



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**mWomen**



## **FACTSHEET: GSMA mWomen Programme Global Development Alliance**

### **Overview**

**Partners:** USAID, AusAID, GSMA and Visa Inc.

**Goal:** To reduce the mobile phone gender gap by 50 per cent by 2014: *By enabling an additional 150 million underserved women in developing countries to own and effectively use mobile phones, the GSMA mWomen Programme Global Development Alliance (GDA) will increase women's access to vital information, networks and services, thereby accelerating women's leadership potential and empowering them to improve their quality of life and that of their families and communities.*

**Location:** Low- to middle-income countries, with an initial focus on South Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Pacific

**Timeline:** October 2011 – September 2014

**Website:** [www.mwomen.org](http://www.mwomen.org)

### **Background**

- The GSMA mWomen Programme is an unprecedented global public-private partnership between the worldwide mobile industry and the international development community.
- The Programme aims to reduce the mobile phone gender gap by 50 per cent and provide life-enhancing services to underserved women in developing countries.
- The Programme was launched with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Mrs. Cherie Blair in October 2010.
- It highlights both a commercial and social opportunity through working with: 31 industry partners in the GSMA mWomen Working Group to create innovative business models to reduce overall cost; the development community, NGOs, governments and operator marketing teams to address cultural barriers; the design and international development communities to help women become more comfortable using mobile phones; and NGOs and content aggregators to increase the availability of life-enhancing mobile services.
- The Global Development Alliance represents Phase 2 of the GSMA mWomen Programme, and builds on the current grants by USAID and AusAID to GSMA, which were made under Phase 1 to support the development of the mWomen Business Case Framework and Research into the 'Wants and Needs of Base of the Pyramid (BOP) Women,' both of which will be released at Mobile World Congress 2012.
- The GSMA mWomen Programme is an initiative of the GSMA Development Fund, implemented through the GSMA Foundation. The GSMA Development Fund exists to accelerate economic, social and environmental development in underserved markets through the use of mobile technology, leveraging the industry expertise of the GSMA and its members, as well as the expertise of international development agencies and non-profit organizations.

## Key Objectives of the GSMA mWomen Global Development Alliance

The GSMA mWomen Programme aims to reduce the mobile phone gender gap by 50 per cent by September 2014, by employing the following impact strategies:

- Shift mobile industry resources to reach underserved women and establish the women's market segment as a key opportunity for the mobile industry;
- Catalyze the creation, launch and scaled distribution of life-enhancing mobile value-added services for underserved women;
- Support underserved women's effective use and ability to engage with mobile technology; and
- Provide access to mobile products and services to enable women's leadership and empowerment.

## Key Activities of the GSMA mWomen Global Development Alliance

- Provide **human resource grants to operators** to help them identify and implement at scale new commercial and social opportunities, products and services for underserved women (launching mid-2012);
- Provide **grants for NGOs** to collaborate with mobile operators in designing activities that address the barriers to mobile phone usage among women, particularly technical literacy and traditional attitudes surrounding women's ownership of mobile phones (launching 2013);
- Conduct **research into women's wants and needs**, including for mobile value-added services, such as mobile payments (2010-2014);
- Assess and effectively replicate pilot projects for **bringing women into** the retail stream of **the mobile value chain** (ongoing);
- Consult with mobile network operators to **design and operationalize customer strategies** for targeting underserved women (ongoing);
- Design and disseminate an underserved women's **marketing toolkit** to demonstrate how mobile industry marketing campaigns can be leveraged for behavior change communications aligned with development objectives (launching mid-2012);
- Institutionalize underserved women as a recognized market segment by **implementing and awarding an mWomen Global Mobile Award**. This will reward the best mobile product or service targeting women in emerging markets, as part of the most coveted industry awards at GSMA's annual Mobile World Congress (awarded annually);
- **Focus attention on the mobile user experience** of underserved women. Strategies will help women feel more comfortable using mobile phones, thus maximizing potential for life-enhancing benefits of the tool (ongoing); and
- **Share knowledge** and **catalyze the replication of best practices** throughout the mobile industry and international development community (ongoing).

## Why Women & Mobile?

Mobile phone adoption in the developing world is growing at a rapid rate; today four out of five mobile connections are in developing countries<sup>1</sup>. However, women, particularly those living on less than \$2 per day, are not benefiting from mobile technology in an equal manner to men. In fact, research by the GSMA and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women<sup>2</sup> showed that a woman in a low- to middle-income country is 21 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone than a man. This mobile phone gender gap represents 300 million women in the developing world without access to this potentially life-enhancing tool.

Focusing on women and enabling their ownership and use of mobile technology has a powerful impact on improving lives and livelihoods. GSMA studies have shown that a 10 per cent increase in mobile phone penetration rates has led to an additional 1.2 per cent increase in GDP in low- and middle-income countries. Benefits from mobile technologies include improving women's literacy and girls' education, advancing access to health and education, supporting women's civic participation and activism, increasing the sense of security and independence for women, and amplifying economic opportunities and incomes for women living under \$2 per day. Because women direct the majority of their income to their families and communities, these benefits are widely shared. Thus, women and mobiles are a powerful combination for development outcomes.



## More about the Partners

### USAID

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency that provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign policy goals of the United States.

As stated in the President's National Security Strategy, USAID's work in development joins diplomacy and defense as one of three key pieces of the nation's foreign policy apparatus. USAID promotes peace and stability by fostering economic growth, protecting human health, providing emergency humanitarian assistance, and enhancing democracy in developing countries. These efforts to improve the lives of millions of people worldwide represent U.S. values and advance U.S. interests for peace and prosperity. USAID provides assistance in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Near East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Eurasia.

### AusAID

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is the Australian Government agency responsible for managing Australia's overseas aid program. The purpose of the Australian aid program is to help people overcome poverty, focusing efforts in areas where the Agency can make the biggest difference.

Australia's expertise in health, education, gender equality, law and order, infrastructure, rural development, and the environment draws on world best practice, as does its work helping combat global threats such as people trafficking, illicit drugs, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. Australia also responds to emergencies such as cyclones, floods, tsunamis and earthquakes.

<sup>1</sup> Wireless Intelligence August 2011.

<sup>2</sup>GSMA; Cherie Blair Foundation for Women; Vital Wave Consulting. (2010). Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity. London: GSMA.

**GSMA**

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide. Spanning more than 220 countries, the GSMA unites nearly 800 of the world's mobile operators, as well as more than 200 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset makers, software companies, equipment providers, Internet companies, and media and entertainment organizations. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as the Mobile World Congress and Mobile Asia Congress.

For more information, visit Mobile World Live, the online portal for the mobile communications industry, at [www.mobileworldlive.com](http://www.mobileworldlive.com).

**Visa Inc.**

Visa is a global payments technology company that connects consumers, businesses, financial institutions and governments in more than 200 countries and territories to fast, secure and reliable digital currency. Underpinning digital currency is one of the world's most advanced processing networks—VisaNet—that is capable of handling more than 20,000 transaction messages a second, with fraud protection for consumers and guaranteed payment for merchants. Visa is not a bank, and does not issue cards, extend credit or set rates and fees for consumers. Visa's innovations, however, enable its financial institution customers to offer consumers more choices: Pay now with debit, ahead of time with prepaid or later with credit products.

For more information, please visit: [www.mwomen.org](http://www.mwomen.org), [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov), [www.usaid.gov.au](http://www.usaid.gov.au) and [www.corporate.visa.com](http://www.corporate.visa.com).