Sketching Private Participation in Agricultural Extension in Nigeria and Benin

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Abstract

The importance of extension in the agricultural system is questioned due to its low effectiveness and efficiency in improving agricultural performance and consequently farmers’ welfare. The objective of this research is to evaluate the feasibility and constraints for including private components into the public extension system in Nigeria and Benin, with emphasis on rice production. The study areas are located in Ogun, Kogi and Ebonyi states in Nigeria, and Dassa and Glazoue sub-prefectures in Benin. The work is divided in two parts. The first part focuses on information and knowledge as agricultural inputs provided by the extension services. The objective is to determine the value farmers give to information and from that estimate the farmers’ willingness to pay (WTP) for information and extension services. The second part evaluates the constraints of implementing private components in the extension system and develops a framework in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. WTP as estimated in the first part of this study is used as a reference to evaluate the financial constraints together with two new concepts, the farmer’s capability to pay (CTP), and the farmer’s requirement to pay (RTP). Technical and institutional constraints are revised through an in-depth stakeholder analysis, and human and physical resources are evaluated as well. The review of experiences around the world provides possible institutional arrangements that are discussed for the local conditions. First evaluations show that even though there is a positive attitude towards financial participation for rice extension, the sustainability of the system can be limited by the relative importance of rice crop in the area. Another important constraint is the availability of service providers qualified and motivated to accept the challenge. The use of coupons or vouchers to structure the system is under evaluation.

Keywords: Financial participation in agricultural extension, WTP for information

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