Enhancing ICT for environmental sustainability in sub-Saharan Africa

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Author(s): Simplice A. Asongu, Sara Le Roux, Nicholas Biekpe

This study examines how increasing ICT penetration in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) can contribute towards environmental sustainability by decreasing CO2 emissions. The empirical evidence is based the Generalised Method of Moments and forty-four countries for the period 2000–2012. ICT is measured with internet penetration and mobile phone penetration while CO2 emissions per capita and CO2 emissions from liquid fuel consumption are used as proxies for environmental degradation. The following findings are established: First, from the non-interactive regressions, ICT (i.e. mobile phones and the internet) does not significantly affect CO2 emissions. Second, with interactive regressions, increasing ICT has a positive net effect on CO2 emissions per capita while increasing mobile phone penetration alone has a net negative effect on CO2 emissions from liquid fuel consumption. Policy thresholds at which ICT can change the net effects from positive to negative are computed and discussed. These policy thresholds are the minimum levels of ICT required, for the effect of ICT on CO2 emissions to be negative. Other practical implications for policy and theory are discussed.

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