



Farmer Service Centres (FSCs)

Drivers of change in agri-food systems



Introduction

The Farmer Service Centre (FSC) model is a privately run business initiative that has evolved into a critical last-mile solution for smallholder farmers in Kenya. It initially emerged to address the gaps in extension and advisory services following the devolution of agricultural functions to county governments in 2012. With limited extension staff, many farmers lacked adequate access to critical services. FSCs stepped in to fill this gap, acting as intermediaries between smallholder farmers and key value chain actors such as input suppliers and markets. FSC operators earn revenue through the sale of inputs and services, while fostering trust and transparency within the value chain.

As climate change increasingly impacts agriculture, FSCs actively contribute to creating a more climate-smart agri-food sector, helping farmers to prepare their fields to withstand the effects of climate change, while also playing

a role in reducing CO₂ emissions through sustainable practices. This positions FSCs as key players in driving both agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability.

Thus, while the term "FSC" has long been known in Kenya, the Agri-Jobs 4 Youth project has taken the model to the next level by expanding its scope and impact. The enhanced FSC model provides smallholder farmers with comprehensive access to agricultural inputs, services, and broader markets by introducing digital solutions and climate-smart technologies. This enables the smallholders to manage their farming enterprises more efficiently and profitably.

The improved FSCs, on the other hand, are set up for success through expanded service portfolios, digitalised operations, and highly professionalised business skills.

Published by:



Our Approach

Empowering Farmer Service Centres (FSCs)

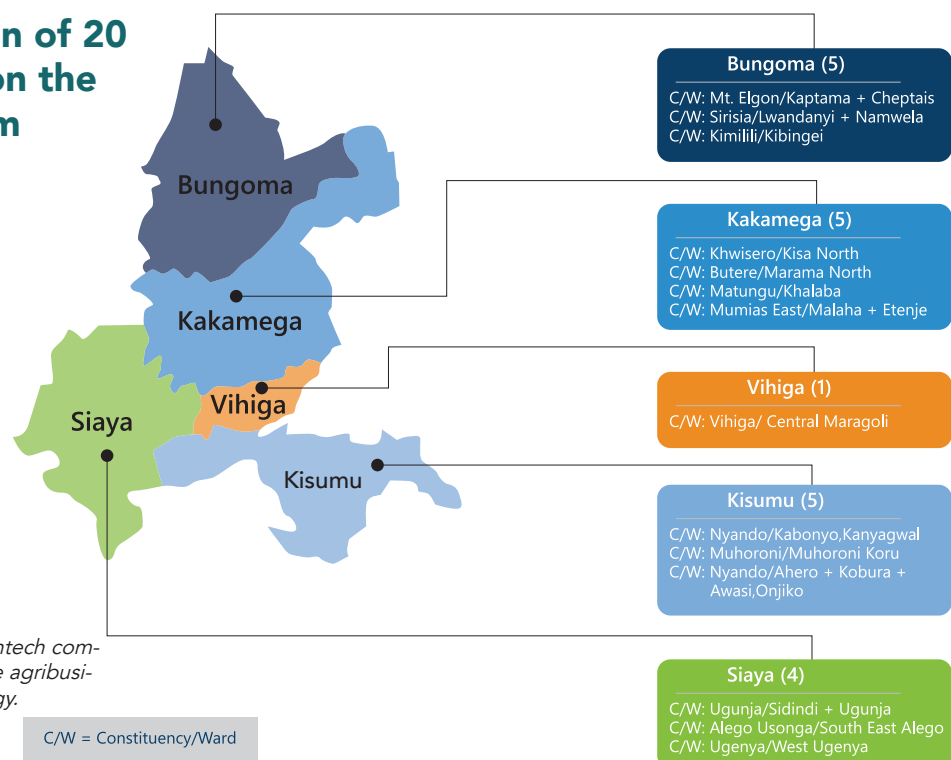
The sustainable growth and success of Farmer Service Centres (FSCs) is supported through three key areas: professionalisation and business development, diversification of services, and digitalisation of operations.

