



TRANSPARENCY  
INTERNATIONAL  
RWANDA



# POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS



**Empowering Farmers at District Level Through Social  
Accountability Tools to Improve District Performance  
Contracts 'Imihigo' in Rwandan Agriculture Projects**



GLOBAL  
PARTNERSHIP FOR  
SOCIAL  
ACCOUNTABILITY



WORLD BANK GROUP



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## Table of Contents

List of tables .....	2
Abbreviations .....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
1. INTRODUCTION .....	8
1.1 Background .....	8
1.2 Objectives of the study .....	9
2. METHODOLOGY .....	10
2.1 Study design .....	10
2.2. Study population .....	11
2.3 Sampling plan .....	11
2.4. Data analysis .....	14
2.5. Quality assurance and ethical considerations .....	14
3. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	15
3.1 Defining key concepts .....	15
3.2 Citizens’ participation in policy-making process: Legal and policy frameworks.....	16
3.3 Existing structures for farmers’ participation in agriculture-related imihigo .....	19
3.4 Major policies for agricultural transformation in Rwanda .....	20
3.5 Actual farmers’ participation in agricultural policy and imihigo formulation, implementation and evaluation .....	24
3.6 Roles and responsibilities of partners in the chain of agriculture governance .....	25
4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	28
4.1 Agricultural structures and their roles in enabling farmers’ participation in agriculture-related Imihigo .....	28
4.2 Factors that enabled farmers’ participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4).....	35
• Policy reforms in agriculture vis-à-vis the Rwandan social and political context .....	35
• Power and resources are distributed in the Agriculture sector in favor of citizens .....	37
• Agricultural incentives that shape the behaviours of key actors in the agricultural value chain...	43
4.3. Effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms in place for monitoring agriculture development programs .....	48
4.4. Identified gaps in the implementation of agriculture policies and programs .....	51

4.5. Respondents’ suggestions to mitigate the identified challenges .....	59
4.6. Policy implementation alignments and gaps .....	64
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	73
5.1 Conclusions .....	73
5.2 Recommendations .....	76
REFERENCES .....	79

## List of tables

Table 1: Sample coverage of the study .....	13
Table 2: Linkage between PSTA-4 priority areas and NST-1 pillars: .....	23
Table 3: Link between PSTA-4 Priority Areas and National Agriculture Policy Pillars .....	23
Table 4: How Agriculture structures enabled farmers’ participation in Imihigo .....	64
Table 5: Factors that enabled farmers’ participation in PSTA-4 .....	65
Table 6: Level of farmers’ awareness and participation in agriculture policy .....	67
Table 7: How Policy reforms in agriculture fit to the Rwandan social and political context .....	67
Table 8: How Power and resources are distributed in agriculture in favour of citizens .....	68
Table 9: Agricultural incentives .....	69
Table 10: Effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms .....	70
Table 11: Specific constraints and opportunities to induce change in agriculture sector .....	70
Table 12: Risk coping mechanisms to help farmers deal with risks in agriculture sector .....	72
Table 13: Identified issues and respective recommendations .....	76

## Abbreviations

BDF	Business Development Fund
CIP	Crop Intensification Program
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
IDA	International Development Association
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NAEB	National Agricultural Export Development Board
NAP	National Agriculture Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NST-1	National Strategy for Transformation (phase 1)
PA	Priority Area
PSF	Private Sector Federation
PSTA-4	Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (phase 4)
RAB	Rwanda Agriculture Board
RDDP	Rwanda Dairy Development Project
SDA	Sector Development Agronomist
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TI-Rw	Transparency International Rwanda
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report consists of a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) of the project ‘Empowering Farmers at District level through Social Accountability Tools to improve District Performance Contracts – Imihigo’. The project is being implemented in Kayonza and Nyanza Districts with around 4047 and 3284 farmers who are direct beneficiaries in Kayonza and Nyanza respectively. The purpose of the project is to help address low citizen participation in policy planning, monitoring and evaluation of local and national agricultural development plans in the targeted districts. This project is implemented in partnership with two other local Civil Society Organizations namely Imbaraga Farmers` Association and SDA-Iriba in Kayonza and Nyanza districts respectively.

The PEA was commissioned by Transparency International Rwanda as to identify the main institutional constraints and opportunities that lead different actors to support social accountability mechanisms in Agriculture. The main objective of the analysis was to gather evidence about politically informed social accountability strategies in Agriculture sector that can lead to meaningful farmers’ participation in policy planning, monitoring and evaluation of local and national agricultural development plans.

Specifically, the study aimed to: Examine how well informal and formal agricultural structures enable farmers’ participation in agriculture-related imihigo; map all key actors directly or indirectly involved in agriculture value-chain decision-making processes and how they function in farmers’ interests; determine factors that enabled farmers’ participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plans for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4); and scrutinize the level of farmers’ awareness and participation in agriculture policy planning, implementation and evaluation at both national and local levels.

It also sought to identify how policy reforms in agriculture fit to the Rwandan social and political context; identify the agricultural incentives that shape the behaviours of key actors in the agricultural value chain; analyze effectiveness and efficiency of the transparency and accountability mechanisms in place at the national and local level for monitoring agriculture development programs; and assess specific constraints and opportunities for collective efforts to induce change in agriculture sector. Furthermore, the PEA was meant to assess the risk coping mechanisms in place to help farmers deal with pests and diseases, market and weather-related risks in agricultural sector; and to formulate actionable recommendations to mitigate challenges that hamper farmers’ participation in agricultural policy planning, implementation and evaluation.

The study was conducted in Kayonza and Nyanza districts, and adopted a qualitative research design with mixed methods of qualitative data collection which included desk review, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The study conducted FGDs with

Cooperative leaders, Farmers Representatives and mixed farmers. At District and Sector levels, the KIIs were conducted with Sector Agronomists and Veterinarians, the Directors of Planning, the Mayors and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). At national level, the KIIs were conducted with representatives from Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), MINICOM, RCA, World Bank, TI-Rwanda GPSA Management Team, SDA-IRIBA GPSA Management Team, and Imbaraga GPSA Management Team. Both thematic and content analysis methods were used to produce balanced information for appropriate interpretation.

The results of the study revealed that there were different structures in place, through which farmers were channeling their needs and concerns in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the agriculture-related Imihigo. They include cell and village general assemblies; farmer cooperatives; Imbaraga and TI-Rwanda project (through farmers' groups and meetings); *Ndagiye Ndagarutse* (kind of note book in which priority needs are recorded); consultations on planning and evaluation of District Performance-based contracts 'Imihigo'; *Ijwiry'Abahinzi*; working with the Private Sector Federation (PSF); meetings with district stakeholders in the agriculture sector and the forms that TI-Rwanda sends to cooperatives and farmers fill in their priority needs which are then collected at the district level.

The study also established that those structures were effective to a certain extent in channeling farmers' priority needs, providing feedback to farmers and enabling farmers to demand accountability on agriculture-related matters. However, the study also established that informing farmers rather than consulting them; sampling of farmers instead of covering them all; lack of commitment and integrity among some service providers; and inadequate budgetary allocation towards agricultural projects were some of the major limitations to the structures.

The study also established that the motivation which farmers got from realizing increased production when they were encouraged to participate in the Rwanda Dairy Development Project, the fruit and banana projects; the removal of zoning and elimination of buyer monopoly; and the construction of dams and terraces in different sectors in Kayonza were some of the factors that enabled farmers' participation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs for the Strategy for Transformation of Agriculture Phase 4 (PSTA-4).

The findings also showed that farmers were aware of the agriculture policy. However, their levels of participation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy was being affected by the demoralization that was emanating from the fact that some of the farmers' needs were not being considered and were being presented again year after year!

The findings showed that agriculture policy reforms fit in the Rwanda's social and political context in that the reforms promote addressing citizens needs and concerns within the framework of the national decentralization policy. In this regard the planning is participatory and inclusive, and is done in a down-up manner whereby the concerns are first compiled at village/group level after which they are handled at a higher level by the districts in line with the Imihigo cycle.

The study established that many women were not only members but also leaders of farmer groups. On the other hand, fewer youths were found to be involved in agriculture as they lack the land on which to carry out agriculture, and also many of the graduates have a negative attitude towards agriculture. The findings further revealed that in some cases farmers could not influence decision making in agriculture-related matters for example when farmers were supplied with expensive yet faked seeds and pesticides; and when farmers were told to grow certain crops like mulberry when there was no market for it.

The findings further indicated that the encouragement of farmers to grow certain high-value crops like Irish potatoes and the connecting of farmers with buyers even before the they harvest were some of the agriculture incentives that shape the behaviours of key actors in the agriculture value chain. However, the study showed that there were gaps in exercising transparency and accountability mechanisms in the monitoring of agriculture development programs, a factor that led to failure of continuing with the programs and farmers ended up making huge losses.

The findings showed that limited access to the market for farm produce; limited access to land for agricultural production; limited access to finance for agriculture; lack of access to insurance for agriculture; delay in availing selected seeds and fertilizers to farmers; expensive agro-inputs some of which are faked; limited district budget allocation towards agriculture projects; unwillingness of the private sector to invest in agriculture; limited education of farmers by the agronomists and veterinarians; limited access to affordable animal feeds; limited access to alternative grass to replace the Napier grass which got diseased; lack of farmers' involvement in price setting and sometimes informing farmers rather than consulting them were some of the constraints being experienced in implementing agriculture policy reforms.

The findings however indicated that engaging in the growing of fruits and vegetables; the construction of terraces, dams, crop drying and storage facilities; fish aquariums and ponds; government subsidies on some agricultural inputs; and the low taxation of agricultural investments were some of the opportunities which farmers could exploit in collective efforts to induce a change in the agriculture sector.

From the above findings, the study concludes overall that to a certain extent farmers were empowered to participate in collective efforts to induce change in the agriculture sector although there were still several limitations which need to be appropriately addressed if the agriculture policy reforms were to become effectively impactful.

For this reason, the study recommends the identification and bridging of implementation gaps in the Land Use Consolidation Policy; increment in farmers' involvement in price setting for their agricultural products; improvement of quality monitoring and control for agro-inputs; making subsidy on agro-inputs; timely availing of selected seeds and fertilizers to farmers; increment in district budgetary allocation towards agricultural projects; creation of incentives and conducting sensitization to attract private sector for them to invest in agriculture.

The study also recommends the creation of insurance and finance packages specifically for agriculture and enable access by farmers; provision of alternative grass to replace the diseased Napier grass; intensification of farmers' education by agronomists and veterinarians; improvement of coverage of farmers for consultations; consulting farmers over their priority needs rather than simply informing them on what to do; identification and bridging gaps in the implementation of the Artificial Insemination (*gutera intanga*) services and also promoting embryo transplantation (*gutera insoro*).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Agricultural development is key to food security and poverty reduction. In its paper *‘Rwanda: Achieving Food Security, Reducing Poverty, moving up the Value Chain’* (2016, p.1), the World Bank indicates that over the last decade one million people in Rwanda have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty, capitalizing on a rapidly improving agriculture sector in which the International Development Association (IDA) has been proud to make substantial investments.

The paper also highlights that although agriculture is the backbone of the Rwandan economy accounting for 33% of GDP, occupying 79.5% of the labor force, and generating more than 45% of the country’s export revenues—its development has been constrained by population density, hilly terrain, and soil erosion. Since 2001, Rwanda has worked closely with IDA to make on-the-ground investments to achieve food security and increase agricultural productivity.

The results are remarkable. Agricultural production has more than doubled and Rwanda was able to attain food security in 2010, producing enough on its own to not have to rely on imports. Agricultural productivity has increased by more than one-third in ten years, commercialization has expanded allowing rapid export growth, and farmers’ incomes in some cases have risen by 30%. This has helped cut the extreme poverty rate by 14 percentage points. Between 2006 and 2011, poverty was reduced by about 12% owing largely to increased productivity (35%) and commercialization (10%) in the agriculture sector.

Rwanda is using the performance-based contracts referred to as ‘Imihigo’ as one of the means to attain agriculture sector development. The Imihigo have a strong focus on results, which makes it an invaluable tool in the planning, accountability, monitoring and evaluation processes. To turn farmers’ priorities planned in Imihigo into the reality, the entire process should be accompanied by quick and operative service delivery process that promotes accountability of service providers, feedback to citizens and participation of citizens.

In that context, TI-Rwanda designed, with the support of World Bank through its specialized branch in charge of Social Accountability called Global Partnership for Social Accountability “GPSA”, the project: *‘Empowering Farmers at District level through Social Accountability tools to improve District Performance Contracts “Imihigo” in Rwandan Agriculture’*.

The project is being implemented in Kayonza and Nyanza District with around 4047 and 3284 farmers who are direct beneficiaries in Kayonza and Nyanza respectively. The purpose of the project is to help address low citizen participation in policy planning, monitoring, and evaluation of local and national agricultural development plans in the targeted districts. This

project is implemented in partnership with two other local Civil Society Organizations namely Imbaraga Farmers` Association and SDA-Iriba in Kayonza and Nyanza districts respectively.

To achieve the project`s objectives, 4 main strategies were defined and termed as components:

**Component 1:** Increasing farmers` ownership of agricultural projects;

**Component 2:** Deepening and scaling up of the cooperation between CSOs and government officials for insuring efficiency of agricultural projects;

**Component 3:** Sharing knowledge and lesson learned;

**Component 4:** Project Implementation Unit.

To identify the main institutional constraints and opportunities that lead different actors to support social accountability mechanisms in Agriculture, Transparency International Rwanda “TI-RW” conducted a political economy analysis study, the results of which are reflected in this report.

## 1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the analysis was to gather evidence about politically informed social accountability strategies in the Agriculture sector that can lead to meaningful farmers` participation in policy planning, monitoring, and evaluation of local and national agricultural development plans.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Examine how well informal and formal agricultural structures enable farmers` participation in agriculture-related imihigo;
2. Map all key actors directly or indirectly involved in agriculture value-chain decision-making processes and how they function in farmers` interests;
3. Determine factors that enabled farmers` participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plans for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4);
4. Scrutinize the level of farmers` awareness and participation in agriculture policy planning, implementation, and evaluation at both national and local levels
5. Identify how policy reforms in agriculture fit the Rwandan social and political context;
6. Identify the agricultural incentives that shape the behaviors of key actors in the agricultural value chain;
7. Analyze effectiveness and efficiency of the transparency and accountability mechanisms in place at the national and local level for monitoring agriculture development programs;
8. Assess specific constraints and opportunities for collective efforts to induce a change in the agriculture sector;

9. Assess the risk coping mechanisms in place to help farmers deal with pests and diseases, market and weather-related risks in the agricultural sector;
10. Formulate actionable recommendations to mitigate challenges that hamper farmers' participation in agricultural policy planning, implementation, and evaluation.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Study design

The analytical process adopted a qualitative research design. This was used because the subject matter (political economy analysis) is entire qualitative and accordingly, the analytical process applied a combination of different types of qualitative methods of data collection.

#### 2.1.1. Desk review

This data collection method involved analyzing major projects and policy documents. These included the following:

- GPSA project documents (implementation framework including the planning, monitoring, and evaluation dimensions, the regulatory mechanisms, etc.)
- National Agriculture Policy
- National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1) 2017 - 2024
- Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture in Rwanda-phase III,
- National Fertilizer Policy
- National Decentralization Policy
- The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda
- Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture-PSTA4;
- Planning for Health (2018-2024),
- Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy

Besides, the desk review looked at the Baseline Survey report for the Project “Empowering Farmers at District Level through Social Accountability Tools to Improve Performance Contracts in Rwandan Agriculture”, the project’s mid-term evaluation report, and the district imihigo (Nyanza and Kayonza) for the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

In this particular context, the desk review helped in understanding the agriculture policy environment, the project design, project partners, and strategies as well as some of its achievements and challenges particularly with regard to farmers’ participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation of agricultural district imihigo.

### **2.1.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

These were conducted with core community project partners including main farmers (direct project's beneficiaries), farmers' representatives, and farmers' cooperative leaders in the two districts (Nyanza and Kayonza).

### **2.1.3. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

These were conducted with selected actors at both district and national levels. They included district Mayors, sector and district Agronomists, Directors of Planning, and representatives of key institutions such as the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM), TI-Rwanda, SDA-IRIBA, Imbaraga, and the World Bank.

