THE EVALUATION OF RURAL SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT (RSSP) AND ITS PERFORMANCE IN RWANDA

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Project planning and management

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DECLARATION A

"This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a Degree or any other academic award in any University or Institution of Learning".

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DECLARATION B

"I confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under my supervision".

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother Rose Nyirasine who introduced me to the academic life, my late father MUGARAGU Védaste who wished me to go further in life and my sister Jacky Kamikazi who availed the necessary resources to support me through various stages of early education.
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ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

M&E : Monitoring and Evaluation
MINAGRIAR : Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
RSSP : Rural Sector Support Project
PCR : Project Completion Report
PPR : Project Performance Review
KPI : Key Performance Indicators
SFB : School of Finance and Banking
CAPMER : Centre d’Appui aux Petites et Moyennes Entreprises au Rwanda
KIST : Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
RIAM : Rwanda Institute Agency Management
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Projects are the lifeblood of the economy; they are regarded as an essential source of growth, employment, entrepreneurial skills, innovation and economic and social cohesion. If projects in the informal sector in developing countries are taken into account, however, their contribution to growth will be more significant. That is why Rural Sector Support Project (RSSP) has been initiated with an aim of revitalizing the rural economy.

This thesis entitled “The evaluation of Rural Sector Support Project-RSSP and its performance in Rwanda” is presented as a result of a research that was carried out in the concerned project i.e. RSSP. The study was carried out basing on three specific objectives, i.e.; to examine the performance of RSSP in Rwanda; to identify the effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goals and to find out the challenges faced by RSSP.

The study population comprised of 491 people; a sample of 220 respondents was chosen, using simple random sampling method. Questionnaires and interviews were used in collecting both primary and secondary data. The collected data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study was in form of a descriptive design, to describe quantitatively how evaluation has impact in improving the performance of projects.

The findings showed that the project has supported the improvement of farming practices using the farmer based extension approach. In addition, the study findings also show that the project has supported the commercialization of smallholder agriculture; the project had intensified production, expanded access to markets, and promoted agricultural value addition.

The study concluded that evaluations of performance measurement systems should focus both on the technical quality of the measurement system and on the extent to which performance information is used in managing to achieve performance goals and in providing accountability to key stakeholders and the public.
CHAPTER ONE
THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

BACKGROUND

Rwanda is entering a new era in which project performance is emphasized. It is committed to invest in development with better performance and results. It is looking for ways to improve performance in its overall strategy and policies particularly those that deal with low-income beneficiaries, women in development, environmental management, and support for micro entrepreneurs. And this better performance will be derived from properly executed evaluation strategically linked to all stages of the project cycle as vital management tools to improve the projects. (MINAGRIAR report 2002).

Effective management of project is vital for the development of any economy, because development is an important aspect for a developing economy like Rwanda.

For some time, Rwanda has been in a situation whereby projects were conceived, initiated and approved in an uncoordinated manner. Resources borrowed, grants received or national funds budgeted for development were not having the desired impact. The situation got worse since 1994 due to the emergency conditions and lack of human resources, which may have been understandable in the circumstances.

During the period after genocide (1994), lack of strategic aid coordination and structured national system to oversee the planning and management of project has led to a situation whereby poor monitoring of projects (often due to non-utilization of the critical path method and project evaluation review technique) may also have led to problems of unclearness in implementation and probably corrupt practices in procurement and personal management (World Bank report, 2000).

Projects make up around 50% of all work carried out. They can therefore be termed as an economically important category of activities that makes the subject of their
management worth studying. Unfortunately, many projects experience schedule slippage and cost overrun due to problems arising from inadequate monitoring and evaluation.

Question like «How is it that the majority of organizations are poor at managing projects?» Some people may think successful management be just common sense, but it is observed that common sense is not so common, because many of the aspects of proper management are neglected for example monitoring and especially at the implementation stages. (Harvey, 1999)

Project Evaluation aims at determining systematically and objectively the extent to which the actual results of the project have been matched to assess what lesson are to be learned from the variations got from performance and expectations.

Evaluation is an analytical process to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the effectiveness, efficiency, and significance or relevance of project, it critically examines and analyses the results of each task in the project cycle to provide the necessary feedback to project management ensuring cost effectiveness and safety in fulfilling project goals. (The Inter-American Development Bank: office of evaluation and oversight, 1998)

It is a basis for making decisions about a specific piece of work evaluated. This plan making process mainly involves making a choice between the possible alternatives to keep the project on track or making corrective actions.

