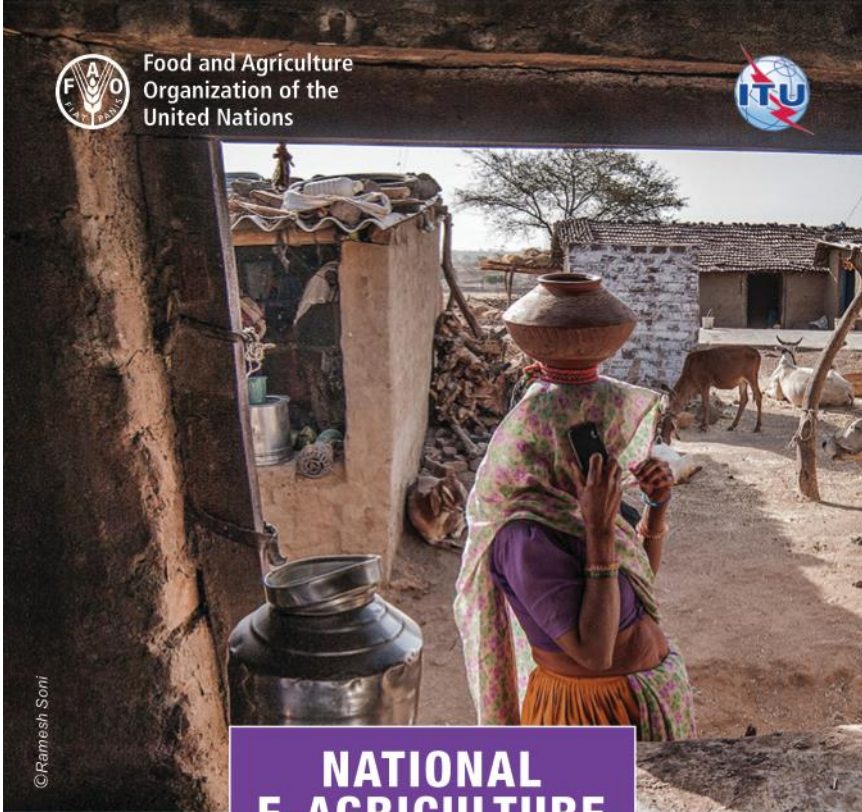


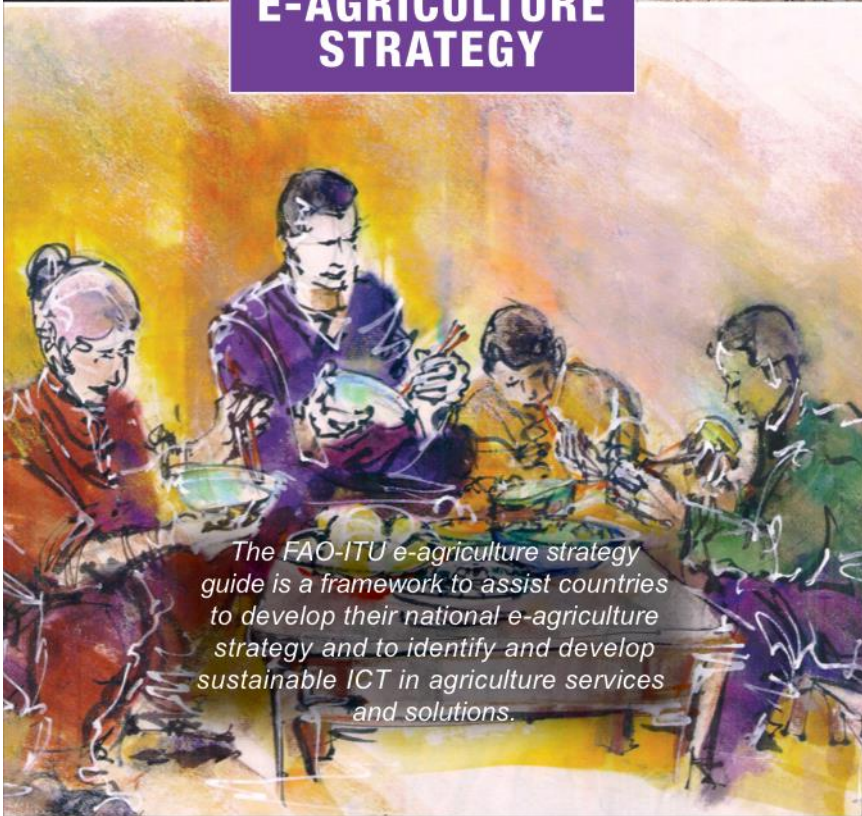


Food and Agriculture
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NATIONAL E-AGRICULTURE STRATEGY



The FAO-ITU e-agriculture strategy guide is a framework to assist countries to develop their national e-agriculture strategy and to identify and develop sustainable ICT in agriculture services and solutions.

