

E-VOUCHER

An e-voucher uses a mobile delivery and tracking system to distribute subsidised agricultural inputs

By David Lumu

The Government has finalised plans to roll out an e-voucher system that will enable farmers access free farm inputs supplied by the Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) through a digital coupon.

According to the plan, under the electronic voucher system, the distribution of seedlings and fertilisers will be supplied to farmers through mobile delivery services that are directly linked to their specific names and the national registration card numbers.

"An e-voucher uses a mobile delivery and tracking system to distribute subsidised agricultural inputs through agro-dealers and input suppliers to targeted farmers. Each beneficiary farmer's e-card is linked to their specific name and national registration card number. On confirmation of the transaction, an e-voucher allows instant electronic payment to agro-dealers/ input suppliers' online accounts for the inputs redeemed by the farmer," Government officials note in their plan.

In his Tarehe Sita Day message recently, Gen. Caleb Akandwanaho aka Salim Saleh, the chief co-ordinator of OWC, rallied Ugandans to embrace the e-voucher system.

"As much as the battle is still on, we are confident that we are on the right track to achieving our mandate and obliterating Uganda's number one enemy (poverty) by the year 2020 if we implement the new structural and operation changes that I have recently suggested in OWC.



Tabaro

I urge the public to fully support us and embrace these new changes such as the e-voucher system as we start a new planting season soon," the message stated.

Speaking to *New Vision*



A team from Operation Wealth Creation monitors farming projects in Arua district

Govt introduces e-voucher system for farmers

yesterday, Maj. Tabaro Kiconco, the spokesperson of OWC, said given the rise of corruptions in the agricultural process chain, the development of the e-voucher system will help farmers get access to the right farm inputs. Under this

system, the farmer will also be able to requisition the planting material of their choice.

"It will help us weed out corruption and the supply of fake farm implements," he said.

In the initial stage of the

ORIGINS

The e-voucher initiative is borrowed from Zambia, where the programme has been rolled out through an electronic voucher

e-voucher system, Kiconco added, farmers will be able to select the type of fertilisers and seed varieties unlike in the past where they had limited options but to take what OWC suppliers gave them.

The e-voucher system will be co-ordinated by the farm service centre, whose main mandate will be to facilitate farmers' access to agricultural input requirements —fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, tractors and credit services.

"Apart from improving beneficiary targeting and promoting timely access to inputs by increasing private sector participation, the e-voucher programme has the potential to accelerate diversification of the smallholder sector by allowing farmers to purchase a wide range of recommended inputs such as veterinary drugs, agricultural equipment, livestock, poultry and fingerlings," the government plan states.

The e-voucher initiative is borrowed from Zambia, where the process of reforming the farmer input support programme has been rolled out through a flexible electronic voucher.

During the pilot programme, OWC officials say about 85% of farming households used vouchers to access fertilisers and maize seeds.

BENEFITS

The system will help farmers get access to the right farm inputs