



RESTORING AFRICA'S DRYLANDS
ACCELERATING ACTION ON THE GROUND

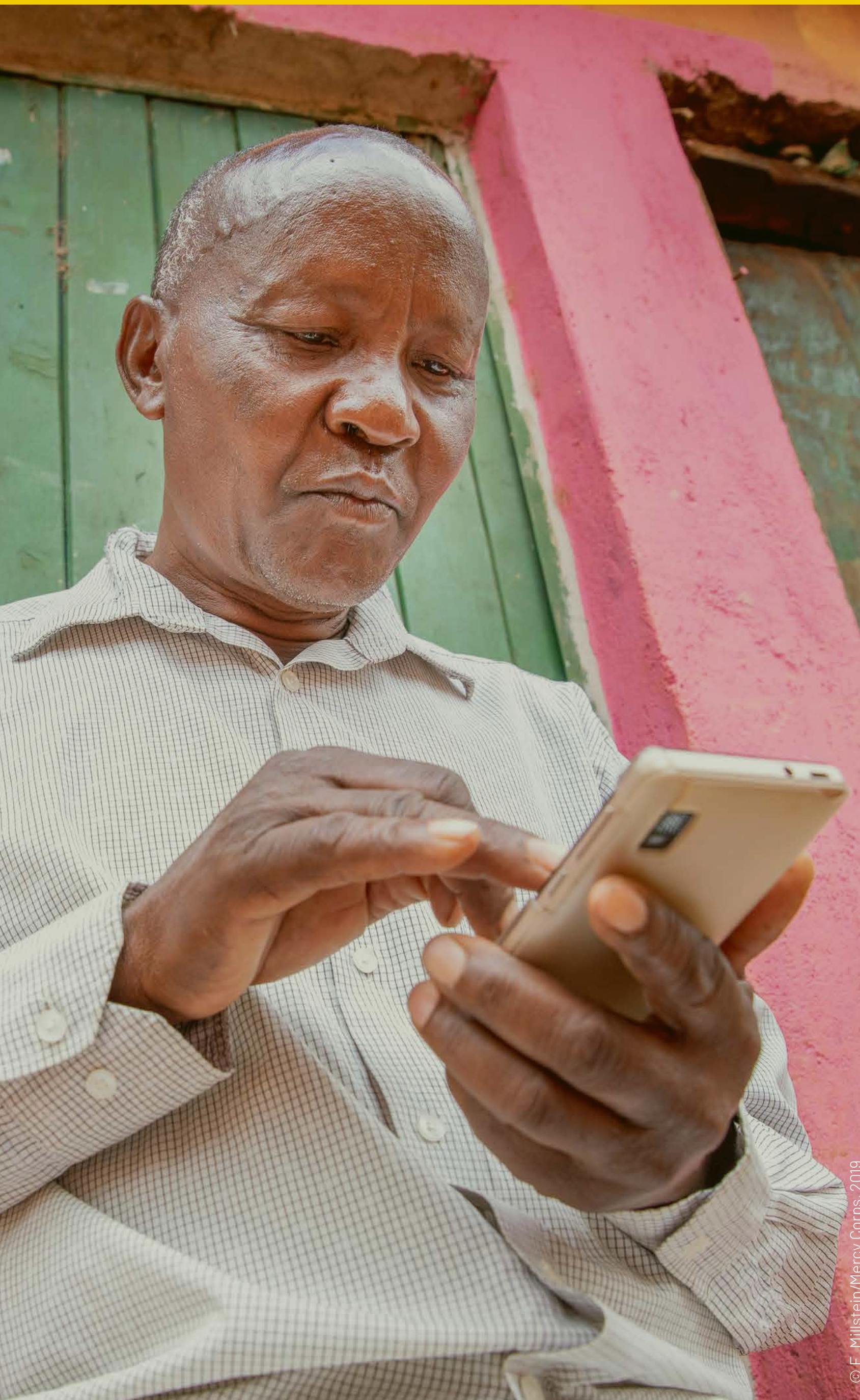


INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE IN THE DRYLANDS

#GLFAfrica



WHITE PAPER



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Innovation, at its core, is about doing business differently. In the context of international development, this means new interventions that create value at scale – and where the value created has primarily social impact but could also be commercial. These innovative interventions might include products, services, processes, business models, and technologies. Yet not all innovations work, and those that work may not do so at scale.

