



# BULK SMS PROGRAM:

## A New and Effective Communication Channel with Farmers

Mozambique Leaf Tobacco Company's (MLT) considerable footprint of approximately 100,000 contracted farmers in four Mozambican provinces, as well as the challenging access to the most rural areas, made it clear that MLT had to innovate to ensure regular and consistent communication with its growers.



With its **Community Leaders Accountability Program** [http://www.universalcorp.com/Resources/OurCompany/Universalleaf/Africa/Mozambique/Community\\_Leadership\\_Accountability\\_Program.pdf](http://www.universalcorp.com/Resources/OurCompany/Universalleaf/Africa/Mozambique/Community_Leadership_Accountability_Program.pdf). Launched in 2018, MLT confirmed that the full engagement of all stakeholders, particularly community leaders in rural communities, leads to a better understanding of best practices and requirements in tobacco growing.


MLT therefore decided to complement this program with a Bulk SMS component, aiming to engage and train community leaders on even more topics. This now twofold Program aims to further increase understanding, support and compliance amongst respected village authorities thereby setting the example and tone for farmers and others in the community.

Since June 2020, text-based messages are sent to the Community Leaders' mobile phones both in Portuguese and Chichewa to ensure full understanding. MLT sends these messages during working hours and referring to diverse topics such as Good Agricultural Practices, Agricultural Labour Practices, Leaf & Buying, Rural Banking, Compliance, Anti-Corruption and any other relevant information such as preventive measures against COVID-19.

OVER **58,000**  
messages sent to date



This solution has proven to be very efficient as it ensures immediate and wider reach in all communities!



For 2020, the roll out approach was focused on the Community Leaders as the best way to target a large audience through their local leaders who would spread the word especially in a covid-19 environment. MLT plans to expand its reach to the wider grower base directly once all growers are registered for the new season – during registration farmers provide their phone number for this purpose.



Despite the high rates of illiteracy in Mozambique, most growers have been able to read and understand the text messages with very little difficulties reported. One of the challenges faced is the difficulty in registering a SIM card in Mozambique as there are usually formal personal identification constraints.

In addition to covering the grower base and community leaders in the field, MLT also plans to expand this communication platform medium internally to its employees with content relating to compliance, HR reminders and procedures, industry best practices and any ad-hoc events deemed relevant.