



# Knowledge Management and Networking in Extension using ICTs



*Africa Extension Week  
6 August 2013, Gaborone, Botswana  
Magdalena Blum, Extension Systems Officer,  
Research and Extension Branch, FAO, Rome*



# Knowledge management in pluralistic demand led extension

- ✓ Major difference to former extension systems
- ✓ Not by one institution, but jointly by all actors of the agricultural innovation system
  - local, national, regional, global
- ✓ Demand led mechanisms required
- ✓ New ICTs for knowledge exchange
  - mobiles, rural radio, internet
  - examples: VERCON, TECA, Online training modules, ...
- ✓ Emphasis needs to be on networking, interactive learning, knowledge exchange, ...





# Trends in knowledge management by ICTs

- ✓ **Direct access of women and men farmers to ICTs - information and knowledge**
- ✓ **Involvement of farmers/FOs**  
→ contributions, decision making, management, ....
- ✓ **Brokerage role of advisors**  
→ emphasis on facilitation, coordination, linking and directing farmers to where they can find solutions
- ✓ **Trend to small devices (mobile phones/apps)**
- ✓ **Trend to tools which the users (young farmers) prefer - social media** (Facebook, You Tube, Flickr, Skype, Slide-Sharing, Twitter, online survey tools, ...)
- ✓ **Linking ICTs - websites, mobiles, radios, social media, etc.**



# ICT use in extension

- ✓ **Interactive knowledge exchange** (VERCON, TECA, ...)
- ✓ **Connecting people, establishing networks**
- ✓ **Information provision** (e.g. mobile phone messages)
- ✓ **Direct advice** (call centers, mobiles apps, ...)
- ✓ **Marketing** (linking local stocks/offers and demand)
- ✓ **Online support for education** (distance courses)  
**and training** (modules)
- ✓ **Mobile payments/banking** (insurances, credit schemes,  
vouchers, ...)
- ✓ **Monitoring and Evaluation**
  - Most social medias have M&E tools
  - Mobile apps for evaluation of extension advisors by farmers



# Various ICT tools

- ✓ Rural Radio
- ✓ Participatory Video
- ✓ TECA - a knowledge base and forum for technologies and practices for smallholders
- ✓ VERCON - virtual network for research, extension and farmer
- ✓ Rural Knowledge Networks
- ✓ Various platform (TAP, e-agriculture, ...)
- ✓ E-modules (imark, etc.)



# Empowering Rural Communities Through Rural Radio

## Information must be:

- available in appropriate languages
- available in appropriate formats
- up-to-date
- locally relevant contents
- communicated through appropriate channels

The characteristics of a good channel include proximity, trust and knowledge





# Characteristics of Rural and Community Radio

- The management of the station is in the hands of those who use it and listen to it
- Facilitation of radio access, participation and decision making in radio production, audience feedback and financing
- It has a *local focus*
  
- A powerful tool on topics crucial to rural livelihoods
- An agent of social change
- A tool for conflict management and conflict resolution
- A channel for expressing ideas and opinions
- An engine of democratization



## PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

- ✓ Technology is constantly improving and affordable
- ✓ Highly persuasive
- ✓ Community/farmer participation in production
- ✓ Interactive - exchange between communities, FOs, ...
- ✓ Recording in multiple languages
- ✓ Multiple standards and formats
- ✓ Screening in daylight on portable computers





Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

*for a world without hunger*

Search the whole site

FAO Home

TECA Home

Technologies

Exchange Groups

Login

FAQ

TECA  
Knowledge Base



## Home

Advanced interface

TECA is a platform where you can find practical information – **agricultural technologies and practices** – to help small producers in the field. In addition, you can interact with people with similar interests and discuss sustainable solutions for your work in our online forums – or **Exchange Groups**.