This method helped in examining both policy-makers and practitioners in relation to the dynamics of farmers' participation in agricultural imihigo planning, implementation and evaluation, and how the project contributed or not to increase the said participation. Opportunities, risks, and challenges associated with such participation were also examined.

## **2.2. Study population**

The present Political Economy Analysis is applied to TI-RW project implemented in Nyanza and Kayonza districts. It, therefore, implies that the target population for purposes of the political economy analysis was the farming population in those two districts. However, since there were very many, the analysis used a representative sample of the population.

## **2.3 Sampling plan**

As the analysis was focusing on issues pertaining to political economy in the context of farming, the inclusion of a person to participate as a respondent was deliberately done in principle and practice, making the sampling technique as being purposive. This was done because the analytical team wanted to make sure that only people with relevancy to agriculture in Rwanda are the ones selected and interviewed so that the responses are representative of the farmers' perceptions. For purposes of the analysis, the following categories of respondents were sampled:

- **Mixed farmers**

These included farmers belonging to different categories of agriculture. They were selected for the analytical process because they are the target beneficiaries of the project whose political economy was being analyzed, and therefore they were considered to be a suitable source of the information that would be used in conducting the analysis. 2 FGDs of mixed farmers were conducted (one for Nyanza and one for Kayonza).

- **Farmers' representatives**

These were people representing the different categories of farmers in the Nyanza and Kayonza districts, at various fora. They were selected to be sources of the required information for the analytical process because the people they were representing are the beneficiaries of the project whose political economy was being analyzed and so, their views and opinions would be representing the views and opinions of the people whom they were representing. 2 FGDs of farmer representatives were conducted (one for Nyanza and one for Kayonza).

- **Cooperative leaders**

These were included as respondents because they are the leaders of the farmers who belong to the farmer cooperatives and so, they were considered to be a suitable source of the data that was needed for the analysis, since the cooperatives they lead to participate in the Imihigo planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process. 2 FGDs of cooperative leaders were conducted (one for Nyanza and one for Kayonza).

- **Key Informants sampled**

These were individuals selected to be respondents because of their specific/key roles and responsibilities in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the project whose political economy was being analyzed. They were identified at both the district and national levels. Information from these people was obtained by conducting Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) as follows:

At the district level the Key Informants included:

- 2 Sector and District Agronomists,
- 2 Directors of Planning,
- 2 Mayors and
- 2 Civil Society Organization Representatives

At the national level the Key Informants comprised of:

- 1 RAB representative
- 1 MINAGRI representative
- 1 MINICOM representative
- 1 RCA representative
- 1 World Bank representative
- 1 TI-Rwanda, GPSA Management Team representative
- 1 SDA-IRIBA GPSA Management Team representative
- 1 Imbaraga GPSA Management Team representative

**Table 1: Sample coverage of the study**

LOCATION	CATEGORY	NUMBER
	<i>FGDs</i>	
Kayonza and Nyanza	Cooperative leaders	2
Kayonza and Nyanza	Farmers' representatives	2
Kayonza and Nyanza	Mixed farmers	2
	<i>KIIs</i>	
Kayonza and Nyanza	Sector & District Agronomists	4
Kayonza and Nyanza	Director of Planning	2
Kayonza and Nyanza	Mayor	2
	<i>National level KIIs</i>	
Kigali	RAB representative	1
Kigali	MINAGRI representative	1
Kigali	MINICOM representative	1
Kigali	RCA representative	1
Kigali	World Bank representative	1

Kigali	TI-Rw GPSA Management Team representative	1
Kigali	SDA-IRIBA GPSA Management Team representative	1
Kigali	Imbaraga GPSA Management Team representative	1

## 2.4. Data analysis

The study used qualitative methods of data analysis because the data collected was entirely qualitative. Both thematic and content analysis methods were applied. The data collected from FGDs and KIIs were triangulated with that from desk review. The analytical process was carried out in line with the objectives of the study to obtain interpretations that were relevant to the subject matter under analysis (that is, political economy).

## 2.5. Quality assurance and ethical considerations

Measures were taken to ensure the protection of respondents and abide by standard ethical considerations. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were observed and followed at all stages of the study process, to prevent the transmission of Coronavirus. Similarly, measures were taken to make sure that quality is optimized at the levels of tools development, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

These measures included:

- Review and approval of the study tools and methodology by TI-Rwanda
- Data cleaning prior to analysis
- Seeking informed consent from participants before interviewing them
- Granting confidentiality/anonymity to respondents/participants
- Data triangulation (through the use of various techniques and data sources)
- Review of all the study steps by TI-Rwanda
- Wearing of face masks
- Sanitizing the hands
- Social distancing

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Defining key concepts

#### 3.1.1 Political economy and political economy analysis

The concept ‘political economy’ is complex and has no consensual definition. Its meaning varies not only with the school of thought but also the field in which it is applied. For the purpose of this study, borrowing the definitions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2017, P.3) political economy ***‘refers to social, economic, cultural, and political factors that structure, sustain and transform constellations of public and private actors, and their interests and power relations, over time.***

In the case of the concept of ‘political economy analysis, this refers to the analysis of the power relations and political dynamics in a specific society and how these affect the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs for a targeted change.

As the Political Economy Analysis Guidance Note (2016, p.2) puts it, political economy analysis is about understanding the political dimensions of any context and actively using this information to inform policy and programming’ and ‘involves looking at the dynamic interaction between structures, institutions, and actors (stakeholders), to understand how decisions are made.

As far as the importance of the political economy analysis is concerned, the DFID’s Political Economy Analysis Practice Paper (2009, P.4) argues that it *‘helps us to understand what drives political behavior, how this shapes particular policies and programs, who are the main “winners” and “losers”, and what the implications are for development strategies and programs’.*

Similarly, in its Guidance Note, 8 of the Political Analysis of *‘Strengthening Sector Policies for Better Food Security and Nutrition Results’* (2017, p.3), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recognizes this importance by noting that political economy analysis “aims to situate development interventions within an understanding of the prevailing political and economic structures and processes in society, and to suggest opportunities to address or remove impediments to policy change and improved outcomes”.

In this study, the political economy analysis approach was used to understand the power relations between farmers and structures (both formal and informal) with a particular emphasis on how these relations promote or inhibit farmers’ participation in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of agricultural policies and programs.

### 3.1.2 Accountability and social accountability

In its publication: *'Reflections on Social Accountability: Catalyzing democratic governance to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals'* (2013, p.10), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines the term accountability as “the obligation of power-holders to take responsibility for their actions” and involves “the dynamics of rights and responsibilities that exist between people and the institutions that have an impact on their lives, in particular, the relationship between the duties of the state and the entitlements of citizens”.

Accountability can be vertical or horizontal. While the former is mainly exercised by state structures such as the legislature or the judiciary, the latter form is generally practiced by non-state actors including citizens, civil society organizations, media, private sector, etc. (UNDP, 2013). Horizontal accountability reflects therefore what is often referred to as social accountability.

According to Houtzager and Joshi (2008) cited in UNDP (2013, P.11) the concept of social accountability “refers to a form of civic engagement that builds accountability through the collective efforts of citizens and civil society organizations to hold public officials, service providers, and governments to account for their obligations with responsive efforts”.

For purpose of this study, this definition was borrowed to examine relations between farmers and service providers, cooperative leaders, and policy-makers from both service delivery and accountability viewpoints.

## 3.2 Citizens' participation in policy-making process: Legal and policy frameworks

Rwanda has undertaken deliberate commitments that are meant to enhance citizens' participation in the country's governance. This section reviews the core policy framework in this regard.

### 3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda as revised in 2015

Citizen participation is a concept that is enshrined in the Constitution of Rwanda. Article 27 provides for the right to participate in government and public services and programmes. It stipulates that “All Rwandans have the right to participate in the Government of the country, either directly or through their freely chosen representatives, in accordance with the law”.

Citizen participation is not only a right but also a duty. The duty aspect is provided for by Article 48 Paragraph 2; the article states that “All Rwandans have the duty to participate in the development of the country through their dedication to work, safeguarding peace, democracy, equality, and social justice as well as to participate in the defense of their country”.

Thus the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda provides a rights and duties-based approach to empowering citizens for their participation in the policy-making process in the country.

### 3.2.2 National Decentralization Policy

The National Decentralization Policy emphasizes citizen participation. In its revised version (Ministry of Local Government, 2012, P.8), it is clearly stated that the policy overall goal is *“to deepen and sustain grassroots-based democratic governance and promote equitable local development by enhancing citizen participation and strengthening the local government system while maintaining effective functional and mutually accountable linkages between Central and Local Government entities”*.

This government’s commitment is more highlighted in the following policy specific objective: *“To enhance and sustain citizens’ participation in initiating, making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating decisions and plans that affect them by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government and lower levels, and ensuring that all levels have adequate capacities and motivations to promote genuine participation”*.

The issue of empowering farmers through citizen participation in policy planning is reflected in one of the Decentralization Policy’s implementation guidelines: *“Promoting Integrated Citizen-centered Local and National Development Planning”*.

This is further emphasized by the observation which states that: *“the GoR recognizes Area-based Planning as an effective way of identifying and responding to unique local development challenges, and initiatives to explore unique development potentials of different localities shall be encouraged, promoted and supported”*.

Therefore, basing on the above-adduced evidence, it is clear and obvious that the National Decentralization Policy offers a legal and policy framework for citizen participation in policy-making in Rwanda.

### 3.2.3 National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017 – 2024

According to the Government of Rwanda (2017), following the re-election of H.E. Paul Kagame as the President of Rwanda in 2017, his government adopted a 7-year programme termed “National Strategy for Transformation (NST1)”. This programme encompasses several government commitments including that pertaining to citizen participation in the country’s governance.

Notably, there are three key areas under the “Transformational Governance Pillar” that are worth mentioning:

- The second objective of the said pillar is to “Strengthen partnerships between Government, private sector, citizens, NGOs, CSOs and FBOs to fast-track national development and people-centred prosperity” (p.34),
- The 6<sup>th</sup> priority area under the same pillar relates to “increase citizens’ participation, engagement and partnerships in development” (p.38)
- Citizen participation is also stressed in one of the key strategic interventions which is about “Reinforcing mechanisms at decentralized levels for citizens particularly women and youth to effectively contribute to districts planning and prioritization.” (p.38)

Besides the aforementioned political commitments, citizen participation is specifically reflected in the “Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy” as described below.

### 3.2.4 Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources Report (2019), the Government of Rwanda adopted this strategy in April 2019. It is the first of its kind and “builds on the work of the previous gender-specific sector strategy developed in 2010” (p.xiii). Its development was induced by the need to “support the implementation of the Fourth Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4) and the National Agriculture Policy” (p.xii).

The Strategy Vision is that “there is increased and sustainable productivity in the agriculture sector for healthy and wealthy women, men and youth” (p.38).

This strategy recognizes the fact that both youth and women are the majority of the Rwandan population which should not be left behind in a sector that largely drives the Rwandan economy. In this regard, the strategy aims to “ensure that women and youth “have increased knowledge and access to services, to participate equally in all parts of the value chain, and to work in collaboration with men to improve their agricultural productivity and economic empowerment” (p.38).

This strategy is therefore an instrumental tool and policy framework of citizen participation in the agriculture sector from youth and gender perspectives. If well applied, this strategy has the potential to effectively contribute to filling the gender and youth gap in this sector and thus reduce the employment and development gap from the same viewpoints.

### 3.3 Existing structures for farmers' participation in agriculture-related imihigo

In order to concretize its political commitment to participatory governance at large and citizen participation, in particular, the Government of Rwanda put in place some citizen participation avenues. Never Again Rwanda & Interpeace (2016) identified major citizen participation channels which are in two categories: State-sanctioned channels and non-state-sanctioned channels.

Major state-sanctioned avenues include the Parliament, National Umushyikirano Council, Presidential outreach visits, Community work (Umuganda), Local councils (Inama Njyanama), local assemblies (Inteko z'Abaturage), National Youth Council, National Women Council, Imihigo (Performance-based Contracts), and Ubudehe among others (p.25-35).

As far as non-state participation channels are concerned, Never Again Rwanda & Interpeace (2016) mentioned the media and various Civil Society Organizations (p.35-36).

All the above avenues are meant to boost citizens' voices at large, including those of farmers. A study conducted by International Alert & Profemmes Twese Hamwe (2018) revealed that "major mechanisms for farmers' participation consist of meetings at different administration levels, and the use of farmer promoters and Farmers Field School (FFS) facilitators, participation into Umuganda, and other community-level meetings" (p.5).

The same study highlights the role of citizens' assemblies (Inteko z'Abaturage) in this regard. The study also observed that those assemblies "appear to be the best, although they take various topics at once, which limits their effectiveness as far as citizen participation is concerned" (p.5).

Moreover, it is worth noting that farmers are also grouped in cooperatives, associations, and farmer groups known as 'Twigire Muhinzi' (Transparency International Rwanda, 2019; International Alert Rwanda & Profemmes/Twese Hamwe, 2018) and these are other channels/mechanisms through which farmers' participation is provided for.

The above account, therefore, elaborates that there exist several mechanisms for farmers' participation in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of agricultural policies and programmes in the Republic of Rwanda.

### 3.4 Major policies for agricultural transformation in Rwanda

This section reviews briefly selected policies that are meant to boost agricultural transformation in Rwanda. For the purpose of this political economy analysis, an emphasis is put on the National Agriculture Policy, National Fertilizer Policy, Crop Intensification Programme (CIP), and National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1).

#### 3.4.1 The National Agriculture Policy

In 2018, the Government of Rwanda revised the 2004 National Agriculture Policy and adopted a new one. The mission of the updated National Agriculture Policy is *“to ensure food and nutrition security of Rwandans by using modern agribusiness technologies, professionalizing farmers in terms of production, commercialization of the outputs, and the creation of a competitive agricultural sector”* (p.13). This mission therefore implicitly emphasizes the role of farmers as both the target group and partners to the implementation of the policy.

The policy pursues four objectives as follows (p.13):

- Increased contribution to wealth creation;
- Economic opportunities and prosperity - jobs and poverty alleviation;
- Improved food security and nutrition;
- Increased resilience and sustainability.

The policy document highlights that it provides “adequate guidance for strategies and subsidiary policies relevant for the agricultural sector in light of the newly formulated Vision 2050 and NST 1”. Moreover, the policy is aligned with the on-going Decentralisation Policy and with key government economic strategies, particularly the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 4) (Republic of Rwanda (2018).

#### 3.4.2 National Fertilizer Policy

The National Fertilizer Policy is the first of its kind and was adopted in June 2014. The Policy vision is to *“have a functional and efficient private sector-led fertilizer sector that is responsive of farmers’ needs and the environment”* (p.5). Its mission is to *“have a competitive and profitable fertilizer sector that ensures fertilizer access and affordability at the farm gate promptly creating acceptable fertilizer use by farmers for increased and sustainable agricultural productivity and farm incomes”* (p.5).

The policy’s main goal is *“to contribute to increased agricultural productivity, economic returns and incomes through increased and sustainable access and use of fertilizers”* (p.5). It pursues 10 specific objectives, one of which is to “establish incentives that permit increased access and use

of fertilizers at affordable rates by all the farmers” (p.5). These incentives include agriculture finance, insurance, and subsidies among others.

### **3.4.3 Crop Intensification Program (CIP)**

The Crop Intensification Program (CIP) started in September 2007 as a pilot program implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources to attain the goal of increasing agricultural productivity under PSTA II. The CIP aims to accomplish this goal by significantly increasing the production of food crops across the country. It focuses on eight priority crops namely maize, rice, wheat, beans, soybean, cassava, Irish potato, and banana (IRDP, 2018, p.13).

The CIP encompasses four priority areas (IRDP, 2018, P.13):

1. Distribution of improved inputs
2. Land use consolidation
3. Proximity extension services, and
4. Post-harvest handling and storage

The CIP towards crops production mainly involves 5 targets:

1. Sustainable management of natural resources, water and soil husbandry
2. Marshland development
3. Irrigation development
4. Supply and use of agricultural inputs
5. Food and nutrition security and vulnerability management

According to a study conducted by IRDP (2018), interviewed farmers commended the CIP for its impact on their livelihoods. The majority of respondents suggested that this programme contributed to increasing agricultural productivity which, in turn, helped them to buy agriculture inputs (89.2%), attain household food security and to buy basic needs (75.3%), construct and rehabilitate houses (67.2%), and to buy other land and livestock (79.9%) (p.10).

