ABSTRACT

The current study examined the role of foreign aid in Agricultural development of Rwanda, taking Gatsibo District as the case study. The following specific objectives were formulated to guide the study. To review the nature and structure of foreign aid in Rwanda’s agricultural sector; to identify the determinants of agricultural production in Rwanda and to evaluate the role of foreign aid in improving agricultural production in Rwanda. A cross-sectional study design was used with the help of quantitative and qualitative study approaches. The study population was made up of NGO and government officials and farmers who have benefited from agricultural projects supported by aid from January 2009 to 2011 and these included selected household farmers on small scale and commercial farmers on large scale basis who number to 150. Major findings indicate that popular participation exists in the foreign aid activities implemented by NGOs in Rwanda but only at the farmers’ group level. Beneficiary farmers benefit in the formation of farmers’ organizations, attend farmers’ group or inter group meetings as well as training. Farmers also benefit in the selection of enterprise, eEnterprise, elect group leaders as well as representatives at various levels. The study further revealed that benefits farmers get from foreign aid spills in the farming sector included, formation of farmers’ organizations, attending trainings from foreign NGOs selection of enterprises to be supported in a given financial year and election of farmer group executives and representatives at various levels. Others were, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural funded activities, participation in procurement and supply of agricultural and technology input/implements to farmers, liaising with agricultural based NGOs and private sector for market support and participation in agricultural trade fairs plus group farming, proposal writing, social events. In conclusion, popular participation existed in the first phase of the foreign aid activities implementation (2001-2007) but has been on decline. Forms and scope of participation by the beneficiary farmers include selecting enterprises, forming farmers’ organizations, electing group leaders and representatives, attending training and group and inter-group meetings. Major recommendations are information on aid, use of agricultural extension service coordinators at district levels and increased participation of beneficiaries of agricultural foreign aid.