

# **Using ICTs in RAS: Challenges and ways forward**

## **Experiences from Africa and AFAAS**

Mr Andrianjafy Rasoanindrainy  
Executive Director  
Farming & Technology for Africa  
14th September, 2015

# Presentation outline

- Where are we now ?
- Where do we want to go ?
- Challenges
- Lessons learned
- Way forward and expectations

## **Where are we now ? *Country level***

- Some localized initiatives. No systematic exhaustive inventory done
- Few initiatives initiated at grassroots
- Often, funder driven and not sustainable
- Maybe some projects starting from grassroots but not known and not out/up scaled
- Policy level not aware and not involved in ICT4RAS

# Where are we now ? *Regional level*

- RESCAR-AOC
  - Have an internal mailing list
  - Building a new platform with Symposium
- SARFAAS
  - Have a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sarfaas/770223093092612>)
  - Have reserved domain name ([www.sarfaas.org](http://www.sarfaas.org))
  - Have a Dgroups ([sarfaas@dgroups.org](mailto:sarfaas@dgroups.org))
  - Have **not succeeded in organizing Skype** meeting

# Where are we now ? *Continental level*

AFAAS has:

- A Virtual Social Network platform with SMS capability but underutilized  
<http://networking.afaas-africa.org/>
- A Facebook page and a Twitter account
- Communication unit is also using web 2.0 tools such as Flickr and Slideshare
- Just started a Dgroups in July 2015  
([afaas@dgroups.org](mailto:afaas@dgroups.org))

# Where do we want to go ?

- At continental level, AFAAS has included ICKM as component 2 of its Strategic Plan (2011 – 15)
- There has been lot of ideas and demands (see next slide) since 2011

# Recommendations from 3<sup>rd</sup> AFAAS Symposium and GA (2011)

- Build capacity (skills, infrastructure) of different users to utilize the available ICT services
- Make an inventory of promising ICT experiences for further development and up-scaling
- Identify/ create effective demand for ICT and make the private sector aware of it in real time for generating appropriate innovations
- Promote social media use and create capacity to use social media (especially targeting the youth)
- Document best practices and lessons learned in using ICT and developing content
- Develop a forum on the AFAAS website

## Where do we want to go ? *Country level*

- At country level, with involvement of the **youth** and the **mobile boom** in many countries, there is an **increasing trend in the use of ICT** for agriculture and extension
- International organizations/agencies (example CTA with the [www.ict4ag.org](http://www.ict4ag.org)) are playing key roles in Africa and youth are more involved
- Learning from Int'l experiences and supported by some agencies, efforts are done in some countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa ...) sometimes driven by public or sometimes by private sector



## **Where do we want to go ? *Regional level***

- SARFAAS envisaged to continue collaboration with CCARDESA in the area of ICKM. ICKM is included as key component of SARFAAS Strategic Plan
- RESCAR-AOC is well interconnected with CORAF/WECARD and is also progressing quickly

## **Where do we want to go ? *Continental level***

- Awareness creation on the use of ICT as an efficient and effective tool for extension at policy level
- Development of skills and competencies in the utilization of ICT4RAS

# Challenges

- Lot of demand but not enough capacity mobilized
- Weak follow up and M&E, weakness of communication and exchange
- Digital divide is still a reality. It's not a problem with equipment and networks anymore but awareness, educational and cultural

# Lessons learned

- The power of an ICT tool doesn't guarantee it's adoption
- Participatory approach at the different phases of the development of an ICT solution (needs assessment, design, development, testing) is mandatory to ensure ownership
- Africa need to learn from other developing countries and learn form others mistakes
- Knowledge and experiences are easily communicated and disseminated with social media and cross country borders

# Way forward and expectations

- Learning more about effective, efficient, friendly and up scalable ICT solution that can be easily and rapidly adopted in Africa
- Where to start from ? Country? Region? Continent ? The egg and chicken question
- Learn key entry points (quick winning actions) in implementation of ICT4RAS