### Technologies & Practices

Find technologies and practices in crop production, forestry, livestock, fisheries, marketing and much more! Some of them can also help to adapt to climate change. TECA technologies are:

- Tested and/or adopted by small producers
- Easy to replicate
- Expected to increase production in a sustainable way

Find technologies & practices



### Exchange Groups

TECA exchange groups are online forums where you can:

- Share your experiences in the field
- Ask questions and connect with practitioners, producers and experts
- Learn how to implement new agricultural technologies and practices

Participate in Exchange Groups

TECA  
Forum



- **Sharing, validation and adoption of proven technologies by and for small agricultural producers**
  - **TECA Knowledge base**
    - *Practical information, non-academic form*
    - *Multimedia: video, audio, images, text*
    - *Content from FAO and trusted sources*
- **Facilitating knowledge exchange between practitioners and improving institutional linkages**
  - **TECA Exchange Groups**

**Partnerships are crucial for both components of TECA**

**URL: <http://teca.fao.org>**



## Community knowledge workers (CKW) initiative

- Launched Oct. 2009 to improve agriculture
- Knowledge outreach:
  - Extension agents at community level as knowledge brokers
  - Network > 950 CKW in farming communities
  - Outreach > 130,000 farmers in > 35 districts
- Use of ICTs:
  - Mobile phones to call & access information & database
  - Farmer call center with experts



**About 45% of content from TECA!**



# Rural Knowledge Network (RKN) Pilot Project for East Africa

**COUNTRIES:** Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania

**DURATION:** 3 years – 2007 to 2010

**DONOR:** IFAD, FAO (HR, implementer)

**Objective:** Establish a knowledge network that farmers can use to access markets and link with key value chain players

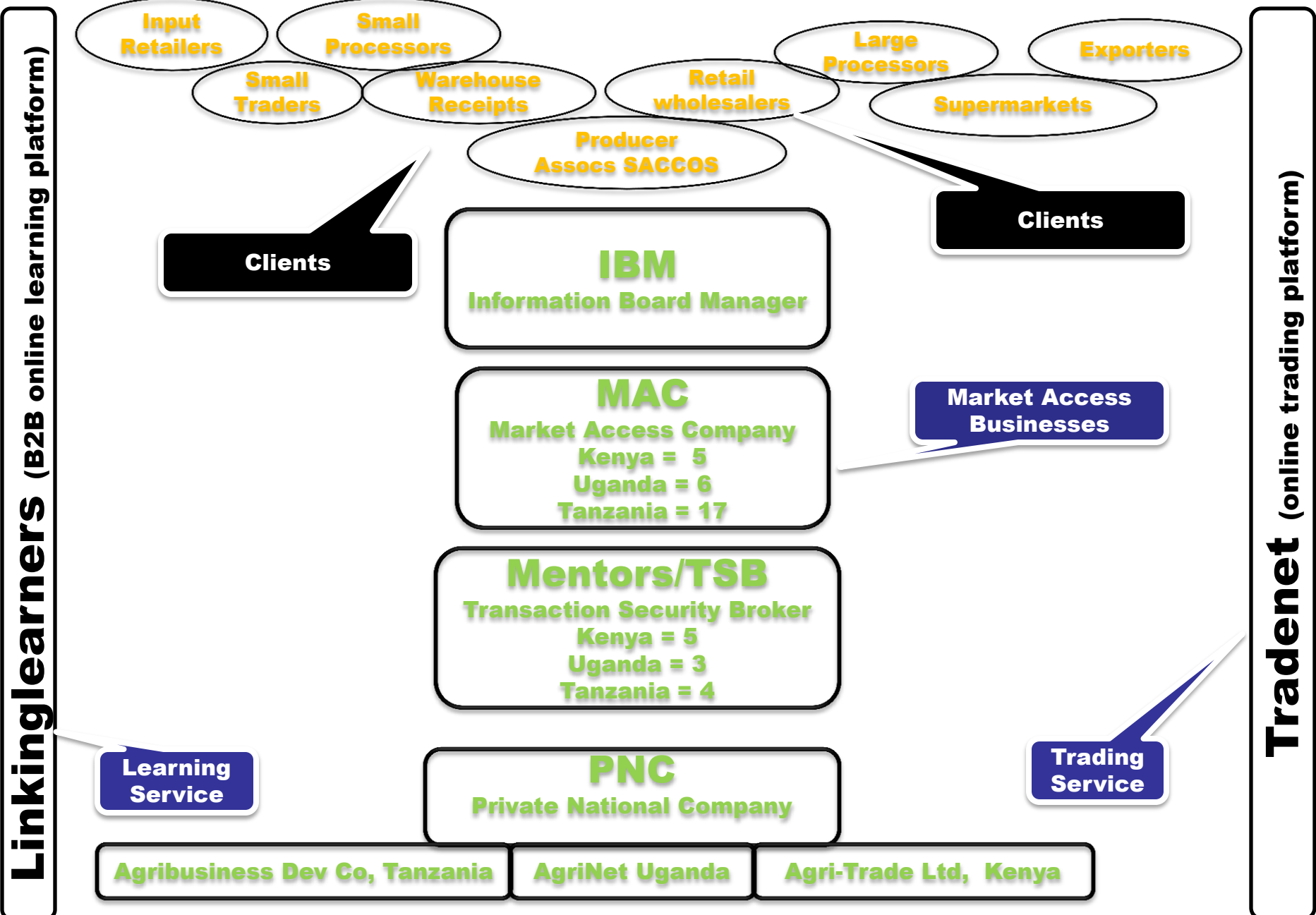
**LEAD TECHNICAL UNIT:** FAO Research and Extension Branch

