

INNOVATION AS A KEY TO SUCCESS: CASE OF FARM RADIO TRUST IN MALAWI



Presented to:

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Context for Developing Countries

- Low agricultural productivity continues due to a number of challenges including lack of extension staff e.g. in Malawi extension to farmer ratio is at 1:3000
- Farmers lack access to accurate and evidence based information to improve their production and productivity
- Limited platforms & innovations for farmers to voice their concerns with duty bearers to address their bottlenecks
- Lack of structured farmer groups to demand services and information



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Context continued....

- Opportunity to exploit the demographic dividend of youth below the age of 35 years : over 50% of population
- High unemployment rate in formal jobs
- High % of populations employed in the agriculture sector at the production level
- Increased proportion of medium scale farmers is an opportunity for innovations in extension
- Agric re-orientation towards commercialization beyond subsistence-opportunity for innovations



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Context cont'...

- Mushrooming of FM radio station in developing countries for localized & customized content
- Increased mobile boom & coverage of mobile network/internet fibre options is key to access of information for farming communities
- The gender digital divide still a huge challenge that requires innovations
- Involvement of private sector in the agric value chains no longer an option but a must



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How to create environment for innovation/ pre conditions for innovation

- Relevance for innovation/Understand the context
- Usability of the innovation; accommodate the illiterate
- Cost for the innovation/ user cost: who is paying for the cost/willingness to pay
- Accessibility of innovation to majority of population
- Availability of of an enabling policy framework
- Willingness of investors in the innovation: win-win scenario
- Increased access to ICTs such as radio, mobile phones & internet in developing countries a big opportunity



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Model for Farm Radio Trust for innovation



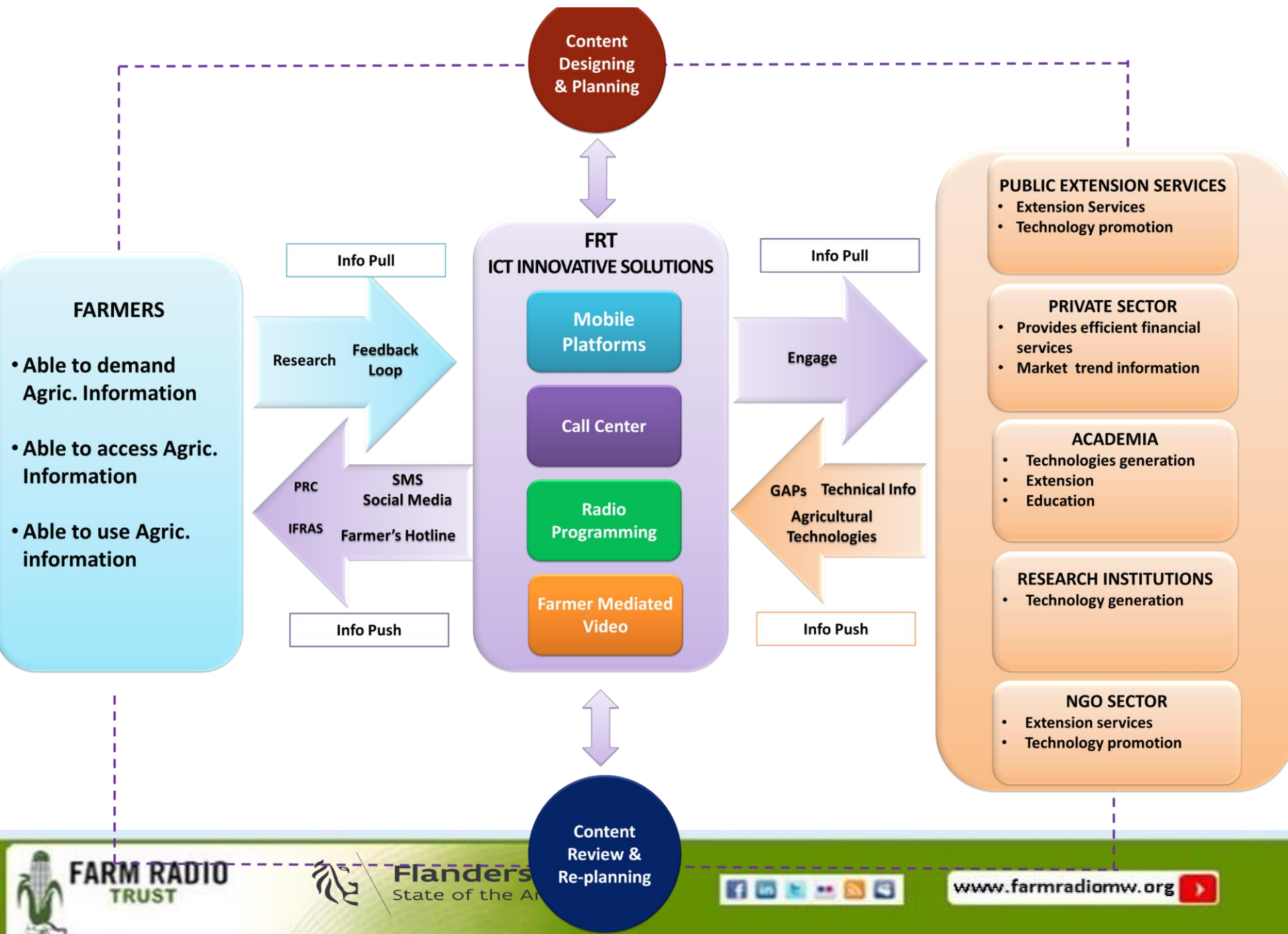
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Barriers to new technologies into resource poor setting

- Low financial capacity to pay for the innovation. This affects men and women differently
- Capacity of users on particular innovation
- Poor internet network in most rural areas
- Quality control of the information being shared through innovation platforms
- Sustainability of innovation when users are not able to pay for the innovation. Need for models that could subsidize the cost for innovation



Three dimensions for Scale up innovation

Horizontal Scaling (scaling-out): The process of expanding impact through replication, - e.g. from one geographical area to another (quantitative)

Vertical Scaling: Changing the policy / institutional environment through higher level influencing, – e.g., moving from a local or provincial engagement to a nationwide engagement (institutional)

Functional Scaling: Expanding the functional scope of an innovation, - e.g. adding processing and marketing components to a project initially focusing on crop production (diversification)



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Possible models for scale up

- Partnership model e.g. public private partnerships
- Pure Business model
- Social enterprise model e.g. FRT providing a social good with a business model
- Public sector reform: Work with government structures
- Institutionalize multi stakeholder technical working platforms
- Work with existing community structure e.g. farmer clubs, cooperatives
- Lobby for institutionalization of e-extension services in government structures
- Impact at scale: Evidence, learning & innovate



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Thank you for your attention

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