

CROP INTENSIFICATION PROGRAMME (CIP) SATISFACTION SURVEY-2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rwanda remains a largely agricultural country, and agriculture remains the backbone of the Rwandan economy (MINAGRI, 2006). Agriculture in Rwanda is the main economic activity as it provides employment to about 72% of the labor force, contributes to about 33% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), meets 90% of the national food needs, and generates more than 70% of the country's export revenues (Bizoza, 2015). About 81 % of all households in the country depend on agriculture. Rural areas accommodate nearly 83 % of all households in the country, and 87% of rural households depend on agriculture (NISR, 2014). In addition to this, the majority of those households practice subsistence agriculture. Rwandan agriculture is mainly based on small-scale family farming units (with an average plot size of 0.75 hectares), concentrating their activities on production for household consumption and local market exchange (Ansoms, 2010). Given the importance of the agricultural sector and the specific challenges it faces, the GOR undertook important reforms and put in place important policies and programs since the beginning of this decade. These included those related to the land use and management, such as, the National Land Policy, the Land law, and related programs and strategies.

The Government also initiated specific policies and programs to address the agricultural sector challenges, such as the National Agricultural Policy, the Strategic Plan of Agricultural Transformation (PSTA) I, and II & III. To address the specific challenges related to the low crop productivity and the very limited use of agricultural inputs, an important program was put in place in 2007: the Crop intensification Program (CIP) which has four major components: 1) distribution of improved inputs, 2) land use consolidation, 3) proximity extension services, and 4) post-harvest handling and storage. CIP aims to raise the productivity of priority crops, increase the revenues in smallholder farms and thereby ensure food security through sustainable intensification processes. The general objective of the proposed strategies is to double the productivity levels of the eight priority crops of maize, rice, wheat, beans, soy bean, cassava, Irish potato and banana. To achieve this objective, CIP pursues the following specific objectives:

- Increase the effectiveness of the farm inputs by improving the appropriateness of their use and response to the inputs
- Shifting focus from supply to enhancing the demand for inputs by farmers and market-driven forces within the system

- Progressively exit from subsidy program while ensuring the initial purpose of subsidies are achieved
- Strengthen the smallholders' links to market for inputs and outputs through improved access to finance and market information
- Minimize the post-harvest losses and facilitate linkages upstream of the value chain through improved storage, and
- Develop areas with superior production potential as breadbaskets of Rwanda to ensure food security and promote exports to regional markets

This document reports the findings of a study commissioned by the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP), under the auspices of programme objectives in contributing to the Rwandan objective of promoting citizens' participation and accountable governance, with the financial support of Ikiraro Cy'iterambere Project.

The study was carried out by the IRDP consultants and Staff, who are in specializing in agriculture research, public policy programs, initiatives and projects. The aim was to assess farmers' perceptions and satisfaction with regards to the planning and implementation of Crop Intensification Programme in selected districts and to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of CIP in Rwanda, and to identify gaps, best practices and lessons learned, as well as existing bottlenecks in the process of CIP implementation.

The study surveyed 1500 farmers in four provinces and Kigali City, 20 sectors from 10 districts across the country. Data was collected using a questionnaire, focus group discussions and key informant interviews from agriculture related partners. The main demographic characteristics of the respondents include:

High proportion (77.1%) of farmers aged 35 to 54 engaged in agriculture compared to others farmers falling in other age groups. Elderly people aged 74 and above, as well as young people aged 15-24 are less represented in agricultural activities (3.7%). This indicates that the agriculture sector has potential to provide greater employment to the youth.

A large share of respondents had completed primary education (50.1%) while few had completed secondary or TVET education (6.0%). Those who had never attended formal school represent 42.9%. None of the interviewed farmers had completed master's courses or PhD. These findings indicated that the farmers who engage in agriculture activities are of low education level. The survey had roughly balanced gender participation: 57.9% of respondents were men and 42.1% women.

Regarding these findings, the researchers recommend that there is need to strengthen and introduce agriculture programmes in middle level schools and universities. Another alternative is to develop agriculture based technology and grassroots training of farming practices based on farmer-to-farmer orientation.

Farmers' perceptions regarding Crop Intensification Programme in as far as access to extension services; access to agricultural inputs and the land use consolidation are concerned.

65% of surveyed farmers were satisfied with services provided through the four components of CIP. The highest level of satisfaction is for proximity and extension services at 80%. Majority of the farmers appreciated the government program of land use consolidation because their small plots were consolidated and formed cooperatives which helped them to improve agriculture productivity in terms of food security, earning agriculture income, and solving other household needs.

The usage of improved seeds and fertilizers is at high level (over 80%). The survey findings revealed "86.8% of interviewed farmers held land that had been subject to the Land Use Consolidation (LUC) programme, whereas 13.2% held land that had not been subject to the LUC". The farmers' perception on CIP varies from sector to sector within the districts. In some sectors, the farmers appreciated CIP benefits and others have misconception on CIP benefits. These variations reflect differences in the way the CIP has been presented by local agronomists. For example some farmers believe that Land Use Consolidation is used by government as a way to take hold of their land through land use consolidation. Farmers in Kirehe (Gatore) and Nyamasheke (Bushekeri) appreciated the benefit from CIP.

Many farmers reported that the CIP had improved their livelihoods. 89.2% of respondents reported that the CIP had helped them to buy agriculture inputs (89.2%). 75.3% reported that the CIP had helped them to attain household food security and to buy basic needs. 67.2% reported that the program had enabled them to construct and rehabilitate houses, and 79.9% reported that they had been able to buy other land and livestock.