What is e-agriculture?

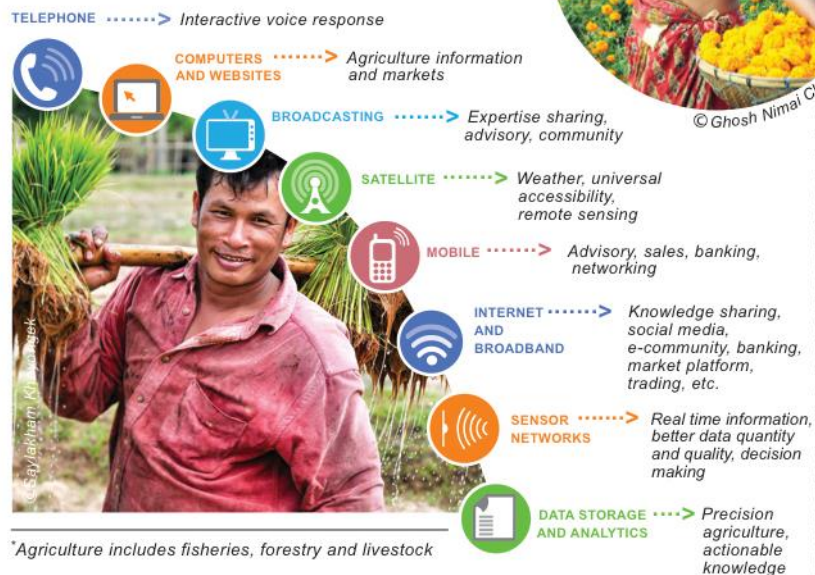
E-agriculture involves designing, developing and applying innovative ways to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the rural domain, with a primary focus on agriculture.*

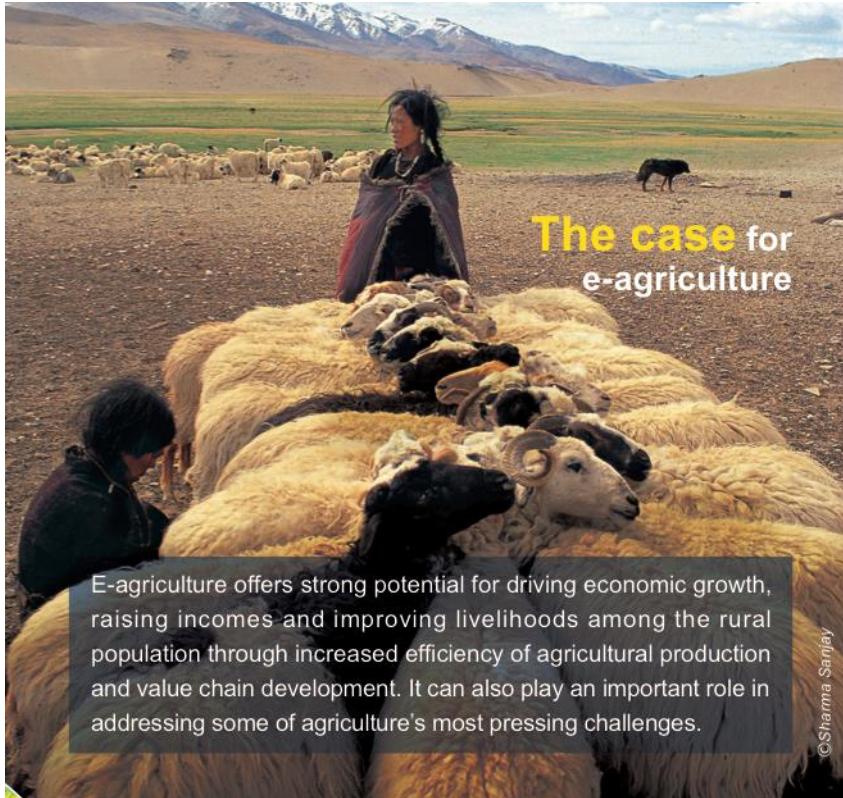
The aim is to boost agricultural and rural development by improving access to valuable information that can help agricultural stakeholders to make the best possible decisions and use the resources available in the most productive and sustainable manner.

