Role of farmers’ participation in Land Use Consolidation in Rwanda: From principles to practice

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What is Land Consolidation?

Land Consolidation is generally defined as simple reallocation of parcels to overcome the effects of fragmentation.

But according to FAO, in reality land consolidation has been associated with broader social and economic reforms.

- Land consolidation is an instrument or entry point for rural development.
- Environmental conditions are being given increasing priority.
- Land consolidation now encompasses activities of village renewal.
- Land consolidation projects also serve to modernise tenure arrangements.
In the Rwandan context, the term ‘Land Consolidation’ and ‘Land Use Consolidation’ are often used interchangeably in law and policy.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) uses the term Land Use Consolidation
Land Use Consolidation in Rwanda

In Rwanda Land Use Consolidation Policy or Consolidation of Use Patterns enunciated started in 2008 as a main pillar of Crop Intensification Program (CIP) initiated in 2007 by the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI).

Farmers in a given area with closed parcels grow the same priority crops on a minimum size area of 5 ha in a synchronized manner on the provision of subsidized inputs by the government while the boundaries and rights on parcels remain intact.
Study Areas

NGOMA (Rutsiro District, Western Province)

NYIRAMUYENZI (Musanze District, Northern Province)

MUNINI (Nyamagabe District, Southern Province)

GISUNZU (Kayonza District, Eastern Province)
Data Collection Methods

• **Household survey in 4 villages**
  Total 86 represent 15% of total households in 4 villages

• **Semi structured interviews with key respondents**
  4 Local Government Officials (2 sector agronomists and 2 cells agronomists)
  1 National Government Official (Head of the Department of Crop Intensification and Food Security in Rwanda Agriculture Board)
  2 Researchers/Experts (Chief of Party of USAID Land Project in Rwanda and a university professor).
LUC implementation process and stakeholders’ involvement

Major Findings

The gap between LUC principles and their implementation

Land Consolidation Ministerial Order n°14/11.30 of 21/12/2010 (Article 14) addresses the role of farmers’ participation in LUC process.

‘To determine the possibilities of encouraging farmers and private investors to voluntarily participate in the program and to support it’.

‘To apply democratic principles, use of consultative methods on any issue to be tackled and provide avenue for members of the community to express their comments on various programs’.

The research found, the above principles were not applied in practice.
Major Findings

Level of farmers’ participation in LUC formulation

Does target driven top down approach violate farmer’s right to use and manage land?
Major Findings

*Level of farmers’ satisfaction with LUC policy and priority crops*

- 34% and 5% of the respondents are reported ‘unsatisfied’ and ‘very unsatisfied’ respectively with present LUC policy.
- 16% and 20% are found satisfied and very satisfied respectively.
- 25% of the respondents have reported neutral to negative feelings about LUC policy.
Major Findings

Farmers’ opinion on improving LUC program

Most of the farmers believe that LUC should be participatory.
Conclusions

• LUC process is target driven and follows a top-down approach.

• The fact of compelling the farmers to grow the priority crops chosen by the government in a top-down way is seen as government’s control over farmers’ land use right and may cause land use conflicts.

• This calls for an active involvement of local farmers in the decision making process on how to use their land through a bottom up approach instead of existing top-down approach.
Recommendations

• The level of farmers’ participation should move from passive level (i.e. information giving) to active level (i.e. taking part in decision making). Strong legal framework should be formulated. A post-project evaluation is also necessary.

• Closer coordination between government officials at national and local level is required

• Moving from ‘land use consolidation’ to ‘comprehensive land consolidation’ program.
Thank You