Session title:	E-Extension: Accelerating Building Back Better
Session number:	11
Type of session:	Livestreamed
Day:	Monday, 6 September 2021
Time:	11:15-13:00 EAT
No. of participants:	54
Session Organizers:	Farm Radio International
Moderator:	Rex Chapota
Rapporteur:	Rex Chapota
Relevant outcome:	• E-extension that includes the use of all digital and mass medium platforms such as interactive radio, videos, mobile platforms can accelerate recovery and resilient food systems. • Coordination and multi-sectoral partnerships are prerequisites for effective and efficient use of E-extension at scale. • Harmonization and standardization of platforms and content is key to effective E-extension services. • More investments are needed to scale up E-extension systems.
Objectives:	E-Extension services have a direct contribution to increased capacity to generate, analyze and use data and innovations to accelerate recovery and resilience of food systems. E-Extension: Accelerating Building Back Better will explore emerging issues, best practices and evidence in digital extension as a key driver in transforming food systems for sub-Saharan Africa.

Speakers:

(*Name, Title, Organization)
1.Moderator: Rex Chapota, Senior Advisor-Strategy and Growth, Farm Radio International, Malawi
2. Keynote Presentation: Catherine Mloza Banda, Senior Regional Program Officer, East and Southern Africa
3. Panel Speakers: (i) Paul Siame, Director of Extension, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Ghana, (ii) Mrs Yenenesh Egu, Director of Extension, Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia, (iii) Dr Patience Rwamigisa, Commissioner of Extension and Skills Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda and (iv) Mr Patrick Kiao, Managing Director, ESOKO East Africa, Tanzania (v) Ms Martine Moguem, Project Assistant, Farm Radio International, Cameroon.

Main highlights:
(*For Insights and newsletter. To be based on the theme of the day. Fill in in bullet form)

• We need resilient food systems that can recover from multiple shocks and stressors - climate change, covid-19 pandemic, etc.

- Food system solutions need to go beyond the pilot project phase in order to reach **more** people **faster**

- ICTs and E-extension systems have the potential to greatly accelerate scale and reach of the resilient food system solutions

KEY CHALLENGES

- High cost of data
- Limited reach and coverage of ICT infrastructure
- Lack of skills for end users to use digital tools and platforms
- Lack of skills for extension agents to deploy digital platforms
- Inadequate coordination among actors
- Confusing messages in e-extension platforms
- Too many pilots without scaling up digital solutions
- Inadequate measurement of the impact of e-extension
- Gender inequality in access to digital tools

INNOVATIONS PROPOSED

- Integration and convergence of different digital platforms
- Go beyond pilots and look at scale
- Let those who use, pay for the services to ensure sustainability
- Deploy digital bundled services that combines a number of functions and actors on one system

RECOMMENDATIONS/ NEXT STEPS

- Governments in collaboration with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) should **reduce data costs and/or subsidize data** for small scale farmers since information is also a critical input of production
- MNOs should enhance **digital infrastructure reach and coverage** in the rural areas of sub Saharan Africa to make e-extension a reality for small scale farmers.
- E-extension stakeholders should build the **capacity of end users** for e-extension to maximize the functionality of digital tools and platforms.
- **Go beyond tech pilots and start-ups** through identification and scaling up best fit digital solutions that can enhance recovery and resilient food systems.
- **Capacitate extension agents with digital skills** so that they can use them to make their work efficient to accelerate information and knowledge sharing at farmer level.
- **Enhance public private partnerships** to scale up e-extension services since no single actor or digital tool will solve all the problems in the value chains.
- Governments should **institutionalize digitalization of extension services** in Ministries of Agriculture.
- **Enhance harmonization and standardization** of messages on e-extension platforms to avoid confusing farmers and value chain actors with contradictory messages.
- **Promote fee paying services** on digital platforms to increase sustainability of services.
- **Utilize remote-led methods** during the COVID 19 pandemic so that there is no information among small scale farmers.
- **Explore integration and interoperability of different digital platforms** so that there are synergies and sharing of information and feedback among digital platforms.
- **Strengthen gender equality measures** to enhance availability and accessibility of digital platforms to women farmers.

Session Summary:

(*To go in final report. Max 300 words. Fill in prose)

Resilient food systems are essential to achieving food security and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. But the challenge remains — how do we achieve change quickly, and at scale? The booming ICT industry offers an opportunity to use digital platforms to answer this challenge. The ICT industry is radically transforming e-extension services. Integrated ICTs, mass media such as interactive radio, TV and mediated videos, and face-to-face approaches are key to accelerating the Building Back Better agenda. We must leverage these e-extension services to enable recovery processes in the midst of COVID-19 through the use of remote-led methods.

Farm Radio International in collaboration with public extension systems in Ghana, Ethiopia, and Uganda as well as the private tech firm ESOKO organized a parallel session at the AGRF 2021 entitled "***E-Extension: Accelerating Building Back Better***". Key recommendations from the session based on a number of digital solutions, pilot projects, studies, and innovative programs were as follows:

- Governments in collaboration with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) should **reduce data costs and/or subsidize data** for small scale farmers.
- MNOs should enhance **digital infrastructure reach and coverage** in the rural areas of sub Saharan Africa to make e-extension a reality for small scale farmers.
- E-extension stakeholders should build the **capacity of end users** for e-extension to maximize the functionality of digital tools and platforms.
- **Go beyond tech pilots and start-ups** through identification and scaling up best fit digital solutions that can enhance recovery and resilient food systems.
- **Enhance public private partnerships** to scale up e-extension services since no single actor or digital tool will solve all the problems in the value chains.
- Governments should **institutionalize digitalization of extension services** in Ministries of Agriculture.
- **Enhance harmonization and standardization** of messages on e-extension platforms to avoid confusing farmers and value chain actors with contradictory messages.
- **Promote fee paying services** on digital platforms to increase sustainability of services.
- **Utilize remote-led methods** during the COVID 19 pandemic so that there is no information among small scale farmers.
- **Explore integration and interoperability of different digital platforms** so that there are synergies and sharing of information and feedback among digital platforms.
- **Strengthen gender equality measures** to enhance availability and accessibility of digital platforms to women farmers.

Tweetable quotes with timestamp:

(*For podcast and to go to AGRF Communication for social media. Minimum 3 per session)

- Reduce and/or subsidize cost of data to make e-extension a reality
- ICT Infrastructure development is a catalyst for efficient e-extension services
- Go beyond pilots and tech start-ups to ensure scale of digital advisory services

How has the session contributed to the AGRF outcomes?

*(For end of AGRF communique/ Press release. List 3 - 5 top outcomes)

- E-extension that includes the use of all digital and mass medium platforms such as interactive radio, videos, mobile platforms can accelerate recovery and resilient food systems.
- Coordination and multi-sectoral partnerships are prerequisites for effective and efficient use of E-extension at scale.
- Harmonization and standardization of platforms and content is key to effective E-extension services.

- More investments are needed to scale up E-extension systems.

COMMITMENTS

Farm Radio International will continue to support e-extension as a key platform for scale in recovery and resilient food systems

Department of Extensions more specifically of Ghana, Ethiopia and Uganda will lead in the institutionalization process of e-extension system to ensure quick recovery and resilient food systems.

Private tech companies are committed to work together with public sector for sustainable e-extension platforms.