

**The Fourth Session of the Web for Development Conference
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Report of the Workshop on e – Agriculture – (13 participants)**

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Outline of Case Studies	<p>Case Study 1: DrumNet by Pride Africa A mobile telephone service connecting certified, trained small scale farmer groups to the <i>DrumNet</i> database provides access to markets, financing, and information services, ensuring a fixed and reliable market for farmers’ produce while facilitating access to credit through equity Bank for farm inputs. A <i>Transaction Insurance Fund (TIF)</i> amounting to 25% of the credit advanced to them is put up by the farmer groups with Equity Bank. At the end of the production cycle, the farmer groups deliver their produce to pre-identified collection centres and upon verification of quality, immediate payment is authorized through the <i>DrumNet</i> / Equity bank accounts. After deducting outstanding financial obligations, the bank transfers the net balance into the accounts of the farmer groups.</p> <p>Case Study 3: The e- Agriculture Initiative by FAO The Initiative promotes sustainable agricultural development and food security through improved exchange of ideas, experiences, and good practices. A <i>Community of Expertise</i> comprising policy makers, planners, development practitioners, farmer organizations, researchers and information and communication specialists interact through regular forums and community networking to contribute a range of resources including case studies, success stories, lessons learnt, publications, learning resources, news, and announcements to the e-agriculture platform.</p> <p>Case Study 2: The First Mile Project by IFAD The interface between mobile telephony and the internet enables small scale producers, processors, traders and others in the market chain to communicate better, form partnerships and exchange information on innovative practices and market opportunities through links with the IFAD supported Agricultural Marketing Systems Development Programme.</p>
Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited access to modern communication technologies, particularly at the grassroots level. 2. Asymmetrical access to information and knowledge by various actors. 3. Provision of and easy access to demand responsive, value enhancing and relevant information for farming communities. 4. The need to develop viable and practical ways to interface indigenous knowledge and external knowledge.

Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create, capture, process, store and disseminate local content to promote local networking, knowledge exchange, business transactions and best practices.2. Engage the local communities by providing information and content in a simple and easily understood manner, using the appropriate channels and adapting knowledge to local needs.3. Promote ICT as an enabler to bridge the gap between smallholder farmers and other actors in the value chain.4. Link systems to mobile phones which are more widely used5. Promote twinning of farming communities in different parts of the country and the world to accelerate transfer of best practices and create6. Improve networking between farming communities and rural based ICT centres.7. Promote partnerships with local media and encourage them to disseminate best practices in agriculture8. Train youth in rural areas as interface between the Internet and farmers.
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