

A PLATFORM BUILT ON SUCCESS

CRS has five years of experience with using mobile devices for MEAL in over 100 projects across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The Great Lakes Cassava Initiative, a large food-security project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented in six countries in Africa, aimed to help 1.15 million farmers overcome the effects of two cassava diseases. The project armed 250 field agents with mini laptops and digital forms to collect project performance data. Intensive field use led to multiple lessons learned and important innovations such as the functionality to capture data offline. This was just one project that laid the foundation for e-Valuate.

WHY E-VALUATE?

e-Valuate is ideal for organizations that want to use a cutting-edge ICT4D platform for data-driven planning and decision making. The platform is efficient, flexible and easy to employ at scale.

By using standardized yet flexible ICT4D tools, e-Valuate offers many advantages for MEAL:

- Easier and more accurate data collection
- Better efficiency for MEAL data collection and reporting
- More transparency and accountability
- Better tools for decision making and service delivery
- Easier performance tracking across projects, countries and regions

CRS developed e-Valuate based on real project needs and indicators. e-Valuate allows projects to start MEAL quickly based on standards, which allows performance tracking across projects, countries and regions. Yet e-Valuate also gives projects the ability to customize forms and reports to meet specific project needs.



For more information about e-Valuate,
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eVALUATE

is CRS' digital platform for collecting, managing and analyzing data on monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL). The platform uses ICT4D tools (including mobile devices, electronic data collection and integrated reporting) to achieve better MEAL.

EVIDENCE AND RESULTS

In 2013, Accenture conducted a study for CRS in Ethiopia to compare the costs and benefits of paper-based MEAL versus digital MEAL. The study revealed that digital MEAL reduced errors in data collection by up to 57 percent and reduced the time to process data from 10 days to mere seconds. The study found that the cost of using digital over the life of a project would in most cases be cheaper than the cost of using paper.

HOW E-VALUATE WORKS | The e-Valuate workflow involves six steps:



1 Use form library when designing the MEAL strategy

The e-Valuate platform was designed to complement typical processes for project and MEAL strategy design. The platform includes a comprehensive library of customizable digital forms by sector, for standardized yet flexible data collection.

2 Collect digital data

The system uses mobile devices that are preloaded with forms from the library. Solar chargers can be used to provide electricity. The devices use GPS to geocode the data. While online or offline, users can capture data about beneficiaries, services delivered and performance. Users can transmit the data to a secure database when a connection is available.

3 Store and manage the data

Each project has a dedicated database that is hosted at a world-class center with high standards for privacy and security. e-Valuate maps aggregate data to an enterprise-level database where it appears in standard dashboards. Users can access, clean and manage their data online.

4 Create reports, dashboards and maps

The system provides a set of analysis and visualization tools that allows staff to aggregate and summarize data, identify trends, perform statistical analyses, and create dashboards and maps.

5 Share the data

The online portal allows any stakeholder (including staff, partners and donors) to access the data, dashboards, reports and maps using a web browser. The platform uses secure, role-specific permissions.

6 Analyze the data, make decisions and act

The data visualization tools give staff members up-to-date figures on beneficiaries and services delivered, as well as detailed information on performance across projects. This allows staff to evaluate the efficiency and impact of programs and make decisions accordingly.

RESEARCH TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT

In order to stay on the cutting edge and to maximize the benefits of using ICT4D for MEAL, the e-Valuate team will hire independent experts to conduct further research studies to measure and document improved efficiencies, data quality, cost savings and results. The team will also track how planning and decision-making improve at the project and agency level.