Therefore, Evaluation is as important as the project itself and recommended as crucial aspects or important management tools towards improving project performance; this is because without proper project evaluation system, projects cannot be sure of achieving their goals and objectives.
Problem statement

Evaluation as major component of the project cycle for proper project management has been neglected and was considered given low priority, thus, accountability for funds that have been spent and blame for project failure not actively sought. Lack of transparency in implementation of projects and corrupt practices in procurement, contract awarding and personnel management have been a big problem leading to poor performance of most projects.

Projects are regarded as the enrichment for employment generation. Projects are an essential source of growth, employment, entrepreneurial skills, innovation and economic and social cohesion. If projects in the informal sector in developing countries are taken into account, however, their contribution to growth is more significant. (Boddy, 2002)

The Government of Rwanda is pursuing a comprehensive poverty reduction Programme. In order to achieve this program the government of Rwanda and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal resources instituted the Rural Sector Support Project which aims at revitalizing the rural economy and improving the quality of life of the rural poor through increased transfer of technical financial resources for the sustainable rural development. This project has to sustain poverty reduction through capacity building to facilitate efficient application of resources to the development and management of investments. (MINAGRIAR report, 2002).

In this regard, as the Rwandan Government has taken upon itself the enviable task of strengthening projects in the national development process; the study focused on evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the Rural Sector Support Project.
Purpose of the study

This study aimed at evaluating the performance of Rural Sector Support Project-RSSP in Rwanda. This would help to find out whether project evaluation in RSSP is a crucial management tool for improving RSSP performance, therefore make recommendations on major of improvements that can enhance proper project evaluation.

Objectives of the study

General objective

To evaluate Rural Sector Support Project in the economy of Rwanda.

Specific objectives

1. Examine the performance of Rural Sector Support Project in Rwanda;
2. Identify the effectiveness of Rural Sector Support Project in meeting its goals;
3. Find out the challenges faced by Rural Sector Support Project.

Research Questions

1. What is the performance of Rural Sector Support Project in Rwanda?
2. What is the effectiveness of Rural Sector Support Project in meeting its goals?
3. What are the challenges faced by Rural Sector Support Project?
Scope of the study

Geographical scope

The study was conducted in a Rural Sector Support Project-RSSP that is located in Kigali, Rwanda mainly in Gasabo District.

Content Scope

The study intended to examine the impact of evaluation in RSSP and how it raises its performance. It has further looked at the relationship between the independent variable (public project management practices) and dependent variable (RSSP performance).

Theoretical Scope

The theory of Evaluation by Mel Mark (1986) and the cognitive Evaluation theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) were confirmed or disproved in this study.

Time scope

The study took a period scope of 2007 to 2010 and it took three month that was from January to March.
Significance of the study

The following disciplines benefited from the findings of the study:

The *manager* of RSSP recognized the roles he had to play in implementing the evaluation practices and how the project can become effective on the basis of a proper evaluation system. It contributed to the improvement of Evaluation practices through effective and efficient design of public projects' implementation policies towards better performance;

The study would be useful for *future researchers* interested in carrying out research in the field concerned with proper Evaluation system that is why a copy will be handed over in the library;

The study was of great importance to the *researcher* due to the broad knowledge and understanding that have been achieved from the research especially in the field of project management.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined as they are used in the study:

**Performance**: is the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. In a contract, performance is deemed to be the fulfillment of an obligation, in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract.
**Project:** is any work that has a well defined objective in a specific time. A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service. Temporary means that a very project has a definite end. Unique means that the product or service is different in some distinguishing way from all similar products or services. A project may be also defined as an endeavor in which human (or machine), material and financial resources are organized in a novel way, to undertake a unique scope of work, of given specification, within constraints of cost and time, so as to deliver beneficial change defined by quantitative and qualitative objectives.

**Public project:** is a form of projects where the ownership is totally under the Government. Construction or development projects for public use, such as bridges, roads, and schools. Governments usually initiate several such programs in periods of economic decline to inject money in the economy (called pump priming) as wages to raise public spending power.

**Accountability:** Accountability refers to the process of "giving an account" or being answerable or capable of being accounted for. There are several dimensions to accountability. The first of these is "reporting," in which description is provided. A second phase of accountability is a "justifying analysis" or explanation. But accountability in its fullest sense may be more.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The study reviewed on terms of ideas put forward by different scholars and it provided conceptual clarifications to the field of evaluation of projects. Material was drawn from different textbooks on project management and evaluation. It included definitions of key concepts used in the study and contribution of evaluation to project management process. In this chapter, the theoretical framework has been expounded and available literature on the subject has been explored and examined in the subject as a basis for the discussion that follows:

Concepts, Opinions, Ideas from Authors/ Experts.

