

Press Release

Ground-breaking study confirms that farmers using Esoko receive more for their crops

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A recent independent study has verified that market prices delivered via text message have a positive impact on rural farmer revenues and livelihoods

Bamako, Mali— INRA, the French National Institute for National Research, found that smallholder farmers in Northern Ghana have seen a 10% revenue increase receiving and then utilizing Esoko SMS market prices—the first study of its kind to prove impact.

Julie Subervie of INRA, the lead of the project, announced these findings in a presentation at the Market Information Systems Conference in Bamako. In the study, 600 smallholder farmers were comprehensively surveyed on their trading behaviors over the harvest cycles of 2008 and 2009. Half of those surveyed had been receiving market prices via SMS—with the going prices in wholesale markets across the country delivered weekly to their mobile—and half had not, so the groups could be compared. This 10% increase comes from statistics around the selling prices of three commodities—maize, groundnut and cassava.

Traditionally, isolated rural farmers simply don't know what their goods are worth in major markets, which allows traders to come in and offer incredibly low prices to buy their harvests. Armed with price information on their mobile phones, farmers can now negotiate a better deal with confidence.

"The fact that an independent research institution found these results is so exciting for us, and shows that what we'd been finding through our own surveying has real merit" says Isaac Boateng, the project lead from Esoko's Monitoring and Evaluation team. "We look forward to further, more in-depth studies with Subervie and INRA, and we're grateful for their interest in Esoko at this crucial time."

"Studies like this will help us expand operations and grow, in the end helping more farmers get the right prices for their crops."

Esoko is currently operating in 16 African countries, and in Ghana alone has over 10,000 farmers receiving prices alerts. The impact of data delivered mobile services on the trading patterns and behaviors of smallholder farmers has not been studied widely to date, but the Esoko users in Ghana create the perfect opportunity to do so. Another impact evaluation is already underway with New York University.

Contact: Sarah Bartlett: sarah@esoko.com (233) 0302 211611 www.esoko.com

About Esoko

Esoko is a mobile-based Market Information Exchange that is changing the way markets work in Africa. Individuals, businesses, and projects can push and pull market information in a quick and affordable way using text messaging. Working with partners in 16 countries, the Esoko platform provides automatic and personalized price alerts, buy and sell offers, bulk SMS messaging, stock counts and SMS polling. Esoko also offers strategy, support and trainings to projects rolling out MIS. Esoko was built in and operates out of Accra, Ghana.

About INRA

The [Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique](http://www.inra.fr) (INRA) is a French public research institute dedicated to scientific studies surrounding the problems of agriculture. It was founded in 1946, and is a public scientific and technological establishment (EPST) under the joint authority of the Ministries of Research and Agriculture.