ICTs that can be harnessed for e-agriculture may include devices, networks, services and applications. These can range from cutting edge Internet-based technologies and sensing tools to other technologies that have been around for much longer, such as radio, telephones, televisions, mobile phones and satellites.



Illustrative use of e-agriculture

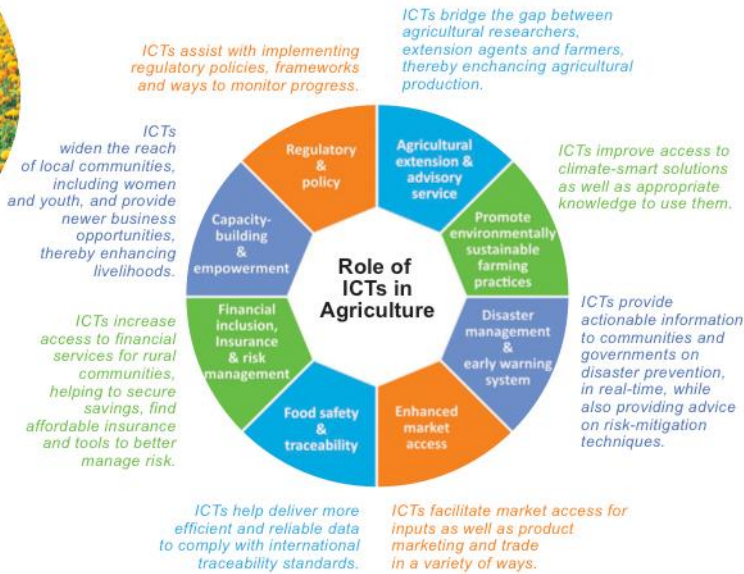




The case for e-agriculture

E-agriculture offers strong potential for driving economic growth, raising incomes and improving livelihoods among the rural population through increased efficiency of agricultural production and value chain development. It can also play an important role in addressing some of agriculture's most pressing challenges.

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E-agriculture creates opportunities for ICT-driven solutions to numerous agricultural problems. The cross-sectoral nature of ICT propels growth in other sectors that can be further leveraged by agricultural communities.

Why a national e-agriculture strategy?

Setting in place a national e-agriculture strategy is an important step for any country planning on using ICTs for agriculture (ICT4Ag) to help reduce poverty, increase food security and further its agricultural goals and priorities.

Building such a strategy is likely to prove invaluable for countries just setting out on the e-agriculture path. But equally, developing a national e-agriculture strategy will prove useful to countries that have already invested significantly in ICT4Ag and are seeking to scale up and scale out.

What can e-agriculture achieve?



Having a national e-agriculture strategy may help a country to increase food production, establish incentives and facilitate the development of technologies for export. It can help to promote new markets, strengthen social protection, decentralize trade and serve as a driver for agricultural innovation. Proven benefits for farmers include ensuring better access to markets and offering transparent and efficient financial services for loans and savings. Among other valuable services offered by e-agriculture are weather forecasts and disaster alerts, extension support in remote areas and access to the right agri-inputs for specific soil and climate conditions.

Roadmap for an e-agriculture strategy

Developing a national e-agriculture action plan enables a government to draw up a roadmap for its strategy on ICT4Ag. This means identifying all activities and how they should be managed, funded and coordinated, and pinpointing key stakeholders for the design and implementation of the e-agriculture strategy.

Any effective roadmap for e-agriculture will require a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach, with cross-cutting support spanning various government ministries, including those dealing with ICTs, food production and processing, rural development, irrigation and water management, disaster management, telecommunications, governance, transportation, finance and commerce.



Guidance for developing an e-agriculture strategy

The e-agriculture strategy guide and toolkit, jointly prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has been developed to assist countries in developing their national e-agriculture strategy.

E-agriculture strategy guide and toolkit website:

<http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/resources/e-agriculture>



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