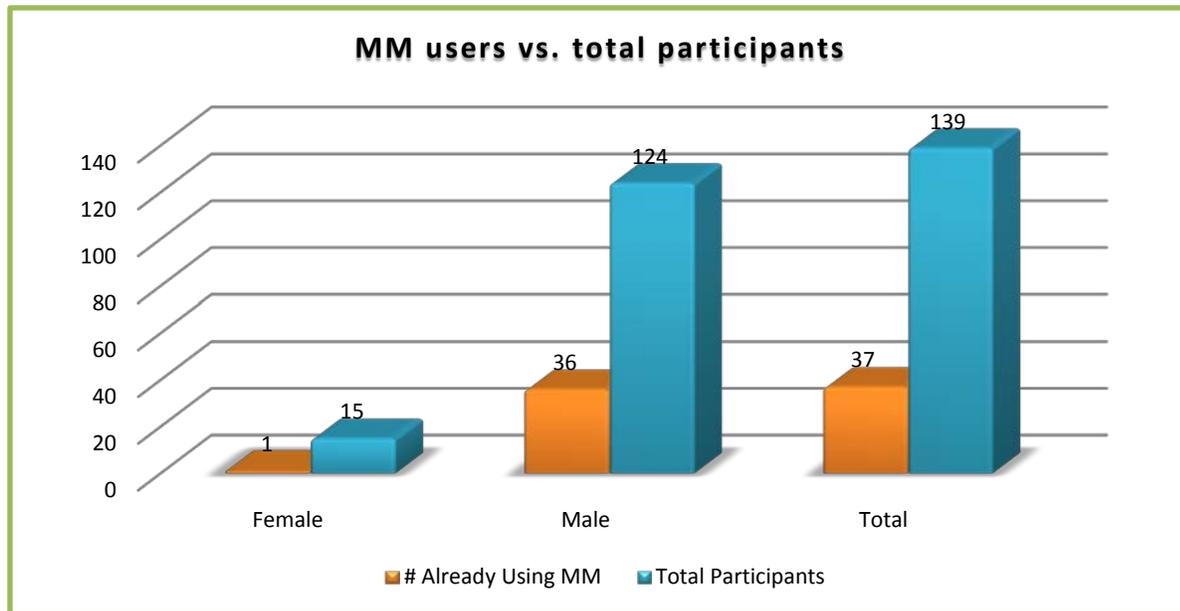
*Note: See Annex A for more information*

Percentage of males using MM



Percentage of females using MM





## Workshop Activities

The workshops began by asking participants general questions about their daily routine. This was followed by an introduction of mSTAR Bangladesh and its role in supporting the USAID-funded Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN) project, implemented by WorldFish. The introduction also included an overview of mSTAR Bangladesh’s grants, which WorldFish is a recipient of. The grants were offered to USAID’s Feed the Future and health projects that commit to testing mobile and electronic payments, whether to a limited or extensive degree, in order to compare and document the costs, challenges, and benefits of using cash versus mobile and electronic payments.



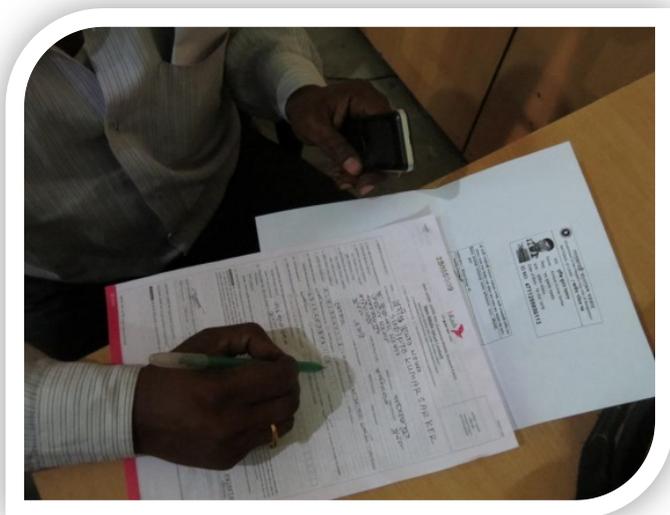
The workshop facilitator, M. Ataur Rahman (mSTAR Bangladesh Team Lead) talked about how new technologies are dynamic, and how they impact peoples’ lifestyles. All of the participants responded affirmatively when asked if they use a mobile phone. Surprisingly, some of the participants have three to four active mobile SIM cards. This supports the idea that everyone feels the need to have a mobile phone for communication purposes.



Ataur then asked participants if any of them use phones for anything other than making voice calls, to which most people responded that they do. Many had used Short Message Service (SMS) to transmit information. Some participants commented that they use the internet on their phones to stay updated on news and sports, and to access social networks such as Facebook. This signifies that as lifestyles are changing, technology—especially mobile phones—contributes in linking people to the mainstream economy.

