



DIGITAL GREEN

Area of Focus: Agricultural Extension

How it works:

Launched in 2006, Digital Green disseminates targeted agricultural information via digital media to small-scale and marginal farmers in India through existing extension systems. They use local social networks to connect village-level intermediaries in rural and remote communities with content experts, program managers, and researchers at a district-level. Their system uses a participatory process for local video production and facilitated video viewing groups using pico projectors. Digital Green uses a robust technology platform to exchange videos, usage data, and community feedback in areas with limited internet and electrical grid connectivity. In each district, Digital Green's partners produce 6-8 videos each month by modularizing agricultural and related practices into short, 8-10 minute segments. The videos feature local farmers on a variety of topics including testimonials and demonstrations of improved production techniques, market linkages, and government schemes. Using web-based analytical tools and interactive voice response (IVR) phone-based feedback channels, Digital Green has also created an iterative model aimed at progressively better addressing the needs and interests of the communities it works with.

Technology used: Pocket video cameras, pico projectors, IVR, web-based data management and analytical tools

Implementer/Funder: Digital Green was developed by Microsoft Research India's Technology for Emerging Markets team. Since 2008, it has been functioning as an independent nonprofit and since 2009 has received funding from the Gates Foundation. Digital Green currently works with eight NGOs, an agribusiness, and the Ministry of Rural Development in India.

Fees: INR 2-4 per farmer per screening. Farmers subscribe to the service as a part of their membership fees to farmer organizations, such as producer companies, cooperatives, and self-help group federations, where they exist, and partners share upfront and recurring costs.

Primary Markets: India (Karnataka, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa). Currently, Digital Green reaches over 1,500 villages and 100,000 farmers and has extended its work to Ethiopia and Ghana as well. Over the next three years, they plan to reach 10,000 villages and over one million farmers in India.

Users: Small-scale and marginal farmers via partner extension systems and community intermediaries.

Business Model: Currently Digital Green depends on outside grants to replicate its model with NGO partners and negotiates cost-sharing agreements with these partner sand the communities that they work with. Digital Green charges fees for technology development and training support services to commercial partners.

Impact: Research conducted by Microsoft Research India found that on a cost-per-adoption basis "Digital Green was shown to be 10 times more effective per dollar spent than a classical extension system." This study, involving over 1,500 households, found an increased adoption of certain agricultural practices over traditional agricultural extension by a factor of seven times.¹ A large-scale randomized control trial is in progress and up-to-date impact data is available on Digital Green's website.

For more information visit: <http://www.digitalgreen.org>

Sources: ¹ <http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/322>

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. Government.

This profile is supported by USAID's Fostering Agriculture Competitiveness Employing Information Communication Technologies (FACET) project under the Financial Integration, Economic Leveraging, Broad-Based Dissemination and Support Leaders with Associates award (FIELD-Support LWA). It was written by Josh Woodard of FHI 360 (jwoodard@fhi360.org). FACET offers on-demand field support to help missions with the challenges of using these ICT interventions in agricultural development. To learn more about field support options, contact Judy Payne, ICT Advisor, (jpayne@usaid.gov).