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SMARTPHONES FOR SOCIAL IMPACT:

Links Forged between Humanitarians Organisations and the Providers of Mobile Data Collection Tools at the NOMAD 2013 Paris Workshop:

For two and a half days from May 15th – 17th the French Space Agency Headquarters in Paris (CNES) hosted a workshop showcasing the latest advances in smartphone-based data tools and the use of these tools by aid agencies to deliver demonstrably life saving improvements in assistance. Representatives of ten technology providers each presenting a distinct smartphone-based data collection tool met with aid practitioners from more than twenty different aid agencies for a series of product demonstrations, aid worker testimonials of prior experiences using smart-phone data tools and a tool fair.

The NOMAD Project, an organization of humanitarian and digital information management experts dedicated to helping aid agencies navigate the available tool options, compare and contrast mobile data solutions, and reach informed decisions on the solution(s) that will be of greatest use to their operations, convened the participants, coming from more than twenty different countries. Fifty-eight per cent of the attendees (excluding the tool providers) had never used a mobile data collection solution before. Of those fifty-eight per cent, seventy-seven per cent said that they left the workshop inspired to introduce smartphone-based data collection methods to their organisation. Collected via twitter and in person, event attendees remarked on the workshop's success, describing it as a "great few days here at [#nomadws](#), lots of amazing ideas and brilliant contacts" and "plenty of exciting discussions involving users & providers of [#MDC \[mobile data collection\]](#) tools at the [#nomadws](#): this will help users leverage their full potential." A representative from PSI Mobile, one of the data tool providers that presented at the workshop, eloquently stated his organisation's satisfaction with the workshop as follows:

“As a solution provider, the opportunity to meet many humanitarian organisations specifically to discuss digital data gathering has been excellent. We have been provided with a forum to present our solution and to engage directly with a community with operational requirements in real life programmes. We have also had the opportunity to listen to other solution providers, which has provided a source of both new ideas and also potential partnership opportunities. We look forward to the next NOMAD event.”

With over ninety per cent of the event attendees satisfied, NOMAD’s team would be glad to organize another event, in order to implement the wonderful ideas the community submitted to them (hackathon with solution providers, thematic sessions, focus groups, etc.) – if funding can be found again for it!

In the meantime the presentations from the workshop have been published on NOMAD’s website. The organizations behind NOMAD, IMMAP and CartONG, will also keep up with their upcoming GIS, data collection and information management trainings, and recruit more data tool providers to feature their mobile data solutions on the Online Selection Assistant that NOMAD has created to help aid agencies compare and contrast providers and find data tools best tailored to their needs.

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The NOMAD Project links aid organisations with the latest information management tools to more easily collect, analyse and manage data. NOMAD has developed an Online Selection Assistant to connect your organisation or project with one of 24 mobile data collection solutions. NOMAD also includes a secondment service comprised of experienced field personnel who are ready to deploy to train your organization in the use of these data collection tools or provide technical support to ongoing operations.

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If you’d like more information on what was discussed in this event and on which organisations attended please contact Martin Noblecourt at m_noblecourt@cartong.org or +33 (0)4 79 26 28 82.