



# Recommendations conference on ICT and GEODATA for AGRICULTURE and WATER

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), April 17-18, 2019



*‘Digital technology to increase business opportunities and entrepreneurship among young people and women in the Sahel’*

- 1 ICT services and geospatial data are a key factor in behaviour change and agricultural development**  
 Young farmers struggle to make a living. Low profitability, low income and intensive labour still render farming activities unprofitable. ICT services and geospatial data support youth’s journey into profitable farming. It start leading young people to work in the agricultural sector because professionalisation makes it possible to increase added value in the agricultural chain. It very much increase recognition and social status for women and men.
- 2 Commitment from governments to digitalisation of Agriculture to make it climate smart and sustainable**  
 Governments must engage themselves in the process of digitalising in agriculture in order to transform it and make producers more resilient. One could therefore speak of a political choice of judicious digitalisation of Agriculture by default. It is important that this digitalisation is done to implement climate-smart agriculture; implement innovative approaches and measures, often different from the measures traditionally used: in the face of climate change, new approaches must be considered, and ICT and geospatial data can make agriculture smarter and wiser.

- 3 Human capabilities must be developed, and youth jobs are not limited to agricultural production**

Significant efforts have to be made in strengthening digital literacy and capacities to help small producers to be more professional for increased productivity, profitability and resilience, especially in the face of climate change. Many jobs are anticipated in the agricultural value chain (processing, packaging, transport, sales), selling outreach services to rural people. Training must also be considered to increase the technological knowledge enabling the design and development of digital tools, especially for young women.
- 4 Information services should be sustainable and cannot be free**

Different business models exist, and sustainability is not related solely to the number of users of a given service. Bundled services are developing and as well as data aggregators to provide services to individuals and user aggregators to achieve economies of scale. The development of small and medium private enterprises can only be considered if someone pays for their services/products/tools. Also developing technologies are not for free, nor are their operation and maintenance. Services offered for free often have hidden costs (no viability, lost ownership, etc).
- 5 Trusted data is needed and must be made available**

There is a consensus on the major role of a quality standard for reliable data and information in decision-making, and the importance of making them available to different users. Great attention should be paid not only to the concept of open or at least shared data, allowing development for the benefit of all, but also to respect privacy standards for people and personal data. Emerging partnerships such as the Akvo Sahel Data Initiative and the GODAN<sup>1</sup> Open Data Coalition show the way forward.
- 6 Tools/services/digital products must be tailored to users' real needs**

It is essential not only to analyse more specific needs of those using these tools and taking into account local conditions but, also to develop truly adapted products/services. For most of them, there is a need to create adapted support for beneficiaries to become users, without losing their ownership rights.
- 7 True partnerships are needed**

It is important to identify the strategic actors who can (and want) to make a difference in development, but often the role, real intentions, interests and influence of these actors are poorly understood or insufficiently used. Awareness of these interests and influences is fundamental to enable sustainable and inclusive transformation of Sahelian agriculture and limit unprecedented concentration of knowledge and power.
- 8 Young entrepreneurs face barriers that need to be addressed**

These barriers range from human capital and skills, finance for infrastructure and equipment, policy and support structure and vary by country.

<sup>1</sup> FAIR principle for data; Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusable



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



**G4AW**  
GEODATA FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

#### Contact:

g4aw@spaceoffice.nl  
<https://g4aw.spaceoffice.nl>

#### Lead Organisation

Adri Bakker: a.bakker@spaceoffice.nl  
Caroline Figuères: cfiguereswork@gmail.com