



**FIPS**

**AFRICA**

Small Farms, Big Futures



# FRNs in Action: Cultivating Success with Process Guides



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**How Farmer-Driven Research is Making  
Bokashi More Accessible and Impactful**





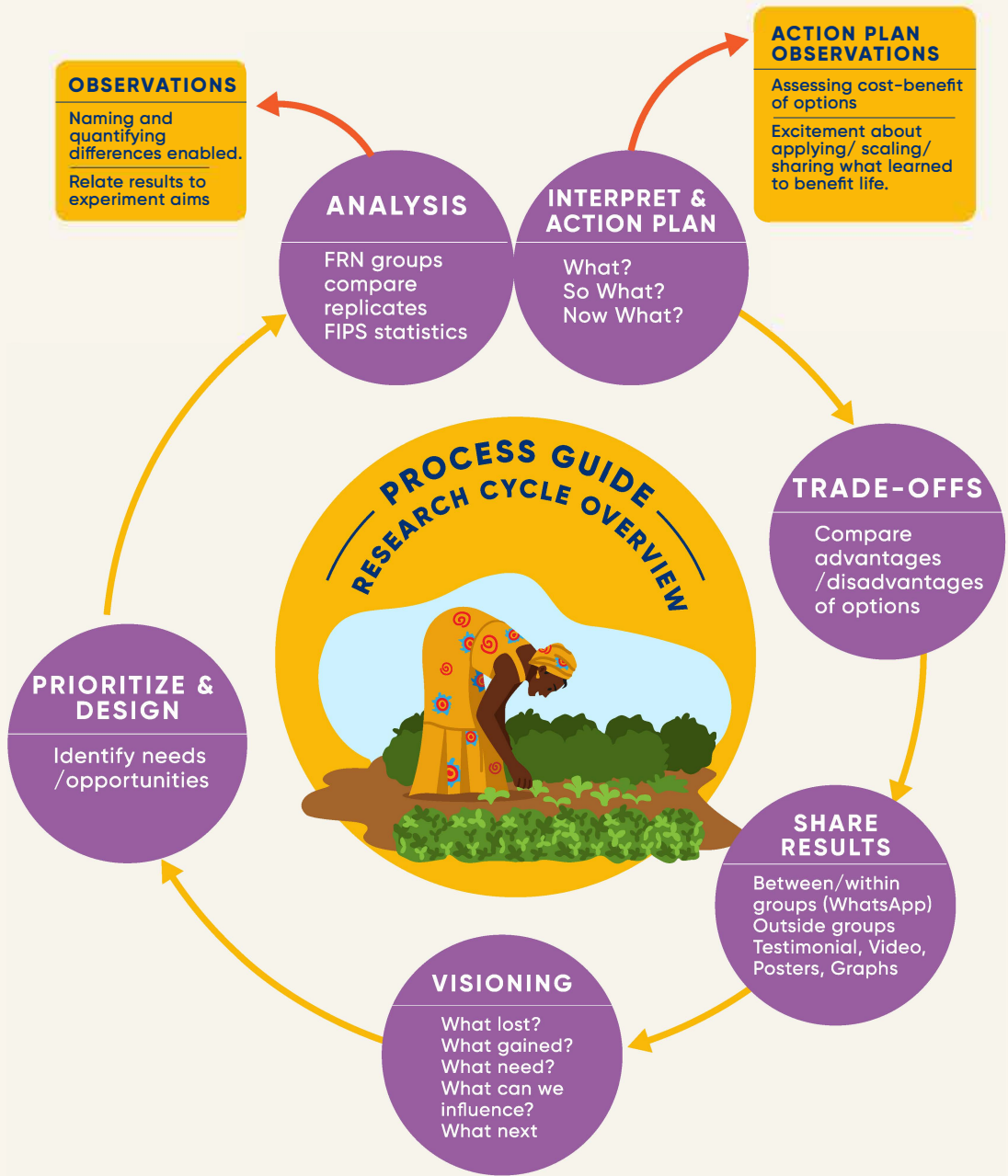
# How Farmer-Driven Research is Making Bokashi More Accessible and Impactful



In traditional agricultural research, outside experts often arrive to analyze, recommend, and leave. But this approach misses a vital truth: farmers are experts too, with deep knowledge shaped by daily experience and challenges.

FRNs flip the script, empowering farmers to lead research and innovation. Farmers become co-researchers, testing, adapting, and refining practices in real time. Through collaborative learning, they share what works - and what doesn't - creating solutions that improve livelihoods and strengthen communities - they're a movement for lasting change driven by farmers, for farmers



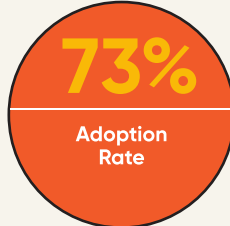
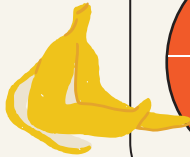


# Research by Farmers, for Farmers

An Example of Bokashi Composting



WHERE  
**WESTERN REGION - KENYA**



Farmers tested different ingredient substitutions - such as using sourdough instead of commercial yeast - and reduced labor-intensive processes, making Bokashi more practical and affordable.



**"What if we try less sugar?"**



Results from Bokashi adoption trials showed that production costs dropped by more than 50% (from 1,150 KES to around 500 KES per ton), cutting both time and effort without compromising the compost's quality, encouraging wider adoption. Meanwhile, farmers who adopted the method reported improved soil health and better crop yields

This kind of hands-on research delivers actionable insights that matter because they reflect real-world challenges and practical solutions.



# Key Lessons from FRN Trials

of the Bokashi Initiative using the FIPS-Africa Approach



## Labor and Cost Reduction

Introduction of single-turning method reduced labor by 50% while maintaining compost quality. Bokashi now costs KES 600 per ton or KES 2,400 per acre (4 tons/acre), compared to KES 7,000 per acre for inorganic fertilizers. Beyond cost savings, Bokashi offers added benefits - long-lasting soil impact, easy accessibility, and environmental friendliness.



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**Hmm, our soil is healthier, crops are thriving, and we're saving money too! Now we have more food and a better income.**



## Improved Livelihoods:

Farmers using Bokashi saw richer soils, better water retention, and higher crop yields. Lower production costs and sustainable practices have enhanced food security and income for smallholder farmers.



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**It feels great to solve problems ourselves**

## Farmer-Led Solutions through FRNs:

Adoption challenges like ingredient costs and labor intensity were addressed through Farmer Research Networks (FRNs). Farmers, acting as researchers, tested alternatives such as sourdough and Kimera (local name for sprouted millet) to replace commercial yeast, lowering costs and increasing feasibility.



## A Sustainable Path Forward:

Continuous innovation, including the use of nitrogen-rich plants like Tithonia, is strengthening Bokashi's impact. With farmers leading the way, Bokashi's adoption is growing, spreading lasting agricultural practices across Western Kenya and beyond.



# WHY IT WORKS



FRNs harness farmers' unique expertise - they know their land, soil, and crops better than anyone. When farmers take the lead in research, solutions become practical and relevant because they're built from the ground up, not imposed from the top down.

A participatory approach that is led by streamlined guides, ensures consistent messaging and shared knowledge. Without a structured process, training becomes disjointed and ineffective. A phased model that builds skills over time is essential. This collaborative approach drives sustainable solutions that stick.

In the journey of composting, FRNs are a powerful example of community-driven innovation, where local solutions spark lasting change.



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