### **3.4.4 National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) 2017 – 2024**

Agriculture is a key driver of Rwanda’s economy and therefore occupies an important place in the NST1. The strategy is aimed at transforming agriculture in Rwanda through its Economic Transformation pillar which includes agriculture and livestock among its seven priority areas. It seeks to modernize these two sectors through increasing their quality, productivity, and production (priority area 6) and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources (priority area 7) (Government of Rwanda, 2017).

### 3.4.5 Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA-4) 2018 – 2024

Rwanda's Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation phase 4 (PSTA 4) outlines priority investments in agriculture for the period 2018-2024. It is the implementation plan of the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) and represents the agriculture sector's strategic document under Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation.

The PSTA 4 builds on the achievements of the PSTA 3, while envisaging a transformation of agriculture from a subsistence sector to a knowledge-based value-creating sector, that contributes to the national economy and ensures food and nutrition security. Throughout the PSTA 4 there is a strong focus on private investments, as it recognizes that agriculture growth must be driven by investments of private actors. The PSTA 4, therefore, emphasizes a stronger role of the private sector, including farmers, with the government becoming a market enabler rather than a market actor.

For example, direct government involvement in production, processing, and marketing will be reduced. Besides creating an enabling environment, the government will provide public goods, otherwise undersupplied by the private sector, including infrastructure, research, social protection, and emergency response.

The PSTA-4 as a strategy for agriculture transformation in Rwanda focuses on four priority areas:

**Priority Area 1: Innovation and Extension** is the knowledge base for Priority Area 2 and 3. The focus is to improve agronomic knowledge and technology in terms of basic research and innovation, development of good extension services, as well as knowledge and information further down the value chain.

**Priority Area 2: Productivity and Resilience.** The aim of this is to increase the production of crops and animal resources. PSTA 4 will see increased attention to ensuring that production is nutrition-sensitive, sustainable, and resilient. Priority Area 2 feeds the value chains in Priority Area 3.

**Priority Area 3: Inclusive markets and value addition** improves markets and linkages between production and processing. This includes key input markets such as fertilizers, insurance, and finance as well as upstream activities such as aggregation, promotion of value addition, market infrastructure, and export readiness.

**Priority Area 4: Enabling Environment & Responsive Institutions** provides the regulatory framework and defines public sector involvement. PSTA 4 aims to improve evidence-based policymaking through better collection and handling of information and enhanced capacity for analysis and policy development, and to improve the planning process, particularly by addressing coordination between stakeholders.

Thus the consideration of the above-listed priority areas is instrumental in the political analysis because since they are determinants of agriculture sector development, it is very important to make a study of how the farmers participated and to what extent, in order to be able to determine whether farmers' empowerment (through the Imihigo) has been impactful or not.

**Table 2: Linkage between PSTA-4 priority areas and NST-1 pillars:**

NST Pillar 1: Economic transformation	NST Pillar 2: Social transformation
<p><b>Priority Area 4: Attain a Structural Shift in the Export Base to High-value Goods.</b> By promoting production, value addition and marketing of agricultural export products</p>	<p><b>Priority Area 1: Enhancing Graduation from Poverty and Extreme Poverty and Promoting Resilience.</b> By increasing production and incomes for farmers and providing productive assets (i.e. Girinka project)</p>
<p><b>Priority Area 6: Modernize and Increase the Productivity of Agriculture and Livestock.</b> This objective is at the core of all PSTA 4 interventions.</p>	<p><b>Priority Area 2: Eradicating Malnutrition.</b> By promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture and food security.</p>

Source: Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture 2018 – 2024

**Table 3: Link between PSTA-4 Priority Areas and National Agriculture Policy Pillars**

PSTA-4 PRIORITY AREAS	NATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY PILLARS (P)			
	P1: Productivity and Sustainability	P2: Inclusive Markets and Off-Farm Opportunities	P3: Technology Upgrading and Skills Development	P4: Enabling Environment and Responsive Institutions
<b>PA 1: Innovation and Extension</b>	- Innovation Fund and Mechanization - Flexible extension models		- Skills development - Youth and women in agribusiness	
<b>PA 2: Inclusive Markets and Value Chains</b>	Value Chain Development: market info, linkages, PPD, infrastructure, standards, marketing	Strategic Grain reserve enhanced	Farmer associations	

<b>PA3: Productivity and Resilience</b>	Inputs, Irrigation, land husbandry, Livestock Masterplan Implementation	Climate-Smart Agriculture; Asset transfers for social protection & Small-scale irrigation	Productivity	
<b>PA 4: Enabling Environment and Responsive Institutions</b>	PPPs with the private sector for commercialization and transformation			Market Enabler - Improved capacity for policy analysis and statistics - Joint planning enhanced

Source: Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture 2018 – 2024

### 3.5 Actual farmers’ participation in agricultural policy and imihigo formulation, implementation and evaluation

Rwanda has made tremendous progress in enhancing participatory governance, especially with regard to establishing legal, political, and institutional frameworks. According to the 2018 Rwanda Governance Scorecard (Rwanda Governance Board, 2018a), the pillar of participation and inclusiveness scored 76.79% (P.9). However, the indicator relating to citizen participation scored 65.63% which is among the least performing of all the assessed indicators and pillars (P.11).

Other government assessments have also shown a limited level of citizen participation especially in the formulation and evaluation of policies, programmes and imihigo (Never Again Rwanda & Interpeace, 2016; Rwanda Governance Board, 2018b).

As far as participation in agriculture in Rwanda is concerned, there is a limited body of knowledge about it. According to the GPSA Project Newsletter Issue No. 2, the baseline study conducted in February 2018 by TI-Rwanda under the GPSA Project showed that with regard to priorities formulated by farmers (quantity) and submitted to the farmers’ forum and eventually considered in the district Imihigo, no priorities had been formulated by farmers (quantity) and submitted to the farmers’ forum/cooperatives; no priorities submitted by cooperatives/forums to the district authorities; and no farmers’ priorities submitted to district/sector authorities and included in District/sector imihigo.

Another study conducted by International Alert & Profemmes Twese Hamwe (2018) in Bugesera, Huye and Nyamagabe Districts revealed that *“Farmers’ participation in the planning of agricultural Imihigo targets is limited to the planning of crop coverage (cultivated area, types*

*of priority crops, seeds and fertilizers) through the NKUNGANIRE programme, and they have limited participation in other areas of agriculture, such as erosion control, irrigation, mechanization and agroforestry” (p.5).*

Nevertheless, it appears that when both citizens and leaders are empowered, citizen participation can become more real and more impactful. A recent mid-term evaluation of the Project “Empowering Farmers at District level through Social Accountability to improve District Performance Contracts “Imihigo” in Rwanda Agriculture, GPSA”, implemented by Transparency International Rwanda in Kayonza and Nyanza Districts, showed an increase in many regards.

That qualitative evaluation revealed an increment in farmers’ influencing capacity. In this regard, it was found that “during the 2018/2019 fiscal year, the priorities of farmers in Nyanza district were integrated at 80% level” (Transparency International Rwanda, 2019, p.33).

In a similar vein, a result of influencing imihigo, “the project improved the farming practices among farmers, as the latter use of fertilizers in the crop production process and their willingness to integrate profitability computations in their farming ventures” (p.33). Moreover, there was an increase of agricultural production “as a result of using fertilizers and adopting recommended post-harvest handling measures” (p.34).

Such an increase in agricultural production has in turn improved the food security among the target farmers and districts. Although the said evaluation was qualitative and was not therefore able to capture the changes in quantitative terms, it provides evidence that effective citizen participation in agriculture can be a real ingredient of transformation in agriculture.

### 3.6 Roles and responsibilities of partners in the chain of agriculture governance

The partners in the chain of agriculture governance consist of the central government; the local governments; the farmer groups; the individual farmers themselves and the Civil Society Organizations. The Central government operates at a national level; local governments at the district level, farmer groups at the area level, and individual farmers at the household level. The CSOs coordinate their activities at different levels depending on the particular role being played.

The central government is represented by the Cabinet, the local governments by their district administrations, the farmer groups by their respective leaderships, and the Civil Society Organizations by their respective administrations. All partners play their roles within the service delivery framework of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI).

## Partners and their respective roles and responsibilities

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- Promoting citizens' participation in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agriculture-related policies and strategies
- Promoting citizens' participation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agriculture related programs and projects
- Making budget allocation for the agriculture sector
- Creating enabling environment and responsive institutions for agriculture sector development

### DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Guiding the implementation of the Imihigo cycle
- Collecting citizens' agriculture needs from lower governance levels
- Analysing alignment of Imihigo with citizens' needs
- Translation of the Imihigo and providing feedback to farmers
- Facilitating participatory selection of agriculture projects from Imihigo
- Budget allocation to finance the selected agriculture projects
- Technical support to farmers in the implementation of agriculture projects
- Material support to farmers in the implementation of agriculture projects
- Infrastructure development for supporting the agriculture sector
- Facilitating participatory monitoring and evaluation of the selected agriculture projects

### FARMER GROUPS

- Mobilizing farmers to participate in the Imihigo planning sessions
- Collecting farmers' needs and forward them to district for consideration
- Participation in the selection of agriculture projects from the Imihigo
- Demanding for feedback and accountability on behalf of farmers regarding their agriculture related concerns
- Participation in the monitoring and evaluation of the Imihigo

INDIVI-  
DUAL  
FARMERS

- Attending the Imihigo planning sessions
- Voicing out agriculture needs during the Imihigo sessions
- Demanding for feedback and accountability regarding agriculture concerns
- Participating in the selection of agriculture projects from the Imihigo
- Implementing farmer-level activities of the selected projects

CIVIL  
SOCIETY  
ORGANI-  
ZATIONS

- Promoting citizens' participation in the Imihigo cycle
- Promoting transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Imihigo
- Participating in the monitoring and evaluation of agricultural projects selected from Imihigo

## 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter discusses how the informal and formal agricultural structures enabled farmers' participation in agriculture-related imihigo, examines enabling factors for farmers' participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4). It also analyzed the level of farmers' awareness and participation in agriculture policy planning, implementation, and evaluation at both national and local levels, and how policy reforms in agriculture fit to the Rwandan social and political context and the effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms in place at the national and local level for monitoring agriculture development programs.

### 4.1 Agricultural structures and their roles in enabling farmers' participation in agriculture-related Imihigo

Regarding this aspect, it is established that farmers use a variety of avenues to voice their needs and concerns in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the agricultural Imihigo. These avenues include Cell and village general assemblies; farmer cooperatives; Imbaraga and TI-Rwanda project (through farmers' groups and meetings); *Ndagiye Ndagarutse* (kind of notebook in which priority needs are recorded); consultations on planning and evaluation of District Performance-based contracts 'Imihigo'; *Ijwi ry'Abahinzi*; working with the Private Sector Federation (PSF); meetings with district stakeholders in the agriculture sector and the forms that TI-Rwanda sends to cooperatives and farmers fill in their priority needs which are then collected at the district level.

These structures were established in the framework of observing the provision of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda which provides a rights and duties-based approach to empowering citizens for their participation in the policy-making process in the country. They are also consistent with the National Decentralization Policy *whereby* citizen participation is put forward to deepen and sustain grassroots-based democratic governance and promote equitable local development.

The grassroots structures are further stressed in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) under the "Transformational Governance Pillar" which aims to strengthen partnerships between Government, private sector, citizens, NGOs, CSOs and FBOs to fast-track national development and people-centred prosperity.

According to Ravi Kumar (2015), the existence of these avenues are a reflection of the principles of communication for good governance which include listening (in this case to the farmers in order to capture their concerns); being citizen-centric (focusing on citizens' interests

in line with national development objectives); prioritization and being impactful (when communicating policy objectives); and building coalitions (not only with CSOs, but also with average citizens who can potentially help to promote and accomplish policy objectives among the communities.

This statement is supported by Transparency International Rwanda's staff under the GPSA project who explained: ***“The GPSA Project has been very fruitful in embracing the participation of farmers in the whole decision-making process at the district level in Nyanza and Kayanza. This is due to the channels established including the groups of farmers who are brought together to select their priority needs that are submitted to the district. At this juncture, we have seen so many achievements concerning the new projects and new ways of engaging farmers initiated by the districts. Through community debates conducted under this project, farmers have been able to raise issues that deter the achievements of their goals. For instance, among the issues sorted out include the reduction of the land lease fees in Nyanza where farmers lamented that the district council had contradicted the presidential order No 25/01 of 09/07/2012 establishing the list of fees and other charges levied by decentralized entities and determining their thresholds. As a result, the district reduced the tax rate in marshlands to Rwf4,000 from Rwf100.000 per ha. Moreover, through advocacy provided under this project, there are instances of farmers who have been able to get fertilizers and selected seeds on time while they used to delay”.***

The role of agricultural structures in enabling farmers' participation in agriculture-related Imihigo was also confirmed by an official from the World Bank who was interviewed: ***“We have seen farmers who are willing to go to cooperatives. This setup provides a good communication channel directly between farmers and the officials. Even when there are complaints, it becomes easy to bring them on board. The other channel is related to Performance contract related activities. The activity is contributing and making sure that farmers are participating in the planning”. There are many other means that ease the communication with farmers. Those include Umuganda and Inteko z'Abaturage (cell and village general assemblies).***

The existence of these structures proves that citizens have in place a variety of avenues through which they could voice out their needs and concerns to be worked on. The local governments in conjunction with farmer group leaderships and TI-Rwanda through the GPSA project did a commendable job of operationalizing those structures so that citizens could appropriately use and benefit from them in order to achieve the country's agriculture sector development goals. The section below analyses how the said avenues are used to channeling farmers needs in the concerned agricultural structures, whether these channels are used to provide feedback on

farmers concerns and the extent to which these forums enable to demand accountability on agriculture related matters.

#### **4.1.1 Effectiveness of the structures in channeling farmers' priority needs and concerns**

Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process; it includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision; it promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers; and seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision ((IAP2, 2011) . The communication of farmers needs in the existing agriculture avenues is evidenced by the different quotes that were captured during the FGDs and KIIs with participants.

***Farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “Our ideas are raised through Village and cell general assemblies. We also have groups introduced by Imbaraga and cooperatives in which we raise our voices and needs”.***

***Farmers' representative in Nyanza District: “Our voices are heard. The whole process of selecting farmers' priority needs starts at the cooperative and farmers' groups level. The needs are collected at the sector level and then at the district level”.***

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “Through village and cell general assemblies, all citizens are consulted in the planning of the district. Therefore, farmers' views are given a high value. This is also done during the consultations on planning and evaluation of the district's performance contracts “Imihigo”. The district, sector, and cell staff also perpetually visit cooperatives of farmers and receive their ideas. Those officials include the Social Economic and Development Officer, Agronomists, Veterinaries and others”.***

***A Cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: “In our district, we have a kind of notebook known as “Ndagiye Ndagarutse” (I'm gone and I'm back). Through this special channel, farmers' needs are recorded and at a certain time, leaders come back to present to us what needs were taken into consideration and implemented and why others were not”.***

***A Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: “Ndagiye Ndagarutse is the channel introduced by Imbaraga through TI-RW project. Through it, farmers are brought together to select the priority needs at the sector level and are taken to the district level. It is like a notebook in which we write down all farmers' needs and are highly valued because this channel helps to get feedback from the district”.***

***JADF – Kayonza District: “The district does have different partners involved in agriculture but we usually work closely with Ijwi ry’Abahinzi and Imbaraga. Through this channel, the district meets farmers and receives their priority needs. The Director of planning, Unit of Agriculture and JADF are always present in those meetings in which farmers are consulted”. We also work with the Private Sector Federation (PSF) because they are directly involved in agriculture. They also contribute to our activities like Girinka and have donated so many cows”.***

***A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “Before the start of T-RW project, farmers were not consulted in the decision making because their views were not heard. Now, things are not implemented without the consent of all participation of farmers. This is why the current channels allow us to fully participate”.***

The above testimonies indicate that to a certain extent farmer groups and cooperatives have facilitated the farmers to present their needs and they are heard. At the same time, they reveal that local government structures are promoting citizens’ participation in decision making of agriculture related matters. The fact that farmers’ voices are heard is a good gesture aligning with the principles and characteristics of good governance (Ravi Kumar, 2015; UK Essays, 2018 and International Association for Public Participation, 2011) which in this case includes listening, being citizen-centric, being responsive and accountable to the citizens.