In particular, it is not well understood which interventions are **appropriate** in arid-to-semi-arid lands (ASALs) and in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS). Nor is it well understood what the feasibility of replication at scale in dynamic development contexts is; nor, indeed, how effective are interventions geared towards supporting the resilience of pastoralist, agricultural and transitional livelihoods.

Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC) aims to generate evidence and address knowledge gaps to build the resilience of millions of pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and farmers in these communities in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. We strive to create impact by using research and evidence to develop knowledge that improves how the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), donors, Non-Governmental Organisations, local and national governments, and civil society can empower communities in the context of climate change.

During this session, we will outline the major findings of the **SPARC Innovation Landscape Study** (due to be published in June) conducted between September 2020 and April 2021. Through this study, we **mapped the innovation ecosystem** (i.e., curated innovations for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists) in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, including the needs these innovations addressed and relevant partnerships.

Participants in this interactive session will engage with innovators. We will stimulate knowledge exchange to increase our understanding of possible opportunities when developing, implementing and scaling innovative solutions to strengthen resilience in the drylands. We will share emerging insights on the enabling factors for successful innovations, as well as opportunities for further areas of research and intervention. For the purposes of SPARC's implementation time frame, we consider innovation as either the development of new solutions and/or improvements to existing solutions; and/or advancements in product and service design, processes, and/or business models. These innovations could be engineered by non-governmental organisations, businesses and social enterprises, academic and research institutions, as well as local populations and civil society organisations. We consider innovations in technology, as well as social innovations. Innovations may cut across the entire value chain and include cross-cutting themes. This may include, for example, supply chain innovations on customer acquisition and distribution channels; product innovations that drive access to markets, finance, and information; digital technology and analogue solutions; and innovations with a gender lens.

As we discuss findings from the landscape analysis, we will highlight the assessed success factors for innovations to understand relevant business models, as well as enabling policies and principles. These insights are preliminary and will be validated through future SPARC research with innovation partners. Key elements of successful business models we will discuss with innovators currently working in ASALS and FCAS include:

- **Strategic partnerships with key partners** such as governments, mobile network operators, donors and research institutions to address dryland-specific opportunities and challenges that enable or hamper innovation and scale. For example, how can strategic subsidies be used to overcome the high investment costs associated with building accessible cash-liquid mobile money agent networks that continue to operate during periods of peak demand (e.g., pay-out services for e-transfer safety net programmes) for pay-out services.
- **Bundling of products and services** to reduce transaction costs and increase the value gained by end-users in dryland communities or bridging between dryland and other communities to drive product adoption and use; for example, through insurance with inputs and/or other information services.
- **Designing market-driven innovations** that are tailored to the (semi-)nomadic lifestyle of agro-pastoralists and pastoralists, as well as leveraging already existing infrastructure, such as women's social networks that can drive uptake of innovative solutions.
- **An enabling environment** to foster innovation, including – but not limited to – policy and regulatory openness, existing infrastructure (GSM network, roads, etc.), and a robust marketplace that influences the appetite to invest in innovations in ASALs and FCAS.

The session will also encourage participant feedback on priority research questions, such as;

- How might service providers achieve sustainability and impact? How do they increase the value gained by end-users to increase adoption and sustained or recurrent use?
- How might service providers manage the high cost of service delivery at the last mile? What distribution channels (digital and analogue) are cost effective, yet impactful?
- Beyond addressing immediate shocks and stresses, what innovations can promote long-term economic and other well-being outcomes for pastoral communities, and break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability to shocks?
- What enabling environment is required to enable scaling up of impactful innovations in ASALs and FCAS?
- What innovations currently exist for smallholder farmers that can be extended to agro-pastoralists in ASALs and FCAS contexts?
- What role do pastoralist women and adolescent youth play in enhancing the resilience of pastoral livelihoods?
- What innovations are relevant to women and adolescent youth, and to what extent are these innovations gender/age responsive and/or gender/age transformative?



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The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihood initiatives, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment and the World Bank and Charter Members.

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