

The ICT4Scale initiative Harnessing ICT to scale up agricultural solutions

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Abstract: Information and communication technologies ICTs can play a significant role in enhancing the uptake and impact at scale of agricultural solutions. The speed of diffusion of mobile phones, their declining costs, the increased reach of wireless broadband, and the broader access to technologies by smallholder farmers, indicate the potential of ICTs to give large numbers of people access to timely and relevant agricultural information, financial services, and input and output markets. ICTs also contribute to strengthening social networks while facilitating participation and interactivity through innovation platforms that can support scaling-up initiatives. The ICT4Scale project, funded by the International Development Research Centre in Canada, aims at developing, testing and sharing a conceptual framework for implementing and assessing gender-responsive ICT-for-scale initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. Implemented by Farm Radio International, Canada, and Farm Radio Trust, Malawi, the project investigates the use of different combinations of ICTs across past and current scaling-up initiatives to identify best practices and challenges, with an emphasis on gender-related issues. In Malawi, a scaling-up model based on mobile technology and interactive radio platforms that brings together key stakeholders from the public and private sectors while giving women and men farmers a voice, is also being tested.