- 1. Professionalisation and Business Development:** Training and coaching are provided to enhance the business development skills of FSCs. Exposure to new business opportunities through B2B meetings further supports their growth. Additionally, the creation of FSC service charters improves branding and visibility, reinforcing their reputation and market presence within the community.
- 2. Diversification of Services:** To meet the evolving needs of farmers, FSCs are trained to develop enterprise growth plans and receive business coaching. Services are expanded into new areas, including business advisory, agro-ecological products and services, market linkages, and financial services. This diversification ensures that

FSCs offer a comprehensive range of support to smallholder farmers, enhancing their role in the agricultural value chain.

- 3. Digitalisation of Operations:** The digitalisation of FSC operations is achieved through the agriBORA platform, which streamlines critical business processes such as farmer management, product procurement, tracking, and information dissemination. This enhances operational efficiency and strengthens market linkages between FSCs and off-takers, improving output marketing and facilitating better market access for farmers. Additionally, the project is building the capacity of agriBORA staff to strengthen their ability to provide comprehensive business support to FSCs and improve their service delivery model.

Map of distribution of 20 FSCs onboarded on the agriBORA platform



agriBORA is a Kenyan-German Fintech company focusing on transforming the agribusiness landscape through technology.



Impact

- ③ **20 FSCs** were on-boarded onto the agriBORA platform, digitalising transactions and enabling the dissemination of agronomy and weather advisories to farmers. **120 farmers received input credit** on a pilot basis.
- ③ Among the supported FSCs, **7 are women-led, 1 is PWD-led, and 5 are youth-led.**
- ③ Over **7,600 agripreneurs and smallholder businesses** gained improved access to inputs, services, and markets. Of these, **3,686** were registered for regular input purchases and advisory support, while **4,000 walk-in farmers** accessed services. Mechanisation services helped reduce post-harvest losses and improve soil conservation and marketing through aggregation.
- ③ **58,858 SMS notifications** boosted input sales by informing farmers about product availability.
- ③ **20 FSCs and 29 companies** participated in two B2B events, resulting in over **30 new business partnerships.**
- ③ **10 FSCs expanded into new value chains,** while **20 FSCs improved branding** with service charters detailing their products and services.
- ③ An outcome assessment found that **65% of agripreneurs** (54% women, 46% youth) **reported better access to inputs and services,** while **68%** (56% women, 36% youth) **improved market access,** and **87%** (56% women, 34% youth) **saw enhanced access to advisory services.**
- ③ **58,858 SMS notifications** boosted input



Success Factors

- ③ **Diversification of Services:** Expanding FSCs' service portfolio to include business skills development, growth plans, and coaching, focusing on creating new market opportunities and jobs, especially for women and youth.
- ③ **Digitalisation of Operations:** Streamlining FSC operations through digital solutions to improve efficiency, market connectivity, and advisory services via eExtension, offering farmers tailored training and visual content for better productivity.
- ③ **Focus on Youth and Women Empowerment:** Targeting job creation for youth and women, aligning with broader development goals.
- ③ **Business Development & Networking:** Supporting FSCs with networking forums and growth plans to scale operations, diversify services, and strengthen value chains.



Success Story

Creating Jobs for Young Farmers

Norbert Okutu, a young entrepreneur from Kakamega County, has always been passionate about agriculture. After high school, he proceeded to further deepen his knowledge and skills in agriculture by studying Agriculture and Biotechnology at Bukura Agricultural College. His commitment was noticed by a colleague, who connected him with the Farm to Market Alliance (FtMA), sparking the idea to establish his own Farmer Service Centre.

Today, his FSC not only employs 22 young individuals trained to deliver vital spraying services to remote farmers but also provides high-quality inputs at competitive prices. Driven by a vision for the future, Norbert aims to expand his team to 300 young employees by 2027, representing over 1000% growth in just five years! His commitment to excellence didn't go unnoticed—Agri-Jobs **4 Youth** selected him for specialised training and business coaching, helping him refine his business plan and establish critical connections with input suppliers. Norbert's journey exemplifies how determination and the right support can transform a passion into a thriving, impactful enterprise.

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

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As at

October 2024

Text

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Design

Lugaka Eric, Nairobi

Photo credits

@GIZ/Dorine Awino / Prisca Watko

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)