During the four workshops, a small number of participants noted that they have used bKash to send or receive money, allowing the facilitator to open up the discussion on mSTAR Bangladesh's objectives. The facilitator invited mobile money users from within the groups to describe their experience. Participants

often expounded on the need to transfer money to distant places urgently. They would either send it themselves using their own mobile phone or use a nearby bKash agent to send it for them. Although they noted that using an agent for over-the-counter services can sometimes include a higher service charge than the mobile financial service providers' prescribed transfer and cash out rates.



Participants were asked to expand on why they might use mobile money as a service. The response was fairly similar in all of the workshops. First, it saves them time and money because they do not need to travel. Moreover, relying on middlemen, known locally as 'dalal', who bring cash to recipients, can be troublesome and unsecure. Finally, it is inconvenient to send a check or make a bank transfer.



Some participants were already aware of the fact that mobiles can be used to send and receive money or airtime credit, though with varying levels of understanding of the process. mSTAR Bangladesh helped all participants understand that mobiles are not just used for making voice calls; mobile phone usage has changed rapidly over the last few years and a clear case can be made that taking advantage of mobile money services will increase efficiency and productivity in people's lives.

## Initial Outcomes

### Capacity Building for Adopting Mobile Money

The TA workshops provided an efficient platform to brainstorm with participants about the usages of mobile money and potential drawbacks of using mobile payments within project interventions. As different levels of stakeholders (e.g. Extension Facilitators, Field Supervisors, Farmers, Patilwalas, etc.) are expected by WorldFish to transition to mobile payments, it is important to map whose participation is essential and their current understanding of mobile money. The mSTAR Bangladesh Team Lead trained and guided the entire AIN project team in improving their mobile money-related knowledge, mapping a well-defined process to gradually transition to a cashless system, and defining their roles in that process.

### Finalizing Field Level Payment Processes

The workshops revealed that WorldFish management has not yet been able to figure out a suitable process to pay training allowances to farmers (BDT 40/farmer/training) using mobile money. Major drawbacks identified by WorldFish management include: low access to mobile phones by farmers, disadvantages to farmers of cashing out of small amounts, mobile money literacy of farmers, and audit documentation. Gradually, a mobile payment system will be introduced at the farmer level to help them open mobile money accounts and to use mobile money to transfer allowances directly to farmers.

## Planned Follow Up

As part of the follow up process, changes in mobile money transactions for farmer payments will be tracked over the next quarter. The number of farmer-related mobile money transactions is expected to increase gradually due to the mobile money roll out process. Finally, the Extension Facilitators' readiness to adopt mobile money will be observed and included in weekly updates.

mSTAR Bangladesh will also invite WorldFish staff to any upcoming and relevant district-level workshops to further increase their capacity, in addition to sharing future knowledge products with the WorldFish team supported during this TA assignment.

## Annex A: Mobile Usage Profile of Workshop Participants

Date	Area	No. of Participants			No. of Active SIM Card			Already Mobile Money user			Using mobile internet		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
4-May-14	Khulna-Dumuria	12	5	17	24	7	31	2	1	3	2	1	3
5-May-14	Bagerhat-Sadar	55	5	60	113	14	127	10	0	10	4	1	5
6-May-14	Khulna-Paikgaccha	27	1	28	48	2	50	9	0	9	2	0	2
7-May-14	Shatkhira-Devbhata	30	4	34	51	7	58	15	0	15	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

## Annex B: Program Schedule

Date	Time	Area	Participants	Exact Location/venue	Details
<b>May 4, 2014</b>	12:00 pm – 04:00 pm	Khulna-Dumuria	17 (15 EF, 1 FS and 1 TS)	Jobayed Ali Auditorium, Dumuria Upazilla Parishad, Dumuria, Khulna	Speakers: Murad, Aatur, Kabir, Samir, Somel, and Erik
<b>May 5, 2014</b>	09:30 am – 01:30 pm	Bagerhat	60 (54 EF, 4 FS and 2 TS)	Hotel Dhan Shiree, Doshani, Bagerhat	Speakers: Murad, Aatur, Kabir, Samir, Somel.
<b>May 6, 2014</b>	10:00 am – 02:00 pm	Paikgaccha	28 (25 EF, 2 FS and 1 TS)	BFRI Auditorium, Paikgaccha, Khulna	Speakers: Murad, Aatur, Ashraf, Samir, Sabbir.
<b>May 7, 2014</b>	10:00 am – 02:00 pm	Shatkhira-Devbhata	34 (31 EF, 2 FS and 1 TS)	Union Parishad Auditorium, Sakhipur Union Parishad, Debhata, Satkhira	Speakers: Murad, Aatur, Azhar, Samir, Rasel.