



→ Small- and medium-sized businesses are a vital engine of developing-country growth.

SMBs and the Informal Economy

Vital Wave helps clients understand and advance the SMB segment in developing countries.

Small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) represent a large share of the economy and workforce in emerging markets. Vital Wave estimates that there are 407 million formal and informal SMBs¹ in developing countries, employing 70-85% of the workforce and generating 40-50% of each country's GDP. Yet SMB owners and workers face distinct challenges. Entrepreneurs have little access to credit and limited opportunities for business training. Informal workers – from street vendors to domestic workers – face limited job security, poor working conditions, and occupational health hazards.

Vital Wave helps clients understand and advance the SMB segment in developing countries. Support for local entrepreneurship, innovation, and growth in key SMB sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and retail can have positive, cross-cutting impact on gender equality, the environment, food security, and urban and rural development. Foundations and corporations engage Vital Wave to support the growth of SMBs through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones, PCs and tablets, and cloud-based services. ICTs can contribute to an SMB's productivity, innovation, and growth.

¹Vital Wave's definition includes informal and non-employer firms, and formal micro, small, and medium enterprises, up to 250 employees.



KEY PROJECTS

- » Activating Silicon Valley to Scale M4D Products and Services in Emerging Markets
- » Business Planning for Regional Mobile Applications Labs
- » Research on SMBs in Emerging Markets
- » Software Start-up Support Program Strategy & Implementation
- » Report on Mobile Broadband and Women's Livelihoods in the Developing World

Vital Wave assesses and implements industry-specific ICT solutions that help SMBs and informal workers improve their health, finances, professional development, and income. The company's services cover all phases of a project lifecycle, from *Strategy and Advocacy*, to *Implementation and Management*, and *Optimization and Institutionalization*. The firm helps development organizations and their partners:

- ▶ Understand the needs and socioeconomic impact of entrepreneurs, SMBs, and the informal economy
- ▶ Support the expansion, diversification, and sustainability of the SMB segment within key sectors
- ▶ Design ICT-enabled interventions to build capacity and increase access to credit
- ▶ Implement ICT-enabled solutions that improve employee incomes, health, education, and financial access

Vital Wave draws from deep ICT and business development experience for engagements focused on SMBs and the informal economy. This experience includes:

- ▶ Guidance of SMB strategies for some of the world's largest corporations
- ▶ Collaboration with governments and development organizations on sector-specific growth and diversification strategies for SMBs
- ▶ Deep knowledge of the landscape of entrepreneurs, SMBs, and informal workers in emerging markets
- ▶ Design and implementation of ICT solutions that build SMB capacity and productivity

Contact Vital Wave or visit vitalwave.com for relevant case studies or free copies of useful reports focusing on SMBs and the informal economy.

About Vital Wave

Vital Wave provides end-to-end services to scale information and communications technology (ICT) solutions for socioeconomic impact in developing countries. The firm works with multiple stakeholders to deliver technology solutions that amplify the reach, uptake, and efficiency of development programs. Vital Wave draws on a full range of enterprise-level ICT implementation capabilities, proven methodologies, and decades of field experience in developing countries to achieve sustained growth at scale.