

Contact:

Email: media@gatesfoundation.org

Phone: +1.206.709.3400

Contact:

Email: usaidpressofficers@usaid.gov

Phone: +1.202.712.4320

June 1, 2012

USAID's HIFIVE/Haiti Mobile Money Initiative Announces that Mobile Money Services in Haiti Have Passed the One Million Transaction Milestone

The award, shared by Voila's T-Cash and Digicel's TchoTcho Mobile, recognizes dramatic progress made through mobile money by giving more Haitians access to financial services

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced today that two of Haiti's mobile network operators—Digicel and Voila—will share a \$1.8 million award from the Haiti Mobile Money Initiative (HMMI) for reaching the one million transaction milestone while meeting the award program's stringent requirements.

Since their launch in Haiti in 2010, TchoTcho Mobile of Digicel and T-Cash of Voila have grown rapidly. Now, after passing the one million qualifying transaction milestone, these services are finding acceptance by Haitians who use them to solve a variety of problems they face daily. TchoTcho Mobile and T-Cash have spread throughout the country, with a network of agents that increased from 200 in December 2010 to 2,270 in December 2011.

This award, presented to Digicel and its partner Scotia Bank and to Voila and its partner Unibank, will be shared based on the operators' proportional transaction contribution in reaching the one million benchmark. Prizes are awarded only after a detailed process which includes extensive verification of transactions and field verification of the agent networks.

“Digicel is proud to have participated with Voila in the competition to deploy mobile money services in Haiti,” said Damian Blackburn, the CEO of Digicel. “We are committed to further expanding our mobile money services in Haiti, where currently over 90 percent of people do not have access to any financial services at all. Our TchoTcho Mobile Money service is being deployed in an ever-growing number of areas throughout Haiti, and we are also partnering with the Government on its plans to alleviate poverty through the Ti Manman Cheri program. In addition, TchoTcho is being used across a wide variety of other sectors like agriculture and health. Looking forward, our ongoing focus is developing TchoTcho to create a cashless society in Haiti that will help this country seize opportunities and tackle some of the challenges it faces.”

Noel Herrity, CEO of Voila, said the initiative is helping mobile money become an incredible solution to millions in Haiti. “It was the fuel we needed to help drive its success,” he said. “T-cash is extremely proud to have played a key role in a historical movement of Haiti, being the first country to officially launch mobile money in the Caribbean. Within one year, T-Cash had provided financial independence to over 21,000 people in several rehabilitative programs such as reconstruction, emergency programs, cash for work, food distribution, and helping the homeless find new places to live. T-Cash continues to be in demand by several entities, and we are currently working with World Bank, Capital Bank, Ramase Lajan, Entrepreneur Du Monde, International Federation of Red Cross, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services and many more. We believe that mobile money in Haiti is the financial solution to empowering economic growth and has the potential within a few more years to act as a springboard for the economic development of the country.”

HMMI, a partnership between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID, was created following the devastating January 2010 earthquake that killed tens of thousands and caused widespread social and economic devastation. It offers incentives to mobile money service providers to encourage a rapid deployment of these services with ubiquitous availability throughout the country, and it provides technical assistance to support solutions that will encourage the scaling up of mobile money in Haiti. A final prize will be awarded if the five million qualifying transaction milestone is reached.

Rodger Voorhies, Director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Financial Services for the Poor Program said: “After the tragic earthquake in Haiti, we believed that making mobile money services widely available in Haiti could help speed recovery efforts and unlock the country’s economic potential. Post-earthquake, the rapid launch and promising early uptake of mobile money services have the potential to make a difference in the lives of many Haitians. Recovery efforts have also been accelerated, as NGOs and government agencies are adapting the services to deliver benefits to a variety of Haitians. The continuing expansion of mobile money services in Haiti should contribute to the sustainability of these services while providing access to convenient and proximate access to financial services that will help people build financial security and productive lives.”

The launch of TchoTcho Mobile by Digicel and T-Cash by Voila in late 2010 dramatically changed the availability of financial services for Haiti’s poorer population and introduced important new channels for a variety of payments. With over 800,000 registered users, these services are enabling Haitians to send, receive and store money using their mobile phones, demonstrating their potential to dramatically improve the lives of Haitians. Introduction of this technology is allowing Haitians to leapfrog more conventional banking models to the safer, more affordable and more accessible alternatives provided by mobile money. It also can help connect people to difficult-to-access vital services like banking, insurance and utilities.

USAID funds the Haiti Integrated Finance for Value Chains and Enterprise (HIFIVE) project, which manages and implements HMMI. Carleene H. Dei, USAID/Haiti Mission Director, spoke of HMMI’s contributions: “Through this first mobile money campaign, Haitians can conduct person-to-person transactions with their cell phones and receive payments from a variety of institutions. We believe that mobile banking can help millions of Haitians join the formal sector and further transform the Haitian economy.”

As one of the first countries in the Caribbean and Latin America to introduce mobile money services, Haiti’s experience is already characterized by fast growth and an early diversity of uses

of the services. Non-governmental organizations in Haiti and other users have adapted the new platforms to their needs for safe, secure, quick and less expensive ways of paying “cash for work” salaries and distributing social benefits to earthquake victims. To-date, over 40 percent of the global deployments of mobile money by NGOs in relief and development work has occurred in Haiti. Businesses and governmental agencies are also developing their own programs for use of these platforms to make salary, merchant, social benefit, e-government and other payments.

In the longer term, these services could provide millions of Haitians the tools to better manage their financial lives, as have similar services in Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan and other countries. The introduction of these services is also spurring innovations in the Haitian information technology sector and helping to lower barriers to entry into e-commerce for Haiti’s micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Editor’s Note

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates, Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. Learn more at www.gatesfoundation.org or join the conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

U.S. Agency for International Development

Through the U.S. Agency for International Development, the American people have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for nearly 50 years. For more information about USAID's programs, please visit: www.usaid.gov/. For more information on USAID’s program’s in Haiti, visit: www.haiti.usaid.gov.

HIFIVE’s Haiti Mobile Money Initiative (HMMI)

HMMI is funded by \$10 million in awards plus additional funds for related activities from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as well as \$5 million in technical and management assistance from USAID. The Haiti Integrated Finance for Value Chains and Enterprise (HIFIVE)—a USAID-funded project—manages and implements HMMI. HIFIVE offers technical and management assistance to a variety of institutions working to improve access to financial services in Haiti. For more information about HIFIVE, please visit: <http://kdid.org/projects/field-support/hifive/hmmi>.

###