



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

FOSTERING RURAL  
TRANSFORMATION THROUGH

the  
**Digital Villages  
Initiative (DVI)**  
in Africa





The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched the corporate programme

## **"1 000 Digital Villages Initiative" (DVI)**

with the goal of converting globally at least **1 000 rural localities** into digital village hubs in which a variety of ICT-based services will be offered. The DVI is an integrated development vision that enshrines digitalisation at the core of rural transformation and prosperity, addressing on-farm and off-farm socio-economic elements. A pilot project has been launched in Africa. Its implementation is led by the FAO Regional Office for Africa in partnership with FAO country offices.





It is acknowledged that digital technologies can be powerful drivers for achieving sustainable, inclusive and efficient agrifood systems and rural transformation. However, the agricultural sector and rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa have benefited less from the opportunities provided by these innovations.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The African pilot DVI project supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, **the Four Betters** (Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment and Better Life) pursued by the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and the African Union Malabo Commitments.

It will contribute particularly to FAO’s corporate Digital Agriculture Priority Area. It is implemented within the framework of the Digital Innovation Strategy of the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF).

## KEY ACTIVITY PILLARS

The DVI will facilitate digital farmer services, other e-agriculture services and digital services for rural transformation.

It articulates around **three** pillars:



**The first pillar** centres on improving **productivity** through ICT and relevant solutions, including climate-smart agriculture services and precision agriculture.



**The second pillar** addresses particularly **market linkages and financial services**.



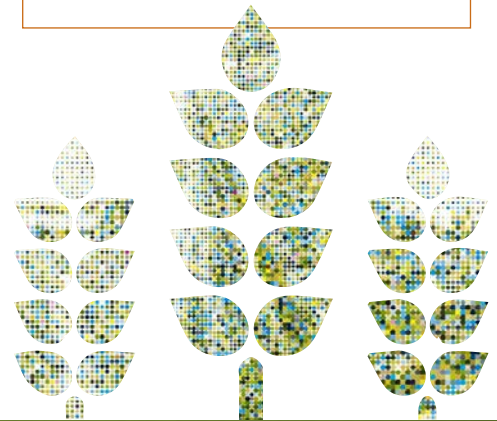
**The third pillar** addresses the village as a whole, aiming at **rural transformation**, and will help facilitate services such as e-health, e-education and agrotourism bolstered by digital technologies in collaboration with other partners.

Key issues such as social protection and rural gender inequalities will be addressed as needed, as well as employment opportunities, particularly for the youth.



“Let us work together to ensure that **digital agriculture** drives the transformation of agrifood systems necessary for eliminating hunger, reducing poverty and building a better future for all humankind.”

FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu





The Africa DVI project recognises the importance of addressing critical challenges facing rural digital transformation, such as digital literacy, costs of services offered, effectiveness and sustainability of digital agriculture services, enabling environment, poor telecom infrastructure and access to renewable energy. As relevant, specific interventions will be supported or encouraged, building on partnerships.



## PILOT COUNTRIES

**Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia**

These countries were selected following a call for expressions of interest. Initial activities have started.

Other countries can also be supported depending on opportunities.

## SCOPING ASSESSEMENT REPORTS

Scoping assessment studies in the seven countries were conducted between July and November 2021. The objective was to understand the agrifood and digital environments and the conditions for successful implementation of the DVI, and identify possible villages involved in the pilot stage. **At least 30 potential villages were identified for the first phase of the project deployment.**

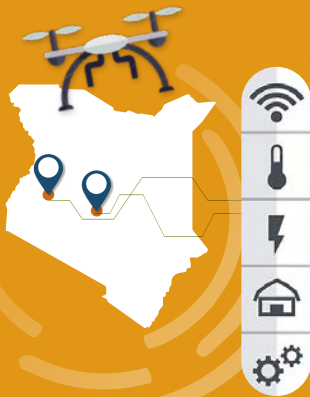
Stakeholder workshops were organized (for example, in Malawi on 8 October 2021 and in Kenya on 14 October 2021) to capture their perspectives and recommendations and inform them about the establishment of the initiative.

# 30



## PRE-LAUNCH ACTIVITIES

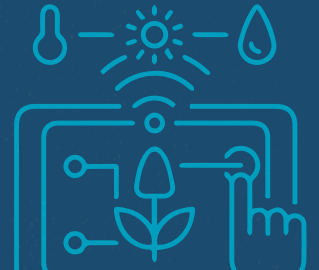
### KENYA



The pre-launch activities focus on **Pillar 1** of the DVI model (smart farming/facilitating production through digital tools) and two wards in Uasin Gishu County and one in Nyandarua County.

