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Impact of USAID/Markets II Intervention on Productivity of Rice Farming Households in Eastern Nigeria

ADUNNI SANNI, OGECHI NWAHIA, ZAKARI ABDULSALAM

Ahmadu Bello University, Agricultural Economics, Nigeria

Abstract

Among the efforts made by Nigerian government to promote sustainable self-sufficiency in rice production is the USAID-Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites (MARKETS), initiated in 2005. This study analysed the impact of USAID-MARKETS II project on the productivity of rice farming households in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed in the selection of the respondents for the study. A total of 491 rice farming households, comprising of 239 participants and 252 non-participants of the project, were included in the study. Structured questionnaire, focus group discussions and field observation were used in data collection. The data were collected on production and socio-economic variables relating to 2017/2018 production. Data collected were analysed using descriptive, Total Factor Productivity Model, Propensity Score Matching and Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE). The USAID-MARKETS II project employed several empowerment strategies towards improving the productivity of farming households in the project sites. These include, supply of improved rice seeds, fertilisers, technology development, training and extension support. The result of Total Factor Analysis shows a progress in total factor productivity growth of 69.7% for farmers with the USAID-MARKETS II compared to 41.9% by the non-participant farmers. Using PSM, the average impact estimation shows that USAID-MARKETS II have a positive and significant impact on productivity of the participants by 1.075. The Average Treatment Effect (ATE) on the treated for rice farming households from the overall population is larger with a value of 1.178 compared to the untreated category. The LATE estimate revealed a significant mean difference of 0.406 in rice productivity between participants and non-participants. The analysis also divulges that the average increase in total productivity brought about by participation in USAID-MARKETS II is 0.396. Major constraints to increased productivity among farmers are; inadequate capital/poor access to credit, inadequate land, high cost of inputs, poor access to technologies, poor market access and low producers price. Despite the significant impact of the project on productivity, there is the need for government to further intensify agricultural empowerment programmes by strengthening the public private partnership linkages that will address sustainable development along the rice value chain in Nigeria.

Keywords: Farming-households, impact, intervention, markets, productivity