Ownership and use of mobile phones for agricultural transactions by traders: The case of the Analanjirofo and Atsinanana Regions - Madagascar

Abel-Ratovo, Henri, L.; Rahelizatovo, Noro, C.; Okello, Julius Juma; Rasoarahaha, Fenosoa; Rasoarahaha, Jean

Date: 2012-06

Abstract

This paper analyzes the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in improving the performance of agricultural markets. It focuses on ownership and use of mobile phone by the rural traders in the Regions of Analanjirofo and Atsinanana, a target zone of the public-private initiative "Programme de Promotion des Revenus Ruraux" (PPRR) that develops a market information services program. The paper uses data obtained through personal interviews with traders, stratified by being located within the PPRR zone of intervention and outside, to identify the drivers of mobile phone ownership and use for agricultural transactions. Statistical tests (t-test) of differences in means of key variables and binary logistic regression models are used to examine the effect of PPRR on ownership and use of mobile phones. The findings show that traders inside the PPRR zone are more likely to own and use mobile phones for agricultural transactions. In addition, his/her personal and socio-economic characteristics affect ownership of mobile phones. Further findings also suggest that mobile phone use depends especially on its usefulness for the transaction activities and on users’ socio-economic characteristics and environment. The paper concludes that the presence of PPRR increases the likelihood of use of mobile phones for agricultural transactions. It recommends the need to improve access to affordable mobile phone handsets and to reduce calling costs, invest in improving literacy levels and complementary infrastructure so as to spur greater use of mobile phones for agricultural transactions, among others.