Additionally, these findings show that CSOs were actively engaged in promoting citizen participation in decision making with regard to the farmers’ agriculture needs. This is also highlighted by the Canadian Institute of Governance (1998) in that ‘*Voluntary and non-government organizations are valuable agents for informing participants and facilitating dialogue between government and citizens*”.

#### **4.1.2 Effectiveness of the structures in providing feedback to farmers**

It is essential to provide feedback to any citizens complaint as it helps to understand what is working well or whether changes need to be made. Feedback mechanisms are very instrumental to foster transparency and accountability in a given public domain. This aligns with the World Governance Indicator (WGI) and African Development Bank (ADB) theory of good governance which emphasizes on the existence of transparency and accountability, as highlighted by Rajamanickam Srinivasan (2013). According to the latter, those two aspects of good governance can be attained when there is adequate citizens’ participation coupled with the willingness of the public service to provide feedback to the citizens.

Similarly, as the global monitoring report (UNESCO, 2016) puts it, in accountable governments, citizens are provided with a platform to report their complaints and grievances that will lead to an immediate and appropriate government response or feedback. Although, this reflects the

government's will and determination to address the problems raised by the people. This also reduces the poor service that often characterizes government officials closer to farmers.

Therefore, this study established that the same structures used in channeling farmers' priority needs and concerns are also used in providing feedback to them. This is evidenced by the following testimonies.

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “When the results of the performance contracts “Imihigo” are released at the national level, the district officials sometimes come to farmers especially during the cell general assemblies and explain to us why they got for instance poor score and what should be done to increase the performance”.***

***A cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: “Through the Ndagiye Ndagarutse, farmers' needs are recorded and at a certain time, leaders come back to present to us what needs were taken into consideration and implemented and why others were not.***

***Director of the Domestic Trade Unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM): “We normally have 3739 as a hotline used by citizens to report to us. There are also Directors of Business and Executive Units at every district and they help to address farmers' issues. Furthermore, we have uploaded the list of all staff on our website so that citizens can easily reach the ministry. We receive so many calls of people who tell us that they got our contacts from the website. All these avenues are there to address complaints and provide necessary feedback on farmers queries”.***

This finding is an indication of the principles of transparency and accountability at the various levels in the chain of agriculture governance. The manner of handling citizens' concerns using feedback channels provides satisfaction to farmers in regard to quality of public service delivery and gives them a chance to re-shape their focuses when presenting their needs for the following year. Besides, this model strengthens mutual understanding and spirit of concerted efforts between citizens and the public servants in the context of national development. Both parties feel at ease in working with one another, and this enhances the synergies between the two.

#### **4.1.3 Effectiveness of structures in enabling farmers to demand accountability on agriculture-related matters**

The study showed that the structures/channels through which farmers voice their needs and concerns were effective to a certain extent in enabling the farmers to demand accountability on agriculture-related matters, as evidenced by the following quotes from respondents:

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “The channels through which we raise our voices are very effective. This is because we are given space to critique and officials implement what we propose. Recently, we reported that the executive secretary of the cell had embezzled the money for ‘mituelle de sante’ and was dismissed”.***

***A farmer in Rwinkwavu – Kayonza: “In Rwinkwavu, we had only one businessman who was allowed to buy our products. During the visit of TI-RW and media practitioners, we raised this issue and later on the problem of monopoly was settled and we’ve been able to attract so many other buyers. The price of rice long and short-grain rice rose from 230 and 220Rwf to 240 and 230Rwf respectively”.***

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “In the season of 2019 B, the selected seeds sent to farmers through agro-dealers were very bad. We were negatively affected because we did not get good produce. However, after claiming to the district through the existing channels of communication, we got good seeds and we increased our production in this season”.***

It is evident from the above findings that partners at the different levels in the chain of agriculture governance, to a certain extent fulfilled their role of being accountable to the people they serve, for example in the case of Nyamirama where a secretary allegedly had embezzled funds and was dismissed when citizens raised their concern over the issue. Moreover, the case of Rwinkwavu whereby only one businessman had been allowed to buy farmers’ production and when farmers raised concern over that issue the monopoly was ended and farmers attracted so many other buyers and this resulted in increase in the price of their produce which in turn enabled them to get more profit. Another example is that in Nyamirama whereby during season B of 2019 the selected seeds that were sent to farmers were very bad and when farmers raised concern over that issue better seeds were sent to them and that time their production levels increased. All these issues indicate that the channels used by the farmers to present their concerns were effective since their concerns were addressed and farmers got satisfied with making improved outcomes of their agricultural business.

#### **4.1.4 Major limitations in relation to the agricultural structures**

The study ought to reveal some loopholes with regard to issues of integrity and transparency when dealing with farmers’ needs, as indicated by participants:

***A farmer in Kabarondo – Kayonza: “In our sector, the representatives of farmers were forced to sign for a loan and the agreement had been written in English. When the loan came, it went to the account of the investor/businessman, and the farmers were told that the money was used to pay insurance. When the summer came, it affected our production and farmers were at a loss. However, the insurance did not pay us and we are now in Kigali struggling in courts”.***

The study also established that there was poor customer care among agro-dealers as evidenced by the following quote:

***A farmer in Gahini – Kayonza: “In our sector, we do experience poor service among agro-dealers. When we approach them in the evening, they sometimes say that they have closed while as farmers we usually get time in the evening”.***

In some cases, farmers were not having the opportunity to use existing channels or avenues to express their priority needs because during the cell and village assemblies/meetings, the Officials would just **inform instead of consulting** the farmers. ***A farmer in Busasamana – Nyanza District: “Through cell and village assemblies, we are only informed about what should be done. We are only informed what the district vowed to achieve in the performance contracts “Imihigo” and we are told what we should do to implement what the district wants”.***

***A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “They come and inform us what we should do so that we can achieve what the district or sector set as goals. They (officials) do not ask for our point of view”. The challenge we face in raising our voices is that the district announces that it consulted all citizens while officials only consulted a few people in a few villages of the district. They do not come in all cells but they only take a small sample of cooperatives in some cells”.***

As discussed earlier, the best way to engage citizens for national development is to listen to their concerns to be able to make informed decisions in the planning process. Informing the farmers what they are supposed to do instead of consulting them, is dealing with perceived rather than their felt needs and concerns. Additionally, the engagement process ought to be citizen-centric implying that it should serve the best interests of the citizens. Therefore, when the farmers are not consulted and are simply told what to do, there is the likelihood that the planned interventions will not effectively address their needs.

Contrary to this situation, the appropriate way should consider being inclusive so that all farmers are consulted (through their various levels of organizations or groups. Interacting with only some of them and leaving the others is likely to collect views and opinions which are not necessarily representative of the entire farming fraternity. The OECD (2009) points out in its guiding principles for open and inclusive policy making that the citizen's engagement process ought to be inclusive such that a variety of people (in this case the farmers) are consulted; and that politicians, ministers, senior managers, etc. (the public service providers) should commit themselves to open and inclusive policymaking.

## 4.2 Factors that enabled farmers' participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4)

This study examined factors behind farmers' benefits that accrued thereof when the transformations took place. For example, farmers said that the transformations had made it possible to increase on production of milk, fruits, and bananas as evidenced by participants of the study:

- Policy reforms in agriculture vis-à-vis the Rwandan social and political context

The study showed that compared to the past, policy reforms now considerably reflect on the wishes of citizens and are easily implemented. The following fact findings enlighten qualitative data with evidences from farmers who participated in the study.

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “There is a project called Rwanda Dairy Development Project (RDDP) that taught farmers how to take care of cows and feed them appropriate grass. This helped farmers to increase milk production”.***

***A cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: “There has been a tangible transformation in keeping modern cows and it led to the increase of milk production due to modern breeding. We used to keep our cattle in a traditional way, but we have been able to get cows that helped to increase the milk production and fertilizer. We easily access medicines and have got milk collection centers and there is one dairy under construction today”.***

***A farmer in Gahini – Kayonza: “Through agricultural transformation made by the government, we were taught how to cultivate modern banana and we've increased our production”.***

***A farmer in Mukarange – Kayonza: “Through the project initiated by the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), we were taught and sensitized to cultivate fruits. As of now, our farming group is already exporting fruits cultivated in Kayonza district”.***

***A farmer in Kabarondo – Kayonza: “There are many dams and terraces being constructed in different sectors of Kayonza. After the construction of those terraces, farmers are going to be helped to cultivate fruits at over 200ha in Kabarondo and 800ha in Murama Sector. We believe this will help increase the income we get through agriculture”.***

As emerged from the study, the public service exhibited effectiveness and efficiency principles of good governance which led to positive change in as far as the agriculture sector is concerned. As highlighted by UK Essays (2018), Good governance is all about “ *processes and institutions to produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal*”.

Moreover, the above findings reflect the effectiveness of the implementation of Government of Rwanda agriculture policies and strategies such as the PSTA 4 which envisages a transformation of agriculture from a subsistence sector to a knowledge-based value-creating sector, that contributes to the national economy. This strategy emphasizes a stronger role of the private sector, including farmers, with the government becoming a market enabler rather than a market actor.

Similarly, this study reveals that due to some policy reforms agriculture productivity has increased remarkably. Indeed, the 2004 National Agriculture Policy revised in 2018, has a core mission to ensure food and nutrition security of Rwandans by using modern agribusiness technologies, professionalizing farmers in terms of production, commercialization of the outputs, and the creation of a competitive agricultural sector. The mission therefore implicitly emphasizes the role of farmers as both the target group and partners to the implementation of the policy.

The study further established that previously there was zoning and monopoly of manufacturers and because of this, farmers could not bargain prices of farm inputs and those of their farm products. But due to the transformations, all these ended and farmers are experiencing a better situation as highlighted in the following quote pieces of evidence:

***A cooperative leader in Kayonza: “Farmers have been lamenting that they are only allowed to bargain with few manufacturers. Our voice has been heard and we have been able to attract so many manufacturers and it created competition among them. As a result of the end of that zoning and monopoly, the price of our agricultural production has increased and we get paid on time than before”.***

Listening to the voice of the farmers and addressing their marketing needs was a good gesture of public governance, in line with the assertion by Ravi Kumar (2015) that listening is an important aspect of problem-solving as it informs public policy and helps to avoid policy implementation blunders. The following quotes provide evidences to that effect:

An officer from RAB in the Department of Land Husbandry and Irrigation Research and Technology Transfer explained: ***“We make sure that the formulation of any policy is derived from farmers’ needs. This is why we try to collect their views and needs before the start of the season. We collect their needs at sector level and share them with RAB and are also sent to***

*the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI). Citizens are more involved in the whole process. If we find any interesting proposal, we go back to the field and consult them and the district on what they think can be a solution to the problem identified and then we formulate and submit a policy. For instance, we formulated a policy concerning government subsidy on irrigation and it started from Kirehe District”.*

He further clarified: *“We have irrigation and mechanization week in which we explain to citizens more about irrigation and mechanization. We also have agriculture shop and make mobilization through direct meetings with farmers or through media. We have Tera Intambwe Muhinzi show and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Radio Huguka and Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA). The work is well done but we vow to put in place a systematic feedback mechanism. When we go to the field, farmers give us a good feedback that they are happy. For instance, they are happy with HERECO and others that perpetually help farmers in their work”.*

*A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “The current situation of how farmers are consulted in planning does play a great role in the implementation of reforms. Recently, things were planned at the central level and it could be difficult to be applicable. For instance, because the reforms hinge on the wishes of citizens, the government is building a dairy in Nyamirama sector and it was difficult to easily get market in the past”.*

*A cooperative leader in Kayonza: “Previously, some policies were not well planned. This is because you could find leaders for instance taking a drying facility in an area where they do not need it. But today, the policies are well planned to hinge on the ideas and needs presented by farmers”.*

- Power and resources are distributed in the Agriculture sector in favor of citizens

The National decentralization policy (MINALOC 2012) stipulates that the government is committed to enhance and sustain citizens’ participation in initiating, making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating decisions and plans that affect them by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government and lower levels, and ensuring that all levels have adequate capacities and motivations to promote genuine participation. This study showed that there was increased involvement of women and youths in the agriculture sector not only as members but also as leaders in their respective cooperatives and farmer groups. This was revealed by some respondents as quoted below:

***A farmer in Kabarondo – Kayonza: “The number of women is very big in the agriculture sector. Women do also take part in advocating for farmers and raising their voices on what can be changed. The experience we are facing is that farmer’s groups and cooperatives led by women are the ones that are having more development”.***

***A World Bank official explained: “While collecting the farmers’ views every year under the preparation of the performance contracts, those groups are well represented. This should continue and be done in all places and make sure that youth and women are consulted. I know GPSA project has already done a lot on this”.***

***The World Bank official also added: “Engagement should be disaggregated focusing on all groups. For sure they have different challenges and views. When I watch the TV, I sometimes see good stories of youth who do well in Agriculture but there is still a lot to do”.***

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “Most of the cooperatives in our sector are led by women and they do lead well”.***

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “There is an increase of youth who have decided to come in the agriculture sector and some of them have joined cooperatives or created their own groups. However, they are still few and the challenge they still face is lack of capital and unavailability of parents’ land to cultivate”.***

This demonstrates the advantage of citizens’ participation in policy planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The UK Essays (2018) points out that participation by both men and women is a cornerstone to good governance (and where there is good governance, the citizens participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of their country’s policies and their voices are heard and their needs and concerns worked on).

This is also demonstrated by the principle of inclusiveness (OECD, 2009) which refers to a situation whereby a wide variety of people are enabled to participate in policy issues of their country.

The issue of few young farmers being involved in agriculture was also expressed in the following word from a participant in FGDs in Nyanza district:

***A farmer in Busasamana – Nyanza District: “Young farmers are still very few. When our youth graduate, only a few of them join agriculture sector but many of them want to go in other sectors. Youth do not even attend farmers’ meetings”.***

***Farmers’ representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: “Our youth do not want to join us in the agriculture sector. They only want to wait for white-collar jobs. I always ask myself what will happen in the future if all those young people think they will only sit before the computer. For***

*me when I graduated, I came here to the countryside and started farming. When my colleagues saw me, they all started laughing at me. Today, I'm sure they cannot laugh at me because I have achieved a lot and have got married".*

Although young farmers are still few, some are already formed into groups and are doing well as evidenced in the following quote:

*A farmer in Nyagisozi– Nyanza District: "Though young farmers are still few we have one group in Nyagisozi sector and are dedicated to working in agriculture. They are soon going to be facilitated to build a greenhouse".*

On the issue of farmers' influence in decision-making regarding agriculture matters, the study showed that there were situations whereby farmers influenced decision-making on agricultural issues as explained by some farmers.

*A farmer in Kabarondo – Kayonza): We cannot say that farmers fully participated in determining technology to use but today's situation proves that the level of participation is at least increasing. As an outcome of farmers' participation in decision-making, we have got grass cutting, cultivating and irrigation machines in Rwinkwavu.*

*A cooperative leader in Murundi – Kayonza: "In our cooperative (KOAYIMU Gacaca), the number of women is bigger than men. We have 221 women while men are only 166 and they all participate in decision making".*

*Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "Our cooperative is made of 21 women while men are on 10 and all members' voices are equal".*

*Director of planning – Kayonza District: "The level of women participation is good and is justified by the number of women who are in cooperatives because they are over 50%. There are women who took a lead as the presidents of those cooperatives and participate in decision making".*

*A farmer in Mukingo – Nyanza District: "The number of women is very big in agriculture and are the ones with a high percentage in cooperatives. Their voices are also heard in those cooperatives".*

This is an indication of alignment with Pillar 1 of the National Agriculture Policy (2018) and Priority area 4 of the Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (2018): *Enabling environment and responsive institutions*. The alignment is also reflected per the National Strategy for Transformation (2017) in respect of Priority area 6 of Pillar 1: *Modernize and Increase Productivity of Agriculture and Livestock*; and Priority area 6 of Pillar 3: *Increase citizens' participation, engagement, and development partnerships*. This strategy recognizes the

fact that both youth and women are the majority of the Rwandan population which should not be left behind in a sector that largely drives the Rwandan economy.