There are questions about the sustainability of these benefits if government removes or reduces its subsidies. The survey findings point to the need for improved education to sustain knowledge and new practices brought by the CIP.

The level of understanding and application of different CIP components by beneficiaries and other actors

The study established that the CIP is not well understood by the farmers. Lack of awareness, fixed mindsets, beliefs and resistance of farmers are key obstacles. Some farmers refuse to consolidate their land on the assumption that the size of their land is small, while others reason that the CIP is for the benefit of the government and not for the farmers. Other farmers believe that the inorganic fertilizers contaminate the land and reduce fertility in subsequent seasons. (Kugundura ubutaka).

While farmers have benefitted from CIP, such as from access to inputs and extension services, most of them are not aware that these services are provided under the CIP program. Most of the farmers are not aware of the existence of an initiative known as Crop Intensification Program, but are aware that government supports the sector. The study observed that the communities are not sensitized on the concept of CIP at village levels.

Some of the farmers do not appreciate land use consolidation because they do not understand the policy and may believe that it serves as a means for government to grab their land. They also reported that growing one crop on a piece of land (mono-cropping) could increase risks and cause hunger. Farmers indicated that when they used to grow many crops in one plot, one crop could fail

while the others could thrive. Some farmers are for the opinion that CIP is beneficial to the government and not to the farmers.

The findings showed that in some districts, most farmers are consolidating lands, which belong to the government, as opposed to their own land. Farmers also reported existence of inequality in leasing the government land (marshland) whereby rich farmers get larger acreage than poor farmers.

The farmers identified some constraints regarding access to inputs (improved seeds, fertilizers) which are supplied by certified agro-dealers, the key ones being delay in delivery, high prices, delivery of seeds that are not adapted to the local climatic conditions and poor knowledge of the importance of improved seeds.

The findings show that the process of input supply starts from farmers and agronomists who assess needs and collect lists of beneficiaries to be sent to the cell, sector by Umudugudu by cooperative, to agro-dealers up to RAB. The response depends on the availability of seeds, fertilizers and dealers. During distribution priority is given to big famers and big cooperatives. Small farmers' claim that they are not favored. Advocacy should address these issues in order to promote greater equality in access to seeds and fertilizers and access to the market.

The challenges faced by farmers

- Involvement of the farmers in planning of agriculture decisions is still negligible at the local level (Sectors); Sector agronomists and certified agro-dealers take decisions and request small-scale farmers to implement without sufficient consultation.
- Not having insurance for agriculture crops in case of drought and flooding is a serious challenge for farmers which prevent them from making investments on their farms.
- Limited knowledge in reducing postharvest losses and marketing, are key challenges to the farmers.
- Insufficient market for maize, Irish potatoes and tomatoes produce. The feeder road infrastructures are still poor in some sectors (example in Ruramira, Kayonza), thus posing a problem to transport the farm produce to the markets.
- Some districts have high yields and yet do not have community storage facilities (example in Nyaruguru) while other district have underutilised community storage facilities (example in Gicumbi, Rubavu).

Proposed key policy actions or recommendations to address identified challenges and gaps in the achievement of CIP objectives

The proposed avenues for improvement of access to agricultural inputs, proximity service delivery in agriculture and land use consolidation and to better respond to citizens needs and to achieve the CIP objectives in this area:

- Farmers should be sensitized on the benefits of CIP with clear information on the four pillars of CIP. Given the benefits of CIP to the farmers as identified in the survey, the farmers should

be informed on their roles in CIP, as well as the role of all the other actors. This will ensure more take up of CIP. This should be carried out through community dialogue, which should be held in every village within the country so as to reach all farmers

- Farmers should be consulted in the implementation of CIP and their proposals taken into consideration. For instance the ideas of citizens should be consulted through local meeting before recommendations are given on which crops should be grown.
- To achieve strategic objectives of CIP, specifically in the components of access to inputs, Ministry of agriculture, development partners and other stakeholders that involved in supporting agriculture activities; should monitor and regular follow-Up in assessing the standards of improved seeds and fertilizers before their distribution to the farmers.
- The improved seeds and fertilizers should be distributed on time and certification of the suitability of improved seeds to Rwandan conditions should be carried out.
- Soil surveying or soil inspection should be put in place before deciding the type of crops to be grown in a specific region.
- The supply of improved seeds and fertilizers should be in form of market competition instead of monopolistic and subsidized supply. This will help farmers to choose their agro-dealers.
- To ensure the increase of agriculture productivity, priority should be given to the use of organic fertilizers (manure and compost) rather than inorganic fertilizer. (RAB should conduct the inspection of soil acidity in order to advise farmers on correct fertiliser application.
- Increasing crop yields will be more profitable and feasible than expanding the cropped area.
- Given limited land availability there is need to create off-farm employment and promote the use of modern technology to increase agricultural productivity.
- There is a need to undertake feasibility studies on volume of production and capacity of farming activities before constructing storage facilities in Districts.
- Strengthening access to finance for agriculture business and farming activities is needed.

Further research

The study findings indicate that the farmers' satisfaction with CIP is high at 65%. However, there is a need to assess the economic benefits of the CIP. Qualitative data shows that CIP Impacted positively increasing production in the 20 sectors covered in the study. A future study should aim to cover more sectors and provide information on measurable economic variables by household.