They aim to investigate e-extension and other value-added **digital services** that can be incorporated into the Kenya Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (KIAMIS), an FAO-developed platform adopted by the Government of Kenya to better respond to needs expressed.

In parallel, **e-extension services** are planned. Results will also be fed into another project, the Kenya Agricultural Sector Extension Policy (KASEP), using KIAMIS.



### SENEGAL



Pre-launch activities in Senegal focus on the **first two pillars** of the DVI.

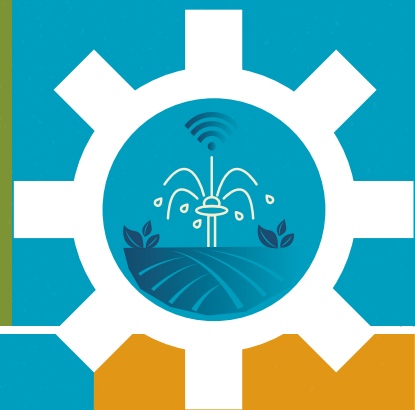
They will help groups of agropastoral and fishery producers in the Niayes region use specific applications that contribute to the improvement of **productivity** and the **commercialisation** of outputs.



**Precision agriculture services** offered by a private company will also be facilitated.



The digital platform Agricultural Services and Digital Inclusion in Africa (SAIDA) developed by FAO in collaboration with the public extension agency National Agency for Rural Advisory Services (ANCAR) will be leveraged to deliver **e-advice** on **weather** and **crop calendar**.



### SOMALIA



In Somalia, the preparatory activities are deployed in the Baidoa District in south central Somalia, in a region regarded as Somalia's **sorghum breadbasket**.

They are linked to the **first two pillars** of the DVI model, directly targeting farmers to benefit from e-agriculture and digital farming services, including digital finance.



They aim at developing a **digital platform** and **digital content** that will enable Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to access expert knowledge and information on agriculture, nutrition and basic financial management in the targeted location.



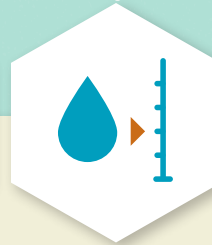
#### Channels of interactions

include short messages (SMS), WhatsApp and radio programmes.



“Africa’s agrifood system transformation depends on the performance of the rural sector. Through the Digital Villages Initiative, the FAO Regional Office for Africa aims to better leverage innovative technologies to bolster dynamic rural development.”

Abebe Haile-Gabriel  
FAO Assistant Director-General and  
Regional Representative for Africa



## DVI AFRICA VALUE PROPOSITION

The Africa DVI provides an integrated framework that aims to foster digital agriculture and digital transformation at rural community level with a view to **ending hunger** and **improving lives**.

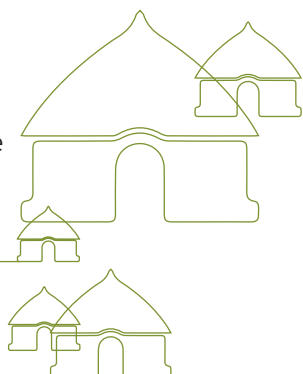
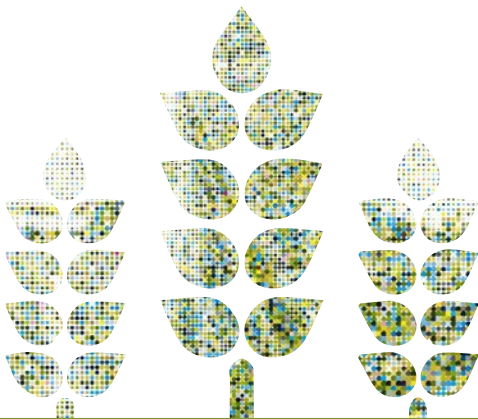
**It expands** and integrates FAO’s existing digital agriculture services in rural areas and enables new digital services.

**It supports** innovative engagement in agriculture by youth and women, increased productivity, market access, resilience and enhanced rural socio-economic well-being.

## MULTISTAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

The initiative **supports FAO member countries in their agrifood systems transformation strategies**.

Multistakeholder partnerships, particularly with the private sector, including digital entrepreneurs and other international organizations, are anchored in the approach. The Africa DVI looks forward to developing partnerships with like-minded institutions.





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