The study also indicates gender mainstreaming in public service delivery as a characteristic of equity and inclusiveness in dealing with policy issues (UK Essays, 2018), since women (who happen to constitute the larger percentage of the farming fraternity in the country) get an opportunity to participate in decision making where their voices are heard. This is also emphasized in Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy (MINAGRI, 2019) which aims to ensure that women and youth have increased knowledge and access to services, to participate equally in all parts of the value chain, and to work in collaboration with men to improve their agricultural productivity and economic empowerment.

However, the study revealed that much as most of the women are employed in the agriculture sector, a big percentage of them do it unprofessionally because they do small-scale farming. In some cases, people falsely attach husbands to agri-business projects managed by women.

***Veterinary – Kayonza District: “We have a big number of women involved in agriculture but most of them do it on small scale land. On the other hand, the challenge is that though a woman may manage a big agriculture business project, people falsely connect the business to her husband”.***

The fact that many women and some youths were being engaged in agriculture is a good sign that the government through its various structures in agriculture governance made remarkable efforts and used appropriate strategies that resulted in attracting women and youths to engage in farming.

The fact that many youth members had not joined agriculture because of their negative attitude towards farming and the lack of land to use for agriculture imply that the government and the cooperatives did not do enough to change the mindset of the youth graduates for them to be attracted towards agriculture, and to ensure that youth get access to land for farming.

Also, the fact that farmers were influencing decision making and more so the women belonging to cooperatives and other farmer groups imply that the group leaderships were providing opportunity to the women to voice out their views and opinions. For example, due to influencing decision making policy, the farmers in Rwinkwavu received grass-cutting, cultivation and irrigation machines, an indication that the government officials listened to the needs of the farmers, considered them and made interventions that appropriately addressed their needs

On the other hand, the study revealed that in some instances farmers had no influence in decision-making on agricultural issues such as fixing the price. The following quotes provide the evidence:

*A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “There are businesspeople identified to buy farmers’ production in our district. While buying our products, the price is based on the one set by MINICOM. This helps to fight those who may illegally buy farmers’ production at cheap prices. However, our voices are never heard in setting the prices of some products. We are told that the price is set by the market”.*

*Farmers’ representative in Nyanza District: “There is a dramatic turnaround compared to the past. This is because there are at least a minimum and maximum price for some crops. However, the market is also influenced by the current trends”.*

*A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District): “The leaders only come to ask farmers how much fertilizers they think they will use. At a certain time, they come and tell us that we will pay a certain amount without our consent on the price because it is fixed. In this season, fertilizer known as PAN 53 was very expensive because it is imported from other countries”.*

On the other hand, farmers sold their produce at unfairly low prices due to the then prevailing circumstances as indicated in the following quotes:

*A farmer in Rwabicuma – Nyanza District: “The prices of our products are very low and we are unable to influence the price setting. We sell the liter of milk per 170Rwf but here in Nyanza the half of it (one cup) costs 200Rwf. So, farmers do not get profit compared to our clients”.*

*A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “In Nyanza market, the leaders once decided that the farmers should trade fruits and vegetables before 11am. In a bid to reduce the price, our customers who are traders then started new tricks to buy our products at 11 am as the fixed time when we (farmers) were in a hurry and unhappy with returning our production home. So, we had no option and sold our products at low prices”.*

*A farmer in Busasamana – Nyanza District: “The traders used to convene meetings and agreed to reduce the price because they were able to delay buying and agitate farmers. Nearly 11 am they started buying production on cheap prices”.*

*A farmer in Mukingo – Nyanza District: “The best pesticide we had was rocket but it is now very expensive and was faked. It was imported from Uganda but the new one’s leaflet shows it was produced in Kigali – Nyabugogo. Despite being fake, it is expensive because the liter rose up to 15,000Rwf. Farmers were able to get a small portion of it for 600Rwf but it now costs over 18,00Rwf”.*

*A farmer in Busasamana – Nyanza District: “The fact that the pesticides have been faked, we are obliged to use a higher amount of the pesticide than what we used before. This has a negative impact because we do not know the quantity we should use”.*

The above quotes indicate the absence of compliance with some core values of the practice of public participation. For example, the International Association for Public Participation, (2011) argues that public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. In this case, farmers ought to have participated in price setting for their milk and deciding on the period during which they would be selling their fruits and vegetables.

The study further revealed some challenges which were limiting the farmers to influence decision-making in deciding on the kind of crop to cultivate. For example, the respondents ascertained that they were forced to cultivate certain crops as evidenced below:

***A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “In Nyagisozi sector, they (officials) came and instructed us to plant mulberry (used to silkworms) and told us that there was a market. In the same month when we planted them, it heavily rained and floods washed them away. Those who had influenced us never came back and did not even give farmers the money they had vowed to give them to grow the trees. Our voices are never heard. The staff in charge of Social Economic and Development Officer (SEDO) at the Cell come and tell us that it was decided that farmers should grow certain crops”.***

***A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “Leaders came and said we had to cultivate chili. When we grew it, we did not get a good market because the price was irrelevant to what they had agreed to pay. They should hear our voices before instructing us what to cultivate”.***

This issue demonstrates a lack of attention on the part of the leaders, to listen to what the farmers prefer to grow, yet listening to the citizens is regarded as one of the enabling factors of good governance/public service delivery. Public service providers should also consider to appropriately address the needs of the citizens and make sure they are satisfied with decision taken for and with them.

However, according to an official from RAB, the government officials consult farmers on agricultural matters at the start of every season: ***“We make sure that the formulation of any policy is derived from farmers’ needs. This is why we try to collect their views and needs before the start of the season. We collect their needs at sector level and share them with RAB and are also sent to the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI). Citizens get involved in the whole process”.***

Nevertheless, it is evident that there were several deviations from the would-be compliance approaches. In the first instance officials did not consult the farmers on what was preferred by them to grow in their area, an issue which was contrary to the need to plan together with the Citizens. Secondly, the fact that when farmers lost their mulberry due to the floods and were

not helped out to regain resilience, implies a lack of commitment on the part of the public service to provide solutions that meet the felt needs.

- **Agricultural incentives that shape the behaviours of key actors in the agricultural value chain**

The 2014 National Fertilizer Policy was adopted to have a competitive and profitable fertilizer sector that ensures fertilizer access and affordability at the farm gate promptly creating acceptable fertilizer use by farmers for increased and sustainable agricultural productivity and farm income and to contribute to increased agricultural productivity, economic returns and incomes through increased and sustainable access and use of fertilizers. One of its objectives is to establish incentives that permit increased access and use of fertilizers at affordable rates by all the farmers. These incentives include agriculture finance, insurance, and subsidies among others. On the other hand, the Crop Intensification Program (CIP) is also aiming at increasing agricultural productivity under PSTA II. Its main goal is to increasing the production of food crops across the country, focusing on eight priority crops namely maize, rice, wheat, beans, soybean, cassava, Irish potato, and banana (IRDP, 2018, p.13).

With regard to the above mentioned incentives, the study established that farmers were advised to cultivate Irish potatoes and they are happy because they reap big profits and the crop grows well in their area. A quote from a respondent highlights this point:

***A farmer in Gahini – Kayonza: “We are very optimistic that we will continue to increase our income through the cultivation of Irish potatoes. We have seen that they grow well in district and this is a very big opportunity for us”.***

This is in line with Pillar 1 of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST -1, 2017 – 2024) Priority 6 which pursues to modernize and increase the productivity of agriculture and livestock. In some cases, the district connects farmers with buyers even before they reap.

***A farmer in Kabarondo – Kayonza: “In our cooperative that cultivates maize, the district connects us with the farmers and we sign a contract. In this season, though we have not yet reaped, we have signed a contract with the buyer on a good price compared to the past”.***

This gesture in public service delivery is in line with PSTA-4, Priority area 3 (Inclusive markets and Value addition), and NAP Pillar 4 (Inclusive markets and opportunities). These two are in pursuant to enabling farmers to access markets for their farm produce through creating strong market linkages.

**Director of the Domestic Trade Unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM):** *“In case the farmers do not have the market for their high production, we invite private companies to buy the products, and if it fails the government itself takes the production and stock it for future use. Rwanda has established Rwanda Grains and Cereals Corporation (RGCC) that works with grain traders and farmers. In addition, we also have the East Africa Exchange (EAX), a regional commodity exchange established to link smallholder farmers to agricultural and financial markets, secure competitive prices for products. If the production is high, the government buys it through the National grain strategic reserve. For instance, recently, the production of milk was higher than the demand in some districts, so the government decided to buy the production and gave milk to citizens as support to poor families to avoid malnourishment”.*

In line with the said incentives, it is worth noting that the GoR put in place opportunities that lead to positive change in the agriculture sector. The respondents pointed out the following as existing opportunities to induce positive changes in the agriculture sector.

- **Cultivation of Irish potatoes, fruits and vegetables**

**A cooperative leader in Mukarange – Kayonza District:** *“One of the opportunities we have is the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. They are very profitable but in Kayonza we still do not have many farmers engaged in cultivation at a large scale. In addition, we have seen that Irish potatoes grow well in our district which is the opportunity for us because we can make a lot of money through agriculture”.*

This is a great opportunity for the citizens as vegetables have some competitive advantages over perennials: they are grown in small areas, they fetch higher returns on investment, they undergo a short maturity period, they can be grown in rotation depending on market dynamics etc. Therefore, vegetables are user friendly and suitable for citizens since many of them lack large areas of land for agricultural production.

**Farmers’ representative in Kabare - Kayonza:** *“Cultivation of Chili is really possible and profitable in our district. I myself can testify what happened to my family because chili has changed our status. I once went in Rulindo district Northern Province) and saw how farmers were making money through chili. For the first time when I came back, I cultivated only 9 acres of chili and I got profit of over 500,000Rwf. Since then, we rehabilitated our house and it now looks so nice. Our market is abroad and investors always compete to get our chili. They are the ones who even instruct us what kind of fertilizers we should use so that our chili can be the best at the market”.*

***JADF – Kayonza District: “Fruits and vegetables have a very big market and they grow well in our district. This is an opportunity for our farmers because many people are not engaged in cultivation of fruits and vegetables”.***

- **Government subsidies**

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “The government has made it simple for farmers to get seeds and fertilizers with the subsidies. Different machines used in agriculture are also having subsidy”.***

In instances where the Government has supported farmers through subsidies it is a good practice of governance as it demonstrates the principles of responsiveness, effectiveness, and accountability in public service delivery. It also aligns with Pillar 1, priority area 6 and Pillar 3 priority area 5 of the NST-1 (2017); priority area 4 of the PSTA-4 (2018) and also Pillar 1 of NAP (2018).

The subsidies are advantageous to the farmers as they reduce on the production cost levels thereby enabling the farmers to realize higher profit margins, in line with the argument by Chron (2020) that the higher the production costs the lower the profit levels.

- **Development of infrastructures**

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “The government through MINAGRI has built so many drying facilities, stocks and storage facilities countrywide. This is a motivation to farmers and investors”.***

This is an indication of alignment with Pillar 1, priority 6 and Pillar 3 priorities 5 and 6 of NST-1 (2017); Priority areas 3 and 4 of the PSTA-4 (2018); and also Pillars 1 and 3 of the NAP (2018). This is because the built post-harvest handling facilities help reduce post-harvest losses which in turn saves the farmers from running unprofitable enterprises. As Chron (2020) explains, anything that increases on the costs or lowers the income of an enterprise causes a reduction in profit level and in extreme cases the proprietor incurs losses.

- **Mechanization of agriculture**

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “In KAYONZA, the land easily allows mechanization in agriculture. This is an opportunity because people can easily get back their investment and profit if they inject a lot through mechanization”.***

This is an opportunity that the country can exploit in areas which are suitable for mechanization, as mechanized farming has some competitive advantage over peasant farming in terms of farm acreage for production purposes, ability to do timely farming operations like

seedbed preparation, planting and weeding etc. and above all leveraging labour resources thereby resulting in lower marginal cost but higher marginal product both of which result in higher returns per unit of investment.

- **Low tax for agricultural production**

***Veterinary – Kayonza District: “Among the opportunities we have is that tax is very low for agriculture production. No one will go to farmers and tax them while reaping. This should incite youth to go in farming than other businesses”.***

This is an enabling initiative that could persuade potential agricultural investors to go in for agriculture as it encourages profitability of the agricultural enterprises. In concurrence with Chron (2020) if taxes are low it means that farmers get substantial profit margins. And because of this they continue doing the farming business while expanding more and more, even diversifying their production lines to spread risks and increase their chances of success in farming.

By interacting with other people (and more so their peers, friends etc.) many more people (including the youths who are reluctant to join agriculture) are more likely to engage in the farming business, a factor that catalyzes not only the agriculture sector development but also the entire national economy.

- **National Agriculture Insurance scheme**

***World Bank representative: “In Rwanda, agriculture, has been considered as a subsistent activity but currently it started to be a business. The target for the next 4 years is to see more private sector people in this sector and ensure that it is no longer subsistent. We need to change the mindset. In Rwanda we have youth Forums that are mobilizing peers to seize the existing opportunities including guarantee. Also, the National Agriculture Insurance scheme started last two years covering some crops but now it covers so many crops. There are a lot of incentives that target youth and women particularly”.***

- **Risk coping mechanisms in place to help farmers deal with pests and diseases, market and weather related risks in agricultural sector**

The study established that for some cases, the district connects farmers with buyers even before they reap. The following statement highlights the evidence to this matter.

***Farmer in Kabarondo – Kayonza: “In our cooperative that cultivate maize, the district connects us with the farmers and we sign a contract. In this season, though we have not yet reaped, we have signed a contract with the buyer on good price compared to the past”.***

This is a good gesture in public service delivery as it demonstrates the characteristic of responsiveness of public institutions (UK Essays, 2018) and aligns well with Priority area 4 of the Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (2018) and Pillar 1 of the National Agriculture Policy (2018).

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “The issue of drought will be reduced through a new project initiated in in this district namely Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project” which will help our farmers to increase production in this drought-prone district”.***

By instituting risk coping mechanisms like connecting farmers to buyers even before harvesting; and the construction of dams and terraces, the government played its role of providing an enabling situation for farmers to be able to do their agricultural production with minimal risk. In this regard the risks minimized are those of unfair prices, drought and land degradation due to soil erosion effect.

### 4.3. Effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms in place for monitoring agriculture development programs

The study showed that there were gaps in exercising transparency and accountability mechanisms in the monitoring of agriculture development programs. This led to the failure of continuing with the programs and farmers ended up making huge losses.

***Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "There are projects that are very nice by looking at their design. What is really dismaying is that we are only informed when they are about to kick-off. Transparency and accountability are missed during and after implementation. For instance, there is Rwanda Dairy Development Project (RDDP) that aimed to help farmers increase milk production. The project was really nice because farmers were required to provide a 40% part of the investment and the project could support them to get another 60% in order to buy modern cows to increase milk production. However, since it was launched, we, the representatives of farmers do not know what happened later. We once held on radios that RAB failed to explain how the funds were used and there was a kind of embezzlement according to the Auditor general. What is not good is that the line institutions did not come to farmers to explain why the project did not continue and the culmination of the auditor general's queries".***

Informing farmers about the new projects (for example this one of RDDP) when they are about to kick off deprives them of an opportunity to participate in the planning for the implementation of agricultural projects meant to develop the agriculture sector. It undermines the NAP, NST-1, and PSTA-4's composite goal of agriculture sector development through strategic transformation process: NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6 (National Strategy for Transformation, 2017; PSTA-4 Priority 4 (Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture Phase 4, 2018) and NAP Pillar 1 (National Agriculture Policy, 2018).

***Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "We were sensitized to mobilize resources that could help us buy water tanks and that we could get a government subsidy. At the end of the day, we did not get the subsidy while we had used a lot of money buying pumps and had constructed where those pumps could be taken and fixed in our homes".***

This issue compromised transparency and accountability, and lacked responsiveness in public service delivery, contrary to the expectations in good governance whereby those three aspects are key factors (UK Essays, 2018; and Emma Dudley, Diaan-Yi Lin, Matteo Mancini, and Jonathan Ng, 2015). It can cause mistrust of citizens towards the public service providers. It is also likely to demoralize the citizens and lower their morale towards engagement in agriculture sector development initiatives.

