

food4you

Trial of a cellular phone networking platform to aid small-scale farmers in South Africa source markets for surplus produce

Feedback from beneficiaries & supporters

Project consortium:





Charles Jenkin

Leafy vegetable farmer & supporter of using small-scale farmers

Madrom Farming: Hermanus, Western Cape



The Good

This is going to be an excellent tool for us and other farmers. We plough too much food back into the field, and we don't have the time or good local contacts to find alternative sources for our crops when retailers can't take it.

This is going to work brilliantly in townships and is much needed for supporting entrepreneurs.

The Bad

You need to consider the implications of South Africa's Consumer Protection Act and the Global GAP labelling for food. Also, consider keeping product cool. Maybe link up with an innovative small-scale cooling solution for the taxis.

The Unexpected

The Khayeltisha intra-economy for fresh produce is estimated at R30million (£1.3m). This application therefore has huge potential in informal markets.

What next?

We are very keen to be involved, not only for finding a solution to our food waste, but working with and supporting smaller-scale farmers.



Carol Segal

Organic Farmer and Rural Development Practitioner

Living Food Gardens: Bulwer, KwaZulu Natal



Key Insight

At present the rural farmers that I work with do not produce much surplus. When they do have excess they give or sell it to neighbours or at worst feed it to the pigs.

If they have enough to sell they go to the local pension pay-out ques and sell it there.

It may well be that they do not produce any surplus because they know they have no market and no way to get it to market.

The Unexpected

It struck me that every Friday as I drove out of these rural areas I was driving behind a Breweries truck. These were mostly empty and could be used to take produce (if produced) to market. Thought would need to go into how to transport the produce.

What next?

It would be very useful if part of the application could start to link farmers so that they plan their planning and harvesting. At the moment everybody produces cabbages and spinach. If farmers in a similar area produced a variety of crops it would increase market value, reduce waste and provide additional nutrition.



Kathy Pitout

Programme Manager

LIMA: Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal



The Good

This would certainly be something that we could look at and work with in terms of our small scale farmers.

We are currently supporting the installation of large scale irrigation schemes into some rural areas and this would certainly add value to those initiatives.

The Unexpected

We are currently working with Food Lovers Market – mainly to look at how to distribute their left over food. It would be a possibility to work with them both in terms of creating a market for the food from the farm and then to use the app to distribute the left over food from their stores.

What next?

You would need to talk to our managing director and to one of our staff members working with some of these initiatives. [Contact details have been sent and we will follow up]



Tichoana Pesanayi

*PhD student studying small scale agriculture and the impact of Climate Change
Rhodes University: Eastern Cape*



The Good

A potentially useful and interesting project. In particular the section on social learning approaches is desperately needed to build capacity and build potential markets for those involved in rural agriculture.

Valuable Insights

Government institutions can be easily accessible markets but can be derailed when procurement responsibility is held at provincial rather than local institutions.

Many small-scale farmers with cell phones do not have smartphone functionality. This would require additional support or time as this rolls out in South Africa.

Selection of farmers will be an important success factor: committed, able to produce a surplus, not distracted by government grants.

This project links closely to a number of chapters in the National Development Plan.



Other Insights

These insights were gathered from informal discussions with people who worked in relevant areas.



Local Ward Councillor: Mphophomeni Township

This would be very useful for the people here. I would also like to be on the list so that I can get fresh vegetables from around here and support people in my Ward.

Enviro Wise Community Group: Folweni

We often have extra produce but it costs too much to take it to the market. [Question: Why do you not sell it more locally e.g. to the neighbours of the food garden (see photo above)] Response: They do not know when we have harvested or what we have. [The app was explained.] That would make a big difference. Maybe we will start with just a simple SMS and then see how it works.

What next?

The project partners have good relationships with a number of community groups and would be able to work with them as the project unfolds.



Mr NVE Ngidi

Director General

Office of the Premier: Kwa-Zulu Natal



premier

Office Of The Premier
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Commenting on Siyaleader – the application developers: “By allowing the creation, accessibility, utilisation and sharing of information, Siyaleader enables individuals, communities and society as a whole to achieve their full potential in promoting sustainable development and improving quality of life.”

“Designed to primarily facilitate improved service delivery with the Kwa Zulu Natal Provincial Government Office of the Premier, to its constituents, Siyaleader’s versatility is suited to multiple environments including foreign aid programmes developed to improve the reach, delivery and affordability of basic services to people throughout the province utilising mobile phone technologies and mobile network infrastructures.”

“The ... team exceeded our expectations, going beyond the original mandate to ensure that the Siyaleader system was adapted to meet the environmental challenges of working in the field but remaining relevant.”