

## FARM RECORDS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AND OTHER SERVICES

### The Problem

Smallholder farmers face a number of challenges related to poor access to information:

- Lack of accurate production, marketing and operational data in agriculture
- Poor record-keeping leads to understated production potential, compromising farmers' ability to access credit and other services
- Poor farm productivity leading to income, food and nutritional insecurity

### The Innovative Solution

Arid Lands Information Network Farm Records Management Information System (FARMIS) innovation is supporting Kenya's agricultural sector by offering market information and farm records management services. FARMIS aims to empower smallholders, who rarely keep records, to develop and nurture a culture of record keeping for decision-making at the farm, county and national levels. FARMIS harnesses the power of technology, particularly the mobile phone, to deliver as well as gather information from farmers. Data is regularly updated and available on a 24-hour basis at the touch of a button online or via a mobile phone. FARMIS also enables farmers to: generate on-demand customized reports on the status of their enterprises; produce seasonal profit and loss statements; project the income potential of farming enterprises; access real-time market information; access inputs and other services; develop a farm activity calendar; link with peer farmers to aggregate produce for bulk sales; and access real-time farming tips.



*Hilda Kinoti, a farmer in Meru, displays ALIN's Farm Book for record keeping under the FARMIS innovation. Photo courtesy: USAID*

### About the Award

Following an open and competitive process in 2014, the Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) was among seven innovations which won a seed funding and technical assistance award from USAID through the Feed the Future Kenya Innovation Engine. In 2016, ALIN qualified for the next-level innovation award.

<b>Stage 1 Award:</b>	Sep 2014 – April 2015
<b>Amount:</b>	KES 7.45 million (\$91,075)
<b>Stage 2 Award:</b>	Feb 2016 – March 2016
<b>Amount:</b>	KES 34.9 million (\$343,118)
<b>Technical Assistance:</b>	governance and business planning, software customization; business modelling, marketing and distribution planning
<b>Target County:</b>	Meru
<b>Targeted Value Chain:</b>	Horticulture, maize, ruminant livestock, staples, and cash crops.

### About the Innovator

**James Nguo** is Regional Director of ALIN - an NGO that leverages emerging technologies to deliver usable information to marginalized communities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. An MSc. Strategic Communication graduate with a BSc. in Mathematics and Computer Science, James established ALIN to introduce information technology as the cornerstone to farmers' access to information. With almost 20 years' experience in the sector, James has been globally recognized as a social entrepreneur.

## Achievements – Stage 1 Award

- Surpassed targets to profile over 5,400 farmers using FARMIS to generate on-demand customized reports on the status of their enterprises, produce seasonal profit/loss statements, develop a farm activity calendar and link them with other farmers for bulk sale of produce, among others.
- Surveys demonstrated 97% farmer satisfaction with the innovation.
- Launched the inaugural Agricultural Production Report, providing up-to-date farm-level information on smallholder commercial farmers in five sub-counties in Meru County.
- Engaged 27 Production Information Agents (PIAs) to provide farmer record keeping and extension services which created jobs and significantly boosted farmers' access to information.

## Goals – Stage 2 Award

- Customize FARMIS to integrate a financial accounting module.
- 16,000 farmers registered, trained and paying to use FARMIS.
- At least five partnership agreements signed with other organizations for access to the advertising platform on FARMIS, data services or license franchising at a fee.
- Engage 30 more Production Information Agents thus creating jobs and boosting farmers' access to information.

**Production Information Agents (PIAs) disseminate information to farmers on the use of the FARMIS system after a meeting in the field**



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