***A cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: “People (from the central level) came here and I was among the farmers selected to get the additional investment that could help in increasing our agriculture production. In order to get my part, I applied for a bank loan and got it. I then waited for that additional subsidy that could enable me to buy a motorcycle expected to help me in my agriculture activities but I did not get it while I had signed on the documents they had brought. Until now, I’m struggling to pay back the loan and its interests while I did not use it. Though I cannot prove it, it seems that the money was embezzled because we had signed! I even signed that I had got my part”.***

This is another indication showing how in some instances the officials supposed to help the farmers to obtain the subsidy lacked commitment, transparency, responsiveness, and accountability in dealing with the issue of subsidy. The issue is a reflection of policy implementation gaps contrary to the provisions of NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6 (National Strategy for Transformation, 2017; PSTA-4 Priority 4 (Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture Phase 4, 2018) and NAP Pillar 1 (National Agriculture Policy, 2018).

In Nyanza district, farmers expressed their concern over the lack of transparency in implementing a program of growing Avocadoes.

***A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “In the past few days, a businessman came and said farmers should be told to grow avocado trees and that they would give a farmer 130, 000Rwf per year and that the land should be managed by the businessman. They (officials) told us that we have to surrender our land to a businessman to grow avocadoes in the farms near the dam that is built-in Rwabicuma and Nyagisozi. We were told that the businessman will exploit our land for 15 years and pay farmers only 130,000Rwf every year. This is beyond our understanding and we want this project to stop”.***

Going by this quote, it becomes evident that there were instances of deviation from good governance principles and characteristics (UK Essays, 2018). The quote expresses citizens’ dissatisfaction with the directive to surrender their land as exhibited by their desire for that project to be stopped. The entire process lacked a citizen-centered approach to delivering public service, contrary to the argument by Emma Dudley, Diaan-Yi Lin, Matteo Mancini, and Jonathan Ng (2015) that when governments deliver services based on the needs of the people they serve, they can increase public satisfaction and reduce costs.

There was a lack of citizens’ participation in decision making; the decision taken by the officials was not favoring the farmers (based on their perception), and the project is not effective as it is not producing results that address the felt needs of the intended beneficiaries (the farmers).

However, the responses from officials indicated that there were several ways through which farmers could easily demand transparency and accountability in monitoring the programs.

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “The district has a toll-free number used by citizens to ask for service or report malpractices. They also have the contacts of officials and those contacts are displayed in different places including on the website. This helps to ensure transparency and accountability”.***

Therefore, though such means exist, citizens were still expressing dissatisfaction that they are not adequately enabled to participate in decision making and even when they do participate sometimes their voices are not heard and their needs are not addressed. All these issues suggest that there is still a need to adequately empower the citizens for them to effectively and efficiently influence decision making and subsequent implementation of policy strategies to be able to realize the policies’ goals.

By informing citizens about a project (e.g. the RDDP) when it is about to kick-off shows that the government did not in this regard promote citizens’ participation in making decisions regarding such project. This issue was bound to cause implementation anomalies as farmers were feeling that they were caught unaware and made to engage in something whose planning they never participated in.

Secondly, by promising the citizens that when they mobilize 40% of the required investment the project would provide the 60% and this was never fulfilled. Again, this is an indication that the government did not act in a transparent manner in service delivery and did not account for the failure to fulfill the promise.

Also, the telling of farmers to surrender their land to a businessman for growing Avocado in the areas near the dams in Rwabicuma and Nyagisozi against the farmers’ endorse the dissatisfaction of farmers as they were not enabled to participate in decision making regarding that issue and this implies that there was lack of transparency and accountability on the side of the government officials.

#### 4.4. Identified gaps in the implementation of agriculture policies and programs

The study revealed the following constraints as evidenced by the respective accompanying quotes:

- **Limited market opportunities for some crops especially vegetables, Moringa, and Macadamia.**

***A farmer in Busasamana – Nyanza District: “One of the biggest challenges we face is lack of market for our production. Among the crops that are much-affected include tomatoes grown in summer. Their production becomes bigger than the market demand”.***

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “Citizens were forced to plant Moringa and Macadamia trees but did not get market for their production”.***

The above quotes indicate an implementation gap in priority area 2 of the Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (2018) which concerns ‘inclusive markets and value chains’ and pillar 4 of the National Agriculture Policy (2018) which also deals with inclusive markets and off-farm opportunities. Lack of market is an indication that the farmers were not adequately empowered to access good markets for their agricultural production. The government ought to have engaged the farmers in the planning of where to sell their produce and at what price (market identification and price-setting). This would have helped the farmers to make informed decisions as regards the quantities to produce with surety of income generation in a profitable way.

- **Scarcity of land and the Implementation gaps of the Land use consolidation policy**

***Farmers’ representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: “Our youth are not coming in the agriculture sector because the land is so small and the small-scale farming is not profitable”.***

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “The land use consolidation policy is not well implemented. This is because even those with consolidated land use different quantities of fertilizers or different seeds. Farmers should really be helped by cultivating approved crops and implement all measures set in a bid to increase production”.***

The importance of citizens’ access to land for agriculture production is key in agriculture sector development as land is a basic necessity/factor of agricultural production. The concerns raised by the respondents suggest a low quality of public service delivery as citizens are not satisfied with the way their land accessibility needs are handled.

The limited access to land for agricultural production compromises the provisions of priority area 3 of the Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (2018); Pillar 3 of the National Agriculture Policy (2018) and Pillar 3, priority areas 5 and 6 of the National Strategy for Transformation (2017). On the contrary, citizens ought to be readily accessing land for agricultural production. In this case, the public service should enable them to achieve this through proper implementation of the land consolidation policy.

- **Issues of financial accessibility and quality of agro-inputs like pesticides, fertilizers, and veterinary drugs**

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “There is a sharp price increase of the fertilizers and pesticides. DAP has increased up to between 400Rwf and 500Rwf while Urea rose too”.*

*A farmer in Mukarange – Kayonza: “Pesticide known as Dudu rose from 1200Rwf to 2000Rwf while Rocket price increased from 9,000Rwf to over 15,000wf per liter”.*

*A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “When we ask about the subsidy on pesticides, officials say it is not possible because they are not taxed and that waiving tax is a subsidy itself. But by considering the capacity of farmers, pesticides are really expensive. The other problem is that there are pesticides that have been faked and do not work well”.*

The issue of expensiveness jeopardizes the objectives and efforts of agriculture sector development as it affects the farmers’ ability to profitably reap from their production efforts. The higher the costs of production the lower the level of profit margin (Chron, 2020). The issue of expensive pesticides can significantly affect the level of farmers’ usage of the pesticides. With reduced use of pesticides, the farmers will realize lower production levels, contrary to priority 6 (Modernize and Increase Productivity of Agriculture and Livestock) of Pillar 1 of the National Strategy for Transformation (2017). In order to promote pesticide, use as one of the strategies for increasing agricultural production, farmers ought to be involved in selecting the pesticide suppliers and negotiate/set prices for the pesticides.

The expensiveness of agro-inputs is an indication that little was done to help farmers access the inputs at affordable prices. This is something that could have been done by involving the farmers in negotiating with reputable suppliers for affordable bulk supplies on reasonable discounts.

The existence of fake agro-inputs on market is also a challenge in the monitoring of quality standards by the government. In this regard the government should strive to have effectively enforced quality standards of agro-inputs and certified the suppliers so that the farmers are enabled to buy from only certified agro-input dealers.

- Issue of good quality grass for cows to replace the Napier grass which was affected by the disease

*Farmers' representative in Busasamana – Nyanza: "A disease came and negatively affected Napier grass. We are very fearful that when dry seasons come, we will not be able to feed our cows. Grasses are very expensive nowadays".*

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: "Disease has affected Napier grass (known as Urubingo) and it has been the very important kind of grass we are used to feeding our cows. Until now we have not yet got another type of grass to feed cows".*

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: "The Napier grass seeds are not sufficient because the demand is very high following the outbreak of the disease that affected the grass we had".*

Feeding is a key determinant of animal productivity. The amount of grass available for feeding the animals depends on the production harvested from the pastures. This in turn depends on the quality of seeds that were planted in the pasture land. Lack of grass for feeding the animals can greatly affect their productivity as the amount and quality of milk produced by cows depends to a great extent on the amount and type of feeds consumed by the cow (Leitner G, Merin U, Glickman A, Weisblit, Krifucks O, Shwimmer A, and Saran A, 2004). To achieve priority 6 (Modernize and Increase Productivity of Agriculture and Livestock) of Pillar 1 of the National Strategy for Transformation (2017); priority area 4 (Enabling environment and responsive institutions) of the Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture (2018) and Pillar 1 (Enabling environment and responsive institutions) of the National Agriculture Policy (2018), the farmers ought to be provided with better quality pasture seeds for them to plant and produce grass for their animals.

The failure of farmers to access better grass seeds to replace the diseased Napier grass implies that the SEDO, agronomists and veterinarians did not help farmers in this regard and were therefore non-responsive to farmers' needs. The officials should make every effort to have identified a source of better grass seeds and mobilize the farmers to buy them. Besides, the farmers could also plant pasture legumes to supplement the nutrition effect of the grasses. This would result in higher production of milk and meat.

- Delay in providing selected seeds to farmers

*A cooperative leader in Kibirizi – Nyanza: “The farmers still have the challenge related to the lack or delay of selected seeds. Rice farmers mostly do not get good seeds they request for while maize seeds do not come on time and we delay to start the season”.*

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “In this season, we were unable to get the selected seeds of maize we had requested. We wanted PAN 53 but we were told that it was not available and were obliged to grow others. At the end of the day when the season was ending, PAN 53 came”.*

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “We think they did not give us PAN 53 because there was a new kind of maize seeds produced in Rwanda and they wanted to have it promoted”.*

- Delay in availing fertilizers to farmers

*A farmer in Gahini – Kayonza: “In this year, farmers delayed to cultivate just because we did not get on-time fertilizers”.*

The delay in availing selected seeds and fertilizers to farmers suggests that officials did not enable farmers to plant in time. It shows that the officials did not exhibit responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency in their service delivery to the farmers. This affected agricultural productivity because crops planted late become vulnerable to adverse weather, and also pest and disease attack, resulting in low production. Thus availing the seeds and fertilizers to the farmers enables them to plant and do the subsequent field operations in time thereby enabling them to realize high production.

- Irrigation machines with poor quality (a case of farmers in Busasamana who bought irrigation machines that failed to function)

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “We were facilitated to buy irrigation machines on the government subsidy and our contribution was 250,000Rwf per one machine. However, those machines failed to work and it’s our loss. Later we were told to collect 59,000Rwf so that we could be facilitated to get new small water pumps that work with those machines but it has not been done”.*

The existence of fake irrigation machines on market indicates that the government officials did not check on the quality standards of those machines. On the contrary, the government should

make it possible to ensure the farmers that only genuine irrigation machines are the ones allowed to be availed on market for sale.

However, the officer in charge of irrigation and land husbandry in RAB gave a clarification about this matter:

***“Our internal auditors themselves reported the issue that citizens are not satisfied with the quality of those irrigation pumps they got on the government subsidy. But there is one thing we should understand. Those irrigation pumps provided are the cheapest ones that over 95% of farmers wanted. 1meter costs only 1,000Rwf (100,000 per 100meters) while there are other high-quality pumps that cost approximately 7,700Rwf (over 700,000Rwf per 100meters). The difference in costs proves why those cheap pumps do not have a good quality but citizens who got them on the subsidy do not understand this”.***

- Need for educating farmers by Veterinarians and Agronomists

***A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “The veterinaries and agronomists do not explain to us how things are done. When there is a disease, the veterinary comes and treats the cow and neither does he advises us on what we can do to protect our cows nor show us the quantity of the treatment we should use when it falls sick again”.***

However, the officer in charge of irrigation and land husbandry in RAB said that government provides training to farmers. In his word, he stated: ***“From a sector level, we train farmers on how the irrigation machines are used. The trainings are provided by RAB engineer, district engineer and the service provider (supplier) should be present. We also offer Post harvest machinery trainings to farmers especially in cooperatives and we show them how the new machines work and how they can increase their production”.***

In a related situation, some farmers feel that there is even a need to provide constant training to agro-dealers, veterinaries, and agronomists as they sometimes fail to satisfactorily explain issues to the farmers.

***A cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: “The government should constantly train agro-dealers and veterinaries so that they can continue to work professionally. Sometimes, a veterinary does not explain well to a farmer how the treatments of animals should be used”***

A farmer's level of knowledge of appropriate farming practices and application of the suitable agricultural technology are key in determining the production level. By not educating the farmers, the agronomists and veterinaries did not help the farmers to carry out their farming activities with informed decisions. This is a crucial factor that could significantly lower the production levels since farmers would be doing the farming activities from uninformed point of view.

- **Quality issue of vegetable seeds**

***A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “We are facing the challenge of manufacturers who are faking the best vegetable seeds we used to get. They change the quality and use the same packaging. My neighbor bought one package of cabbage per 6,000Rwf but we did not know what kind of vegetable it became”.***

The existence of poor quality vegetable seeds on market is an indication that the government did not monitor well the quality standards of those seeds. On the contrary, the government ought to have helped the farmers by ensuring that only genuine vegetable seeds are the ones allowed to be availed on market for sale. Quality of seeds is one of the factors that determine crop productivity because when the seeds are viable they germinate and when they are unviable they don't. therefore, in a situation whereby a farmer receives poor quality seeds it means that the germination percentage is likely to be very low consequently producing low yields. And with low yields the farmers are not benefitting but rather make losses.

- **Farmers dissatisfaction on the effectiveness of Business Development Fund(BDF)**

***Veterinary – Kayonza District: “BDF has really not successfully achieved its mission. No tangible facts about the people who benefited from BDF support. I know there are so many constraints to get the loan through BDF while we have so many young graduates including veterinaries and agronomists who are unable to get the capital”.***

The fact that the Business Development Fund did not effectively benefit the farmers is an indication that the officials implementing it did not fulfill some of the things which were necessary for the fund to become effective and achieve its mission. In this regard the government did not probably create an enabling environment for the farmers to easily access the fund. In this regard the government should make necessary effort to investigate what was not fulfilled and address them accordingly. Otherwise this issue shows that there was no responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency in making profit from the BDF.

- Limited district budgets yet agriculture projects are expensive

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “We all wish to have a developed agriculture sector but the challenge hinges on the budget. Agriculture projects are very expensive and the district cannot only implement projects in agriculture. We have to balance with other sectors”.***

The issue of inadequate budget allocation rests entirely on the government both at central and local (district) levels. The budgets that were being allocated to finance the agriculture projects were insufficient. This issue therefore affected the extent to which farmers’ needs could be addressed as the required amount of money was not available. In this case the government has to increase on the budgetary allocation towards agriculture sector development strategies and programs.

- Unwillingness of the private sector to invest in agriculture

***Director of planning – Kayonza District: “Private sector has not yet really come to invest a lot of money in agriculture. In other developed countries, one farmer can satisfy a district. But the other challenge is the scarcity of land for agriculture”.***

The unwillingness of the private sector to invest in agriculture indicates that the government did not provide an investment environment that is attractive to potential private investors. Considering the business dynamics of agricultural enterprises, the government would have put in place strategies that are conducive and attractive to potential investors for example: easy access to land for agriculture use, subsidies on agro-inputs, low taxes on agricultural production, and linkages to favorable markets. It would be good for the government to work with the Private Sector Federation (PSF) in this regard for the strategies to become more impactful.

- Inadequate communication channels to sensitize investors in agriculture

***A cooperative leader in Nyamirama - Kayonza: “The most biting challenge is lack of investment among our youth. But again, many people think agriculture is still being done like in the past while things changed and the profit is there. It seems there are no adequate channels to incite rich people to invest in agriculture”.***

- Limited animal feeds factory in the area

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “There is a need of having animal feeds factories. This is because we get them from Kigali and the transport makes it expensive. The other challenge***

***we face is quality. Recently, a veterinarian told me that my chickens lack calcium while I feed them those products from factories located in Kigali”.***

The construction of area based animal feed factories would reduce procurement costs and would guarantee quality standards. This is because farmers would be actively involved in the feeds production process, the veterinaries would advise the factory operators on the appropriate feed manufacturing formulae, and there would be participatory monitoring and evaluation of the performances of the factories.