**COLLABORATING UNITS:** Agribusiness Officer of multidisciplinary Team in SFE

**FAO Field offices:** Regional and sub-regional offices, Country offices in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

**PARTNERS:** Traidcraft, Agridea, Linking Local Learners, NIDA & Gov'ts

# Businesses Involved in Commercialization of Market Access Services





# Achievements of the RKN

## 1. Further clarity on the Market Access Business Model

- Business opportunity
- Business operations (NMCs, MACs & IBMs)
- Market intelligence service and platform

## 2. Web based market intelligence service set up

- Market price information sharing via sms
- SMS trade alerts (Offers to buy or sell)

## 3. Market Brokerage/deals

- Various trials in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania but with limited success

## 4. National and regional trade fairs for Market Access Service Providers and their Clients

## 5. Capacity building of market access companies

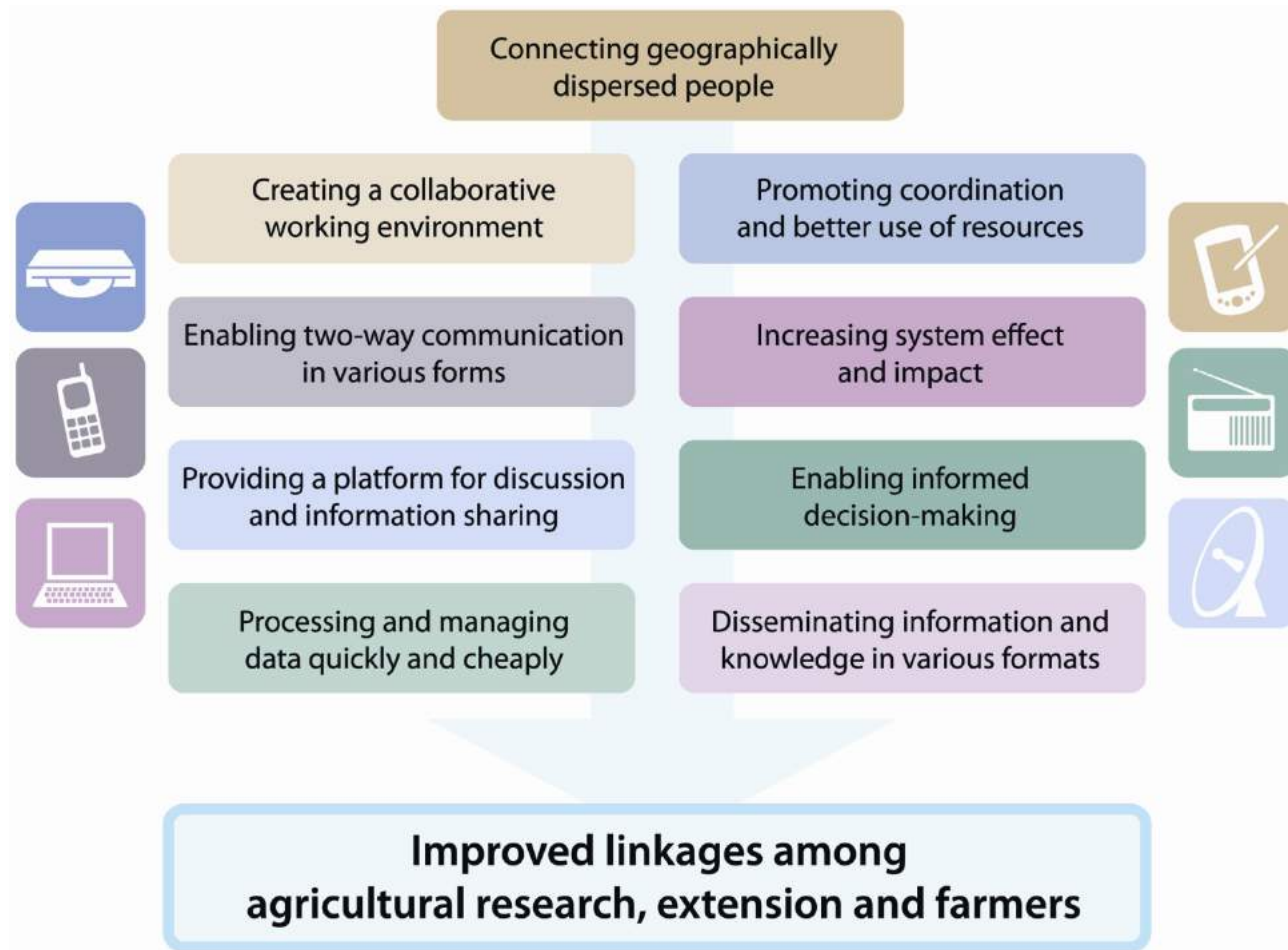


VIRTUAL EXTENSION and RESEARCH  
COMMUNICATION NETWORK

## VERCON - A conceptual model

- To enhance interaction among agricultural research, extension, farmers and the other stakeholders of agriculture and rural development
- To facilitate knowledge-sharing and access to agricultural information among and between institutions and individuals









# VERCON - Main functions

- ✓ News and events
- ✓ Multimedia resources
- ✓ Question and Answer
- ✓ Directories
- ✓ Agricultural technologies
- ✓ Discussion forum
- ✓ Newsletter, blogs
- ✓ Market information
- ✓ Training modules
- ✓ Policy Links
- ✓ E-mail





# VERCON - Lessons learned

1. Enabling environment
2. Institutionalisation of the network
3. Network facilitation
4. A knowledge-sharing culture
5. Particular attention to farmer demand and participation
6. Use of social media increasing



# TROPICAL AGRICULTURE PLATFORM (TAP)



[HOME](#) [ABOUT TAP](#) [HOW TAP WORKS](#) [PARTNERS](#) [CONTACT US](#)



## TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL PLATFORM *Facilitating capacity development in agricultural innovation in the tropics*

TAP facilitates more effective and streamlined capacity development interventions in innovation systems in tropical agriculture. TAP was created to focus specifically on capacity development in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), more than 90% of which are located at least partly within the Tropics.

TAP provides a mechanism for all actors to communicate, exchange ideas, knowledge, experiences, and practices, and work in a more coordinated way, learning from each other about capacity development policies and practices that work. Interventions will acknowledge national leadership and ownership and will be aligned with national plans and demands. TAP fosters partnerships and shared visions to steer agricultural innovation along a more coherent path and to arrive at development solutions at scale with lower transaction costs. TAP also works to establish close linkages with relevant existing multi-partner initiatives that promote coherent institutional approaches, such as those being implemented by regional fora and International agencies.

### Update:

The TAP partners are currently conducting three **Regional Assessments** to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013, as a prelude to designing the TAP services shown below that will help boost agricultural innovation in the Tropics.

#### POLICY-DIALOGUE SPACE

Allowing for greater dialogue and interaction among stakeholders [\[more...\]](#).

#### MARKETPLACE

Promoting and brokering existing demands and offers in capacity development [\[more\]](#).

#### TAPIEDIA

Offering a global information system for innovation outputs, success stories [\[more\]](#).

PARTNERS AS OF 15/05/2013



# Concluding remarks

- ✓ Continuous changes due to new innovations (technological, organizational, social, ...)
- ✓ Hence continuous up-dating and adaptation
- ✓ ICTs are tools, not an end in themselves
- ✓ Partnerships and interactivity are the backbones of successful ICTs application
- ✓ Capacity development at farmer level to make use of ICTs
- ✓ Innovative responses to new demands and challenges required



**Thanks for your attention**