

Farmers' perceptions and opinions of the implementation process of food securing innovations in Tanzania

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Although Tanzania has experienced economic growth in the recent past, poverty and food insecurity are still high especially in rural areas where majority of the people are smallholder farmers. These mostly practice low yielding subsistence agriculture. The low productivity increases vulnerability of smallholder households to food insecurity and poverty. To address challenges in the rural food value chain in this country, the Trans-SEC project, developed ten food securing innovations by collaborating with farmers in a Participatory Action Research. A few farmers tried out these innovations to assess whether they could spur growth in food and income. This thesis is part of the ongoing monitoring of the innovations in the Trans-SEC project. It focused on three innovations; the Kitchen Gardens, Tied Ridges and the Poultry Crop Integration.

The study objective was to explain the implementation process by exploring the perceived facilitating and hindering factors and how these may contribute to the differences in the performance of the innovations hence gaining insights into the degrees of implementation. This was facilitated by asking interviewees to describe the implementation process, to explain the factors influencing farmers' decisions to implement the innovations, the perceived benefits from being part of the process and farmers' opinions about integrating African Indigenous Vegetable in the Kitchen Garden innovation. The farmers were assumed to be logical decision makers who decided to implement to achieve their varying goals. The Theory of Planned Behaviour and Diffusion of Innovations' theory were used to explain farmers' behaviour as they implemented.

A case study research approach was used to obtain qualitative data from farmers and experts from the two case study sites in Dodoma and Morogoro regions. A Net-Map tool, the "process Net-Map" and an interview guide were the main tools used during data collection from fifty-eight purposefully sampled interviewees. The process Net-Map is a mapping tool used to visualise and retrace implementation steps when studying a process. Data was obtained mainly using semi structured interviews. The narratives of interviewees as they explained the different aspects of the implementation process were transcribed. The interviewees had rated the implementation process on

several criteria using the process Net-Map towers leading to numerical data. The results obtained included were analysed using a mixed approach.

The implementation processes were mapped, visualizing the implementation paths of the innovations per village from farmers' and experts' perspectives. The main steps in the implementation of the three innovations such as situation analysis, development of innovations, designing the implementation plans, formation of implementation groups and preparation for installation, ongoing monitoring from which data was obtained and dissemination of obtained results at district and national level. Points of entry of challenges faced along the paths of the different innovations were highlighted. The different facilitating and hindering factors perceived to be influencing the extent to which farmers were using the innovations were identified and insights obtained into how these were influencing the extent to which farmers were using the innovation. It was noted that farmers gained a lot of knowledge. Several farmers believe that they gained in terms of food, knowledge and income. Farmers trusted the experts, received materials and support not only from the project staff but also from the groups. These factors facilitated the implementation process of the three innovations.

Farmers gained a lot of knowledge which when applied consistently under conducive circumstances will have a positive impact on their food and income situation. Factors within the environment and individual specific factors influenced farmers' decision to expand their degree of implementation of the three innovations. Farmers' beliefs and attitudes about their innovations influenced their decisions to expand scope of innovation use. Some of these observations were not only in line with the two theories used in the study but also with existing literature on studies that studied similar innovations in other countries. Using the process Net-Map as a tool to describe the process facilitated visualization of the processes of the implementation. It was an efficient tool for estimating perceptions. The data collected was from only two villages, it is cannot therefore be used to generalize about implementation processes in general. A further study is recommended using other methods such as quantitative studies to assess especially the perceived benefits from the implementation process.

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