- **Sometimes farmers are not involved in price setting for their farm produce.**

***On this issue, the Director of the Domestic Trade Unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) explained: “As we are in an open market, the market itself should fix the price depending on the demand. However, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) intervenes in setting prices in a bid to regulate and avoid the loopholes that may bring negative effects to Rwandans. We only help in setting the prices of essential products because other products are not affected by not having a fixed price. Moreover, the ministry was pushed to setting the prices by some government programs like land use consolidation and others geared towards the increase of agricultural production. So, this was the way to help farmers get the market and profit from their production”.***

In addition, MINICOM explains that the inability by farmers to determine cost of production limited them from appropriate price setting and this necessitated the ministry to intervene by training the farmers through their cooperatives.

In this regard ***the Director of the Domestic Trade Unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) explained: “The level of capacity of farmers has been low in determining the cost of their production. This is why the ministry helps to build their capacity through training. Because the Ministry has no big staff, we are unable to train all farmers but we do it through cooperatives, unions, and federation. For instance, we have developed a useful excel sheet format used by rice farming cooperatives to record all activities and value that determines the cost of production. Now that rice farmers have understood how to calculate the cost of their production, MINICOM is no longer inviting them to set the price. Their unions themselves invite the ministry in the meetings of setting the prices, then the ministry, on their behalf, invite Rwanda Association of Manufactures (RAM). The farmers bring them excel sheet that calculates the cost of production and the manufacturers bring theirs that show how much they will spend prior to having final production at the market. We debate and debate! It is like a war”.***

On the issue of whether there are there monitoring mechanisms to know if the trainees train the farmers in their cooperatives or if presidents consult members before attending the meetings that set prices, the Director of the Domestic Trade Unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) said: ***“I cannot surely prove that the exercise is done. As a solution, it will be good if we take sample of cooperatives and visit them before the start of the season and ask them if they are trained to use the excel sheet format that helps in calculating the price and if the presidents of cooperatives consult them prior to attending meetings that set prices. It seems they may exist some cases of malpractices and cooking the data (Gutekinika)”***.

#### 4.5. Respondents’ suggestions to mitigate the identified challenges

The study captured a number of suggestions as explained below with respective quotes from respondents:

- **Government should make subsidy on pesticides and animal treatments**

***A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “The prices of pesticides and animal treatments are very high. This is why it would be nice if the government provides farmers with subsidy to afford them”.***

***A farmer in Gahini – Kayonza: “Though we have found that Irish potatoes are very well in our district, we are facing a challenge of the disease called Cyumya. This is why we should be facilitated to easily access pesticides”.***

***A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “We’ve been requesting the government to provide subsidies on pesticides and veterinary drugs because they are expensive but we have not yet got the solution”.***

***A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “Farmers will continue to be in the loss margin if the prices of pesticides and fertilizers are not reduced. This is why government subsidy would be very helpful”.***

***Farmers’ representative in Nyagisozi – Nyanza: “The pesticides and veterinary drugs are very expensive. Last week, the veterinary came home to see what was wrong with my cow but he unexpectedly charged me 20,000Rwf. For sure farmers need government subsidy on veterinary drugs and pesticides”.***

- Government should monitor the quality of pesticides on the market

*A farmer in Rwinkwavu – Kayonza: “The government should constantly monitor the quality of pesticides that are on the market. Nowadays farmers are getting fake pesticides”.*

- Introducing a special bank or fund for farmers

*A farmer in Mukarange – Kayonza: “One of the biting challenges we face is that banks do not really accept to finance farmers’ projects”.*

*A farmer in Gahini – Kayonza: “Farmers’ capital is always small just because there are no special banks that accept to support us. It would be nice if we at least get one”.*

*Farmers’ representative in Nyagisozi – Nyanza: “The government has made it possible for teachers to have Umwarimu SACCO and it has introduced a new fund called EJOHEZA to be used in saving. It should also help farmers to introduce a bank because the agriculture sector employs a big number of Rwandans but there is no capital for many of them. If done, we would increase or production because we can easily access financial services with low-interest rate”.*

- Sensitization of farmers countrywide to introduce insurance and sensitizing existing insurance companies to be engaged in agriculture

*A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “In our group of farmers, we have introduced our own mutuele (insurance) for cows. Every farmer contributes with 1,000Rwf and when his/her cow falls sick he/she gets subsidy on treatments. He only pays 50% of the amount spent while treating a cow”.*

*A farmer in Nyamirama – Kayonza: “In Nyamirama sector, our farmers’ group introduced a special fund. When a farmer’s cow falls sick, he/she is accepted to borrow money and does not give interest”.*

- Farmers should be informed about District budget allocated in agriculture sector

*A cooperative leader in Nyamirama - Kayonza: “When the projects are launched, we are not informed about the budget planned in its implementation. Most of the times we clap our hands we benefit from the project but most of farmers do not even care to know what was the aspirations of that project”.*

*A cooperative leader in Murundi – Kayonza: “We request civil society like Transparency International Rwanda to advocate for farmers to know the budget allocated in agricultural projects. Most of the times we do not know where it flies to”.*

- Farmers should fully participate (be consulted) in setting prices of their produce

*Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "When we planted Irish potatoes, the seeds were very expensive because they costed not less than 600Rwf per kg. However, while the cost is high, we expect that our production will not get a good price because we will not have participated in setting price. We, farmers need to participate in setting prices of our production".*

- . Facilitating farmers to buy rainwater tanks

*Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "The district and government at large should put more efforts in sensitizing citizens to buy rainwater tanks so that they may serve in agriculture during sunny periods. In so doing the government subsidy should be provided to a big number of people".*

- Building more storage facilities

*Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "Our production of Irish potatoes does not get a good market just because we do not have any alternative to keep it. I would be nice if we get a storage facility".*

*Farmers' representative in Nyanza District: "It would be really nice if we get a storage facility for fruits and vegetables and have at least fridges in the facility. This is because sometimes we do not have the market and our production is spoilt".*

- Making constant follow up on business people who do not pay cooperatives and farmers on time

*A cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: "There are cases where the leaders of cooperatives are jailed because the businesspeople failed to pay debts that they owe cooperatives. The central government and district should follow up and hold cooperative leaders accountable to their respective members".*

- Use of Kinyarwanda on leaflets of pesticides and animal medicines

*Farmers' representative in Nyamirama - Kayonza: "One of the challenges we face is that we do not really understand the quantity of pesticides and treatments we should use. Recently, I saw my neighbour who used high quantity of pesticide and all his maize trees became dry and yellow. It would be nice if the leaflets attached on the medicines are made in Kinyarwanda so that farmers get to know better".*

- Provision of constant trainings to agro-dealers, veterinaries and agronomists

*A cooperative leader in Gahini – Kayonza: “The government should constantly train agro-dealers and veterinaries so that they can continue to work professionally. Sometimes, a veterinary does not explain well to a farmer how the treatments of animals should be used”.*

- Land use consolidation should be implemented appropriately

*Director of planning – Kayonza District: “The land use consolidation policy is not well implemented. This is because even those with consolidated land use different quantities of fertilizers or different seeds. Farmers should really help by cultivating what is agreed to and implement all measures set in a bid to increase production”.*

- Harmonization of the Information sharing with TI-RW

*Director of planning – Kayonza District: “We really thank that this project of TI-Rw and Imbaraga is contributing to ensuring that the voice of farmers is heard. The structure used to hear their priority needs is very nice and we wish that TI-RW continues the harmonization of information sharing with the district. It will undoubtedly help us to achieve a lot as it is justified by the outcome of what has been done so far”.*

- Campaigns to sensitize youth to take part in agriculture

*JADF – Kayonza District: “There is a need of putting more efforts in the campaigns that aims to sensitize young people to enroll in agriculture sector. In so doing, students should be sensitized while at schools and others may be hooked through entertainment activities like concerts”.*

- Veterinaries and agronomists should educate farmers on animal and crop protection issues

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “Veterinaries and agronomists should be the ones to train farmers on how to prevent diseases. They should also clearly show farmers how much pesticides and drugs to use in case of any disease. If they do so, there are some issues that farmers may be able to solve themselves”.*

- Selected seeds should be availed to farmers on time

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “If a certain type of seeds is not available, RAB, in its system, should remove it on the list of available seeds in Rwanda. If it is done farmers would request for seeds that may come on time.*

- Quality control on pesticides and vegetable seeds allegedly faked by manufacturers

*A cooperative leader in Busasamana – Nyanza: “We are receiving faked products in agriculture. Those include pesticides and vegetable seeds. So, there is a need of ensuring the quality of those products imported”.*

- Farmers’ cooperatives and groups should be consulted in selecting crops

*A farmer in Nyagisozi – Nyanza District: “Through their cooperatives and groups, farmers should write down and propose what they want to cultivate and explain why so, instead of being instructed to cultivate crops that do not grow well in their sector”.*

- Embracing mechanization and land use consolidation policy

*Farmers’ representative in Nyagisozi – Nyanza: “The use of technology through mechanization will be a solution to low productivity in agriculture. However, this will be easy if land use consolidation policy is embraced”.*

- Embracing the use of embryo transplantation than normal artificial insemination

*Farmers’ representative in Nyanza District: “Farmers have met challenges during insemination (gutera intanga) of the cows because it sometimes does not work. But it would be nice if we embrace the use of embryo transplantation (gutera insoro) because it is more efficient”.*

Based on the various issues raised above, one would argue that serious problems in the agricultural sector in Rwanda are declining significantly. Trying to look at the problems that have been identified in agriculture sector before, we can say as a study by IPAR (2009) and World bank (2013), identified several challenges in agriculture sector of Rwanda such as insufficient inputs stocks, affordability, farmers’ knowledge and skills and incentives, Lack of irrigation and weak meteorological capacity are major causes of a high vulnerability to weather related shocks of the Rwanda agricultural sector, Lack of business skills and entrepreneurship is also a problem since; there is a very limited agribusiness entrepreneurship in Rwanda. Lack of access to credit Facilities, poor rural infrastructure and weak land title. However, compared to the problems posed by various studies in the early years, the problems presented in the current situation are not extreme although they also need to be addressed.

## 4.6. Policy implementation alignments and gaps

**Table 4: Agriculture structures enabled farmers' participation in Imihigo**

<b>Objective 1: Informal and formal agricultural structures enable farmers' participation in agriculture-related imihigo</b>
<p><b>Alignments:</b></p> <p>Several structures are instituted to enable citizens channel their agriculture needs and concerns (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5 &amp; 6; PSTA-4, Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p> <p>Structures are effective to some level in channeling farmers' needs and concerns (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5 &amp; 6; PSTA-4, Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p> <p>Structures are effective to some extent in providing feedback to the farmers about their needs and concerns (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5 &amp; 6; PSTA-4, Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p> <p>Structures are effective to some extent in enabling farmers to demand accountability on agriculture-related matters (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5 &amp; 6; PSTA-4, Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p>
<p><b>Gaps:</b></p> <p>Some farmers are not given a chance to present their views and opinions – they are simply informed and not consulted on what needs to be done (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).</p> <p>Failure by district to work on some of the agriculture needs and they keep on appearing again in the priorities year after year (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 5; PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p> <p>Incidences of lack of integrity in addressing farmers' needs e.g. the case of farmers in Kabarondo-Kayonza where farmers were forced to sign an agreement for a loan then they were told that the money was paid for insurance yet when drought came they were not helped (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 5; PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p> <p>Inadequate consultation, whereby only few farmer groups are sampled in a district but later the officials claim that every group was consulted (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).</p> <p>Poor customer care by the agro-input dealers whereby some of them are not willing to sell inputs to farmers during evening time (contrary to PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).</p>

The alignments in the table above indicate some commitment and efforts made in enabling farmers' participation through providing avenues for channeling needs, obtaining feedback, and

demanding accountability on agriculture-related matters. However, some gaps indicate limited effectiveness and responsiveness in working on farmers' needs.

**Table 5: Factors that enabled farmers' participation in PSTA-4**

**Objective 2: Factors that enabled farmers' participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4)**

**Alignments:**

Improvement in production of milk through participating in the Rwanda Dairy Development Project (RDDP) (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6).

Improvement in production of bananas e.g. in Gahini sector in Kayonza district (NST-1 Pillar1, Priority area 6).

Through project by NAEB, production of fruits increased e.g. in Mukarange sector (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority 6).

Farmers started fruit exportation through assistance by the NAEB (PSTA-4, Priority area 2 & NAP Pillar 4).

Construction of farm structures and facilities e.g. dams and terraces in Kabarondo and Murama sectors (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4, Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Ending of zoning and elimination of monopoly of manufacturers, agro-input suppliers and the buyers of farm produce – now there is competition and farmers can bargain the prices (PSTA-4, Priority area 2 & NAP Pillar 4).

**Gaps:**

Some agro-inputs are very expensive to buy. Farmers can't afford them (Contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6).

Lack of animal feeds manufacturing factories (Contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Sometimes artificial insemination of cows is unsuccessful – cows fail to conceive (Contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Sometimes agro-inputs are faked (Contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Seeds and fertilizers are not availed to farmers in time (Contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority areas 3&4; and NAP Pillars 1&3).

In some cases, farmers are not involved in setting prices for their produce especially in cases

where they are not consulted but are simply informed of what should be done (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 2 and NAP Pillar 4).

Lack of market for some crops especially vegetables, Moringa and macadamia (PSTA-4 Priority area 2 and NAP Pillar 4).

Lack of alternative grass seeds to replace the Napier grass which got diseased (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Inadequate crop storage facilities.

Lack of agricultural insurance services (contrary to PSTA-4 Priority areas 3&4 and NAP Pillars 1&3).

Limited access to agricultural finance (contrary to PSTA-4 Priority areas 3&4 and NAP Pillars 1&3).

Limited access to land for agricultural use – land use consolidation policy not well implemented (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Limited district budgets – cannot fully finance all prioritized needs of farmers (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Unwillingness of the private sector to invest in agriculture (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Inadequate education of farmers by agronomists and veterinarians (contrary to NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Failure of the Business Development Fund to achieve its mission (contrary to PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

The above policy alignments are indication of agricultural production enhancement through implementing specific agro-projects; creation of enabling environment by constructing farm structures and facilities like terraces and dams for agricultural production; and enabling farmers to access good price by eliminating monopoly of buyers for their farm products.

However, the gaps are indicative of limited empowerment of farmers for agricultural production as evidenced by the limitations cited above. Agriculture is unlikely to be profitable in circumstances where agro inputs are expensive and sometimes faked; farmers have limited access to land; farmers cannot access finance for agriculture; they lack access to agricultural insurance; inputs like seeds and fertilizers are not availed in time; inadequate skilling of farmers by agronomists and veterinarians; lack of crop storage facilities; limited access to good markets for the farm products; expensive animal feeds etc. In order to make agriculture profitable and

enjoyable, it is critical that those issues be looked into so as to sustain and enhance agricultural production, post-harvest handling and marketing.

**Table 6: Level of farmers’ awareness and participation in agriculture policy**

<b>Objective 3: Level of farmers’ awareness and participation in agriculture policy planning, implementation and evaluation at both national and local levels</b>
<p><b>Alignments:</b></p> <p>Many farmers are aware, but not all.</p> <p>Some farmers participate in the agriculture-related Imihigo process (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6);</p>
<p><b>Gaps:</b></p> <p>Some farmers got to know of the Imihigo when TI-Rw sent forms to their cooperative to fill in their agriculture needs (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).</p> <p>Participation for some citizens is still lacking as they are just informed instead of being consulted (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).</p> <p>Others are left out of the process when the officials simply sample some farmer groups and leave out others (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&amp;6).</p>

The above alignments are an indication of some effectiveness in mobilizing and sensitizing the farmers. However, the gaps indicate that the efforts to make farmers aware and to participate in policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation were not substantial enough to impact every farmer. This is an area that calls for improvement.

**Table 7: Policy reforms in agriculture fit to the Rwandan social and political context**

<b>Objective 4: Policy reforms in agriculture fit to the Rwandan social and political context</b>
<p><b>Alignments:</b></p> <p>The reforms provide for citizens’ participation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the agriculture related district performance based contracts – ‘Imihigo’ (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).</p> <p>The social aspect lies within the act of teaming up and dealing with their well-being concerns; and the political aspect being envisaged in the involvement of various political structures within the country (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).</p> <p>The implementation of strategies align well with the national policies like the National Strategy</p>

for Transformation (NST-1) 2017 – 2024 and the National Decentralization Policy.

**Gaps:** Irregularities in implementing the reforms, which result in low participation of farmers in the Imihigo e.g. informing rather than consulting farmers (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6).

The contents in the table above are an indication of agriculture policy reforms being in line with Rwanda’s social and political context. The gaps indicate that there is need to avoid irregularities in policy reform implementation.

