

Fact Sheet on the 8028 Hotline and IVR/SMS System

In the past, there has been significant time lost as new information on agronomic practices trickles down from research institutions and government bodies to the smallholder farmers. The ATA identified the use of an ICT platform to streamline the provision of tailored, real-time information directly to smallholder farmers in one to three weeks.

Using the Interactive Voice Response/Short Message Service (IVR/SMS) system, smallholder farmers can call into the 8028 automated hotline for free and receive information on high-value crops and a wide range of agriculture activities. Conversely, a push-based voice and SMS alert system is used to notify farmers of pertinent and timely agriculture issues, drawing on the specific characteristics of farmers collected when they initially registered on the system.

A pilot IVR/SMS project was launched in February 2014 in four regions, (Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNP), focusing on horticultural crops like potato, onion, and carrot. With an average of 500 calls per day, 7,700 unique callers, and a total of 57,400 calls into the system, the pilot was successful.

In July 2014, the project content was expanded to address the needs of farmers during the pre-planting, planting, and post-harvesting seasons. The system now runs on 90 phone lines and includes best practices advice on growing the important cereal crops of maize, tef, wheat, barley and sorghum. Its content is available in three languages (Amharic, Oromiffa, and Tigrigna) and can be updated periodically to cover additional areas.



VITAL STATS

as of 9/16/2014

1,464,036+
Total calls

Average total calls (August)

27,899 | **202,8050** | **847,028**
Daily | Weekly | Monthly

Average unique calls (August)

5,894 | **42,907** | **191,058**
Daily | Weekly | Monthly

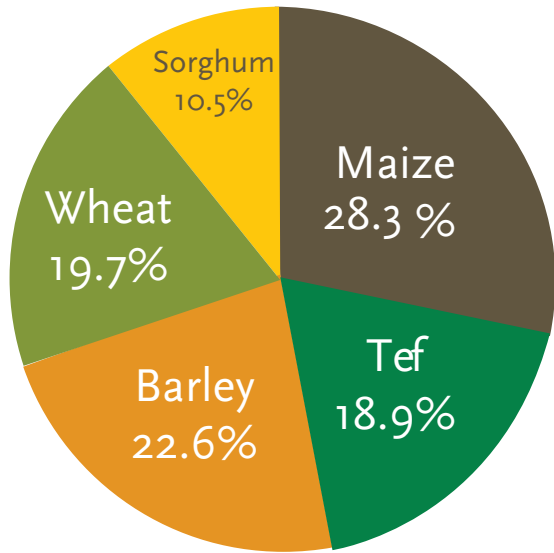
Caller's profiles

Farmer	67%		19%	81%
Model farmer	19%		Female	Male
Development Assistant	5%			
Expert	2.2%			
Other	5.7%			

8028 hotline menu options selected

Pre-planting	50.6%
Planting	29.6%
Crop protection	15.5%
Fertilizer side dressing	4.2%

Information requested by cereal crop



Callers by language selected

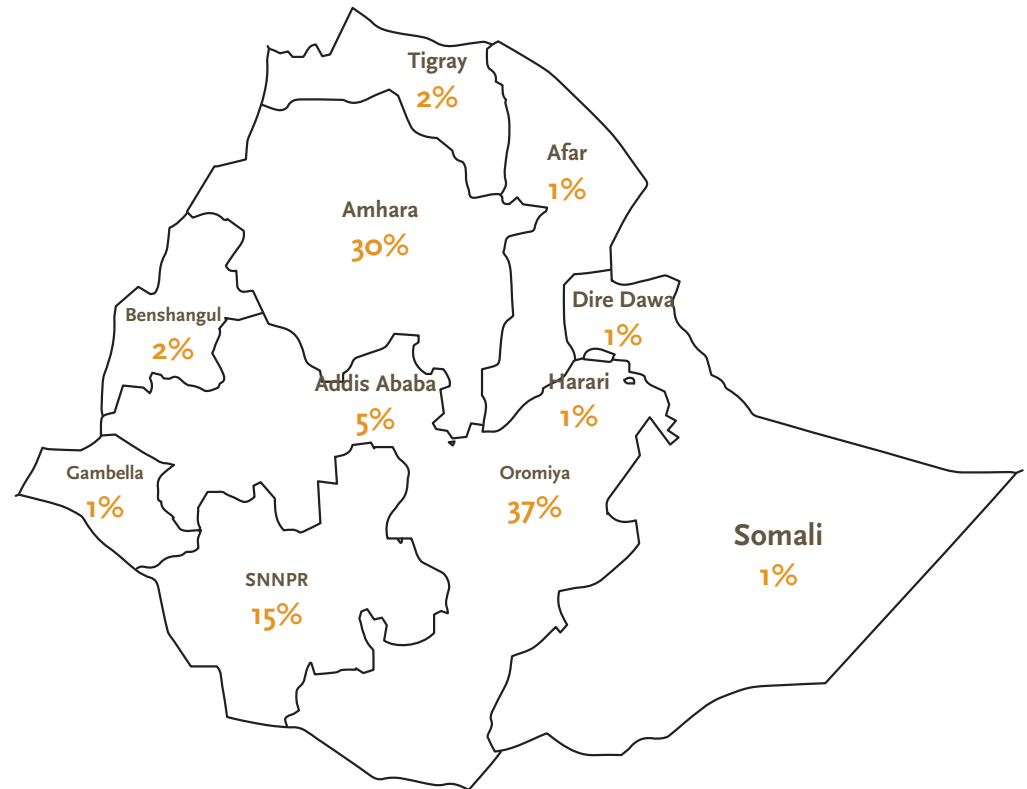


Call statistics

as of 9/16/2014

311,783	Callers registered to the system
2.42	Average call duration in minutes
73	Average # of phone lines in use at one time
3	Average time callers return to 8028

Volume of callers by region



Future Directions

A scale-up of the IVR/SMS system is scheduled for the end of 2014, expanding to include content on sesame, chickpea, haricot beans, fava beans, cotton and the horticulture crops from the pilot project. Information will also be available on pre-irrigation, adding irrigation water, weather, rural financial services (RFS) and agricultural inputs.

The new system will grow to the use of 180 phone lines and aim to reach 14.1 million smallholder farmers and extension workers in four main regions.