

INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE AS DRIVER TO KENYA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

KIMANI NDEGWA

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

P. O. Box 62000 – 00200

Nairobi, Kenya

&

DOROTHY WANJIRU GACHUGU

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

P. O. Box 62000 – 00200

Nairobi, Kenya

CITATION: Ndegwa, K. & Gachugu, W. D. Innovations in Agriculture as Driver to Kenya's Economic growth Entrepreneurship Development. *International Journal of Arts and Entrepreneurship* 4 (10), 79-101.

/

ABSTRACT

The Agriculture sector is the backbone of Kenya's economy directly contributing 26 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually and another 25 per cent indirectly. The sector accounts for 65 per cent of Kenya's total exports and provides more than 70 per cent of informal employment in the rural areas. The sector therefore is not only the driver of Kenya's economy but also the means of livelihood for the majority of Kenyan people. The Agriculture sector is largely dominated by micro and small enterprises (MSEs) that have low levels of innovation occasioned by low adoption of improved technologies leading to low productivity. These MSEs are also characterized by over reliance on labor intensive and low productivity technologies as well as over-reliance on rain fed agriculture and minimal irrigation use. The sector also lacks dominant enterprises and farming systems, a fact which complicates adoption of innovations in the sector. Innovative practices in the agriculture sector such as agro-processing and others have been identified to improve rural incomes by adding value to the produce; save on transport costs by delivering high-value/low-volume products and create opportunities for use of by-products as inputs in other farm operations. In the quest to innovate, agribusiness firms engage in networks and create links. However, such links are still weak and need to be strengthened through networking and collaborative research and dissemination of results into the communities. Private-public partnership policies, especially through business and collective associations, have proved important in addressing agricultural innovation challenges. Therefore, the study recommends a policy framework to encourage private participation in agricultural production activities. Public-private partnerships must be strengthened and extended beyond the traditional field of research and development (R&D). The key objective of this study was to investigate the role of agricultural innovation practices in influencing economic growth. Specifically the study sought to establish the contribution of innovation in agricultural production practices, agricultural value addition practices and agricultural marketing techniques in economic growth. The study employed desktop research by reviewing relevant research texts, scientific journals, websites, agricultural publications and magazines.

The study found that productivity is improved with enterprises earning more as depicted in the public-private partnership between agricultural input suppliers and the Kenyan government through the Kenya Horticulture Development Program (KHDP) in Western Kenya. The greenhouse innovation in tomato farming to address issues of seasonality and input intensity, improved marketing and production, and increased smallholder incomes.

The Innovative practices in the Agriculture sector such as agro-processing and others, improves rural incomes by adding value to the produce; save on transport costs by delivering high-value/low-volume products and create opportunities for use of by-products as inputs in other farm operations such as animal feeds, manure and fuel. Secondly, innovative practices in the Agriculture sector provide opportunities for reducing farm losses through conversion of perishable commodities into more durable products. It was also found that expanding farmer access to formal marketing channels depends on innovative responses to distances and maintenance of the cold chain in perishable agricultural products sector, and it was determined that innovations in the agricultural marketing system potentially match innovation in processing, with potential spillover into production technology and quality standard.

[View Full Text PDF Format](#)