### **Table 8: Power and resources are distributed in agriculture in favour of citizens**

#### **Objective 5: Power and resources are distributed in Agriculture sector in favour of citizens**

##### **Alignments:**

In line with gender mainstreaming strategy, many women are members of farmer groups and are involved in the agriculture – related Imihigo (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).

Some needs and concerns of farmers are worked on using the portion of the district budget allocated to agriculture (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 5; PASTA-4, Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Some farmers are able to influence decision-making on agriculture matters via the Imihigo process (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6). Eg. The number of women is very big in agriculture and are the ones with a high percentage in cooperatives. Their voices are also heard in those cooperatives”.

##### **Gaps:**

Youths (young farmers) are still low in their involvement in agriculture due to lack of land to farm and the fact that graduates have a negative attitude towards farming (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6).

District budgets are still low and allocation towards agriculture is still limited, so not all farmers’ priority needs and concerns are worked on (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 5; PSTA-4 Priority 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Women are involved in agriculture in a big number but most of them do it on small scale land.

The above alignments are indicative of the effectiveness of Rwanda’s gender mainstreaming strategy and farmers’ level of involvement in decision making on agriculture related matters. The gaps illustrate the need to increase youths’ involvement in agriculture; increase budget allocation towards agriculture and farmers’ ability to influence decision making.

**Table 9: Agricultural incentives**

**Objective 6: Agricultural incentives that shape the behaviours of key actors in the agricultural value chain**

**Alignments:**

Farmers are incentivized by advising them to grow high-value crops like Irish potatoes from which they obtain big profits (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority 6).

Some farmers are connected to good market of their farm produce even before they harvest, a factor that boosts their moral to produce with hope of obtaining good income when they sell (PSTA-4, Priority area 2 and NAP Pillar 4).

The elimination of zoning and monopoly of buyers has incentivized farmers because they can now participate in deciding to whom they will sell their farm produce depending on the price which the buyer is willing to offer to the farmers (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6; PSTA-4, Priority area 2 and NAP Pillar 4).

The provision of improved seeds and fertilizers to farmers for increased crop production (NST-1 Pillar 1; PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

**Gaps:**

Some actions are demoralizing to farmers e.g. a case of farmers in Rwabicuma – Nyanza, who were not involved in price setting for their milk and the farmers who were told to sell their vegetables not later than 11:00am all of which resulted in farmers selling their produce at unfairly low prices (contrary to PSTA-4 Priority 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

The alignments above demonstrate efforts made to enable farmers to benefit from agriculture. The gaps are indicative of some governance/service delivery issues which tend to negatively affect farmers in carrying out their farming activities. In turn, this affects the levels of agricultural production.

**Table 10: Effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms**

<b>Objective 7: Effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms in place at the national and local level for monitoring agriculture development programs</b>
<b>Alignments:</b>  The effectiveness and efficiency lies in farmers participation in the Imihigo process to voice out their needs and concerns, and also to receive feedback about the same (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority area 6).
<b>Gaps:</b>  To some extent the transparency and accountability mechanisms were ineffective and inefficient e.g.  The case of RDDP in which farmers were required to provide a 40% part of the investment and the project could support them to get another 60% in order to buy modern cows to increase milk production, but the project never fulfilled its commitment (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6; PSTA-4 Priority 4 and NAP Pillar 1).  A case of the Avocado growing project whereby farmers were told to surrender their land to a businessman to for him to grow avocado near the dams that were constructed in Nyagisozi and Rwabicuma sectors (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6; PSTA-4 Priority 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

The above alignment is a reflection of effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms for monitoring agriculture development programs. On the other hand, the gaps reflected some level of ineffectiveness and inefficiency which thus calls for addressing.

**Table 11: Specific constraints and opportunities to induce change in agriculture sector**

<b>Objective 8: Specific constraints and opportunities for collective efforts to induce change in the agriculture sector</b>
<b>Alignments:</b>  Existing opportunities are:  Cultivation of high-value fruits and vegetables e.g. Irish potatoes – higher profits, incentive for agricultural investment (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3). Government subsidies on seeds, fertilizers and agro-machinery – lower investment costs, incentive for agricultural investment (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3). Infrastructure development e.g. dams, storage facilities etc. – agriculture production support

services (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).  
Good land for mechanization in Kayonza district – an opportunity for mechanization  
Low taxation on agricultural production – an incentive to investing in agriculture (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).  
Inexistence of aquarium and ponds – a good investment niche to exploit  
Existence of graduates from IPRC and TVET schools – skilled labour for use

#### **Gaps:**

Constraints include:

Lack of market for some crops (PSTA-4 Priority area 2 and NAP Pillar 4).

Scarcity of land for agriculture use (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6; and PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3)

Expensive agro-inputs and some have been faked (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6; PSTA-4 Priority 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Lack of better grass to replace the existing Napier grass which got diseased (NST-1 Pillar 3, Priority areas 5&6; PSTA-4 Priority 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Delay in availing selected seeds to farmers (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Delay in availing fertilizers to farmers (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Fake irrigation machines (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Fake vegetable seeds (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority areas 5&6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Lack of educating farmers by agronomists and veterinarians (PSTA-4 Priority areas 1&4; and NAP Pillars 1&2).

Poor performance of Business Development Fund in achieving its mission (PTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Limited district budgets yet agriculture projects are expensive to implement (PTA-4 Priority areas 3& 4 and NAP Pillars 1&3).

Unwillingness of the private sector to invest in agriculture (NST-1 Pillar 1 Priority area 6 and Pillar 3 Priority area 6).

Inadequate communication channels to sensitize potential agriculture investors (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

Lack of capital: inexistence of special bank for farmers (PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Lack of insurance for farmers (PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).  
 Farmers voice is not heard. They are sometimes just informed instead of being consulted (NST-1 Pillar 3, priority area 6).  
 Farmers are not involved in setting prices of their produce (NST-1 Pillar 1 priority area 6 and Pillar 3 priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).  
 Artificial insemination of cows sometimes fails (NST-1 Pillar 1 priority area 6 and Pillar 3 priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 4 and NAP Pillar 1).

Alignments above indicate opportunities which are enabling factors for agricultural production and which farmers should exploit to benefit from agriculture. The gaps on the other hand are indicative of limitations which the government and other partners in agriculture sector development should appropriately address if agriculture policy reforms are to make positive impact.

**Table 12: Risk coping mechanisms to help farmers deal with risks in agriculture sector**

**Objective 9: Risk coping mechanisms in place to help farmers deal with pests and diseases, market and weather related risks in agricultural sector**

**Alignments:**

Farmers being connected to buyers even before they harvest their crops (e.g. a case of a cooperative in Kabarondo-Kayonza) – mitigating lack of market for farm produce (PSTA-4, Priority area 2 and NAP Pillar 4).

Construction of dams and terraces in Kabarondo and Murama sectors – mitigating effects of adverse weather conditions (NST-1 Pillar 1, Priority area 6; PSTA-4 Priority area 3 and NAP Pillar 3).

**Gaps:**

Pesticides and disease combating agro-chemicals are expensive and therefore unaffordable by farmers (NAST-1 Pillar 1, Priority 6).

Sometimes the agro-chemicals are faked and so they become ineffective in controlling the pests and diseases (NAST-1 Pillar 1, Priority 6).

The alignments above are indicative of some efforts made in enabling farmers to cope up with risks of market accessibility and weather adversity. The gaps indicate the factors which are still making farmers remain vulnerable to production risks especially as regards animal and crop health.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

In the context of political economy, farmers are enabled to a certain extent to participate in collective efforts for inducing agriculture sector development, but these efforts are greatly compromised by various limitations for example: informing farmers rather than consulting them, providing fake agro-chemicals and irrigation machines, failure of agronomists and veterinarians to educate farmers, delayed provision of selected seeds and fertilizers to farmers, limited access to finance and inadequate risk-coping mechanisms.

It is therefore concluded that the government and its partners to a certain extent empowered farmers to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the agriculture related district performance contracts 'Imihigo', but there are still several concerns that need to be adequately addressed in order to improve the empowerment.

#### ***Agricultural structures enable farmers' participation in agriculture-related imihigo.***

- Formal and non-formal agriculture structures are effective to a certain extent in channelling farmers' needs and concerns on agriculture-related matters.
- The structures are effective to a certain extent in providing farmers with feedback regarding their needs and concerns on agriculture-related matters.
- The structures are also effective to a certain extent in helping farmers to demand accountability regarding their needs and concerns on agriculture-related matters.
- Transparency International Rwanda is very instrumental in helping farmers to participate in the agriculture-related Imihigo (a respondent revealed that they came to learn about farmer consultations when TI-Rwanda brought papers to their group for them to fill in their priority needs and concerns).

#### ***Factors that enabled farmers' participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs of the Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA4)***

- Existence of agriculture structures through which the farmers could voice their views and opinions provided opportunity for them to participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programs of the PSTA-4.
- Farmers were motivated by the fact that some of their needs and concerns were being addressed (for example increase in milk, fruits and banana production; construction of dams and terraces; and the elimination zoning and monopoly of manufacturers agro-inputs and buyers of farm produce).

### ***Level of farmers' awareness and participation in agriculture policy planning, implementation and evaluation at both national and local levels***

- Farmers were aware of their right to participate in agriculture policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- The status of awareness is attributed to the efforts and intervention by TI-Rwanda, and the Imbaraga project.

### ***How policy reforms in agriculture fit to the Rwandan social and political context***

- Compared to the past, some reforms now considerably reflect on the wishes of citizens and are easily implemented (for example allocating storage facilities, constructing dams and terraces where they are needed).
- implementation strategies align well with the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (as revised in 2015), and the other national policies like the National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1) 2017 – 2024 and the National Decentralization Policy.

### ***How power and resources are distributed in Agriculture sector in favour of citizens***

- A large proportion of women are involved in the agriculture sector not only as members but also as leaders of their respective groups and their voices are heard through the existing agriculture structures.
- There is very low involvement of young people in agriculture due to unwillingness of the youths to join the sector after they graduate (poor attitude towards agriculture) and lack of land on which to do the farming.
- Some farmers are able to influence decision-making on agriculture matters via the existing structures and their voices are heard.
- Some farmers are unable to influence decision-making when they are instead influenced by officials to grow certain crops which moreover don't have market, provided with fake agro-inputs (like the case of the irrigation machines which failed to function) and when they are not involved in setting prices for their produce.

### ***Agricultural incentives that shape the behaviours of key actors in the agricultural value chain***

- Farmers are incentivized by advising them to grow high-value crops like Irish potatoes from which they obtain big profits.
- Farmers are also connected to good market of their farm produce even before they harvest, a factor that boosts their moral to produce with hope of obtaining good income when they sell.

- The elimination of zoning and monopoly of buyers has incentivized farmers because they can now participate in deciding to whom they will sell their farm produce depending on the price which the buyer is willing to offer to the farmers.
- The provision of improved seeds and fertilizers to farmers for increased crop production.

***Effectiveness and efficiency of transparency and accountability mechanisms in place at the national and local level for monitoring agriculture development programs***

- The transparency and accountability mechanisms are effective and efficient to the extent of farmers’ participation in the agriculture-related Imihigo, and the use of the Toll-free number to report mal-practices.
- There are gaps in exercising transparency and accountability mechanisms in the monitoring of agriculture development programs for example: the case of the RDDP in which farmers were told to mobilize 40% of agriculture investment so that the project would subsidize with 60%, but was never fulfilled and the line ministry never came to explain to the farmers; and the case of Avocado growing program in which farmers were told to surrender their land to a businessman to grow the Avocadoes in areas near the dams which had been constructed in Rwabicuma and Nyagisozi). This led to failure of continuing with the programs and farmers ended up making huge losses.

***Specific opportunities for collective efforts to induce change in the agriculture sector***

- Cultivation of high-value fruits and vegetables e.g. Irish potatoes – higher profits, incentive for agricultural investment
- Government subsidies on seeds, fertilizers and agro-machinery –lower investment costs, incentive for agricultural investment
- Infrastructure development e.g. dams, storage facilities etc. – agriculture production support services
- Good land for mechanization in Kayonza district – an opportunity for mechanization
- Low taxation on agricultural production – an incentive to investing in agriculture
- Inexistence of aquarium and ponds – a good investment niche to exploit
- Existence of graduates from IPRC and TVET schools – skilled labour for use

***Risk coping mechanisms in place to help farmers deal with pests and diseases, market and weather related risks in agricultural sector***

- In the case of market, farmers are connected to buyers early enough even before they harvest (a case of a cooperative in Kabarondo in Kayonza district).

- In the case of adverse weather, the government constructed some dams to ensure reliable supply of water for agriculture
- Regarding the risk of poor soil fertility, farmers are provided with fertilizers only that they usually delay in doing so.

## 5.2 Recommendations

From data analysis, the study identified a number of issues of concern and generated respective recommendations as indicated in the table below.

**Table 13: Identified issues and respective recommendations**

No	Identified issue	Recommendations
1	Limited access by citizens to land for agriculture production	Government to identify limitations in Land Consolidation Policy implementation and address them to make the policy more beneficial to citizens.
2	Delay in availing selected seeds and fertilizers to the farmers	District officials together with the sector agronomists and farmer group leaderships should draw up seed and fertilizer distribution plans well in advance to ensure that farmers receive those agro-inputs in time
3	Expensiveness and poor quality agro-inputs	Farmers should be involved in bargaining for fair priced inputs. Government should certify agro-input dealers in the country and monitor the quality of the goods they sell to farmers. Also, government should make subsidy for those specific agro-inputs that farmers consider as expensive.
4	Limited district budget allocation towards agriculture projects	Districts should increase on their budgetary allocation towards agriculture projects so as to enable them become substantially impactful to the citizens. Civil Society Organizations should advocate for districts' increased budgetary allocation towards agriculture.
5	Limited access by farmers to markets for their agricultural produce	Farmers, through their cooperatives, should actively become involved in identifying prospective buyers and bargaining for better prices for their farm produce
6	Limited access by farmers	Financial institutions should create an agricultural

	to finance for agriculture	finance desk in their structures to specifically provide financial services that appropriately address the needs of farmers.
7	Lack of farmers' access to insurance for their agricultural enterprises	Insurance institutions should create an agricultural insurance package that appropriately address the needs of farmers.
8	Limited education of farmers by agronomists and veterinarians	Agronomists and veterinarians should intensify their education services so as to become more impactful to the farmers. They should draw up education schedules together with farmer groups and include provisions for field visits to farmer localities. MINAGRI should monitor its field staff and do whatever is necessary for them to effectively and efficiently carry out their duties.
9	Limited access by farmers to affordable animal feeds	Farmer groups should pool their resources and partner with prospective private sector investors to construct animal feeds factories in their respective areas.
10	Lack of access to alternative grass seed to replace the Napier grass that got diseased	Agronomists and veterinarians should identify a better grass alternative and make appropriate distribution arrangements with farmers for them to obtain the better grass
11	Informing farmers on what should be done instead of consulting them over their priority needs	Farmers should be fully allowed to present their priorities during the Imihigo planning sessions. They should also be allowed to voluntarily participate in agricultural projects of their choice. Civil Society Organizations should monitor transparency and accountability mechanisms in order to assess their effectiveness for the benefit of the citizens.
12	Failure of the business development fund (BDF) to achieve its mission	Government should identify limitations in the operationalization of the fund and address them appropriately so as to make the fund more impactful
13	Unwillingness of the private sector to invest in agriculture	Make agriculture attractive to private investors so as to increase their willingness to invest in agriculture. For example, provide communication channels through which potential investors can be sensitized on benefits

		of investing in agriculture; and provide investment incentives like low taxation, tax holiday where appropriate, fair business competitiveness, easier registration of businesses etc.
14	Sometimes failure of cows to conceive when subjected to artificial insemination	MINAGRI through its Veterinarians should find out the causes of failure of artificial insemination services to cows and address them appropriately. Higher conception rates for the cows will increase animal production levels. Alternatively, MINAGRI should promote 'embryo transplantation' ( <i>gutera insoro</i> ) because this is more efficient than artificial insemination ( <i>gutera intanga</i> ).
15	Partial coverage of sectors when collecting farmers' views and opinions	District officials should avoid sampling sectors and should instead ensure that views and opinions are collected from farmers in all the sectors in each district

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