

FALL ARMYWORM TECH PRIZE

The Fall Armyworm (FAW) poses a serious threat to Africa's food security. Native to the Americas, FAW was first identified in Africa in 2016 and is now present across sub-Saharan Africa. Differing from other types of armyworms, the FAW eats not only the vegetative parts of plants, but also the reproductive parts significantly impacting yield.

FAW attacks over 80 different plant species. Agriculture experts estimate the pest could cause between \$2.4 and \$6.2 billion in losses for maize, a major staple crop in Africa on which more than 200 million people depend. Crops like sorghum, rice, and sugarcane are also at risk.



Given its recent rapid spread, and its physical similarities to other armyworms, African smallholder farmers and the agricultural experts who support them, have struggled to identify FAW, grasp its grave threat, and apply best practices to combat it.

That is why the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative, will open up a call for digital solutions to FAW on March 28, 2018. The call is for digital tools and approaches that source, analyze and translate data for smallholder farmers, and those who support them, that empower them to make timely, accurate, and relevant decisions around combatting the impact of FAW.

Given the spread and rate of the outbreak, interventions need to be deployed at a transnational, if not continental, level. Furthermore, information on how to treat the pest needs to be quickly transmitted to smallholder farmers and those who advise them. These conditions beg for innovations in digital tools and approaches to track the path of the pest, communicate interventions to smallholders, and relay information to agriculture decision-makers and agents.

USAID is establishing one regional hub located in Kampala, Uganda to better address the regional complexities associated with introducing, testing, and scaling new digital solutions. The Agency is seeking interested Missions and stakeholders who can provide support and feedback around these hubs.

Further, USAID is calling upon international and regional leaders in food security, agricultural and information and communication technology and research to join us in combating this devastating pest. We welcome your partnership as we seek path-breaking solutions to empower smallholders to effectively manage this grave threat.

For more information and opportunities, please contact fawtechprize@nesta.org.uk or go to <https://fallarmywormtech.challenges.org>.