

Bridging the rural digital divide



The information revolution has completely bypassed nearly one billion people. They are the rural poor, who constitute 75 percent of the people in the world who live on less than one dollar a day. The advent of information and communication technologies has served only to widen the gap between them and others who do have access to such technologies. The rural digital divide is most evident when comparing the disparities between urban and rural communities, men and women and between successful farmers and their less successful neighbours.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its partners are working on an integrated set of activities to bridge the rural digital divide by strengthening human and institutional capacities to harness information and knowledge more effectively. The Organization has identified the following key issues to be addressed:

- ▶ locally adapted content and context;
- ▶ building on existing systems;
- ▶ addressing diversity;
- ▶ capacity building;
- ▶ access and empowerment;
- ▶ strengthening partnerships and participation;
- ▶ realistic approach to technologies;
- ▶ costs and financial sustainability.