Project

A project according to Choudhury (1988) can be defined as anything that starts from scratch with a defined mission generates activities involving a variety of human and non-human resources all directed towards fulfillment of the mission and stops once the mission is fulfilled.

The project Management Institute defines as a one-short, time-limited, goal-directed, and major undertaking requiring the commitment of varied skills and resources. it also describes a project as a” combination of human and non-human resources pooled in a temporary organization to achieve a specific purpose” The purpose and the set of activity which can achieve that purpose distinguish one project from another.

According to Harvey (1999), a project can be defined as a non repetitive activity. He suggested that above definition needs to be augmented by other characteristics;
- It is goal oriented; it is being pursued with a particular end or a goal in mind;

It has a particular set of constraints-usually centered around time and resources;

- The output of the project is measurable;

- Something has been changed through the project being carried out.

Chary (1997) defines a project as any work that has a well defined objective or goal to the sequence of multitudinous activities required to be performed i.e. a project has an end.

Basu (1998) writes, a project is a particular job that needs to be done in connection with the general program. A project has a distinct objective, a clear-cut termination so it is included in a single use plan. Setting up the work in a project makes the task of managers easier. It sharpens the duties, simplifies control men who do the work can sense their accomplishment.

The chief virtue of a project lies in identifying a nice, neat work package within a bewildering array of objectives, alternatives and activities. In a nutshell, projects are a media through which activities are performed to meet the objectives, hence calling for management.

By definition, a project achieves a given objective a set time frame. Projects should be a response to a readily apparent need for economic and social growth in any sector in both developing and developed societies. (Louis, 1996)

A project can be defined in terms of its distinctive characteristics; “a project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or services”. Being temporary means that every project has a definite beginning and a definite end. Unique means that the product or service is different in some distinguishing way all similar products or service and designing a new transporting vehicle as examples of a project (Duncan, 1996)
Evaluation

Louis Goodman defines Evaluation as an analytical process to determine as systematically and objectively as possible, the effectiveness and efficiency and significance or relevance of projects. Evaluation should critically examine and analyze the results of each task in the integrated project cycle to provide the necessary feedback to project management ensuring cost effectiveness and safety in fulfilling project goals. This process will also accomplish three additional needs:

Provide rapid solutions to unexpected problems that might emerge during implementation;

Provide a sound basis for post-project assessment and evaluation;

Provide useful lessons to improve policies, plans and management for future projects. (Louis, 1982)

An evaluation studies the outcome of a project (changes in income, housing quality, benefits distribution, cost-effectiveness, etc.) with the aim of informing the design of future projects.

Bamberger describes evaluation as “mainly used to help in the selection and design of future projects. Evaluation studies can assess the extent to which the project produced the intended impacts (increases in income, better housing quality, etc.) and the distribution of the benefits between different groups, and can evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the project as compared with other options” (Bamberger, 1995).
Project performance

The term project performance in this study means a broad construct which captures what projects do, produce, and accomplish for the various departments with which they interact.

Bate (2009) refers to project performance as the output or results of a project as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives).

Theoretical perspectives

This study was guided by the theory initiated by Mel Mark who discusses why theory is important to evaluation practice. Although evaluation theory serves several purposes, perhaps it functions most importantly as a guide to practice. Learning the latest methodological advance—whether it’s some new statistical adjustment for selection bias or the most recent technique to facilitate stakeholder dialogue—without knowing the relevant theory is a bit like learning what to do without knowing why or when (Mel Mark, 2002).

What you risk is the equivalent of becoming really skilled at tuning your car’s engine without thinking about whether your transportation needs involve going across town, overseas, or to the top of a skyscraper. Will, Tom and Laura make the same point using a military metaphor: “Evaluation theories are like military strategies and tactics; methods are like military weapons and logistics,” they say. “The good commander needs to know strategy and tactics to deploy weapons properly or to organize logistics in different situations. The good evaluator needs theories for the same reasons in choosing and employing methods (Will et al., 1995).
The reasons to learn about evaluation theory go beyond the strategy/tactic or why/how distinction, however evaluation theory does more than help us make good judgments about what kind of methods to use, under what circumstances, and toward what forms of evaluation influence (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

First, evaluation theories are a way of consolidating lessons learned, that is, of synthesizing prior experience. Carol Weiss's work can help evaluators develop a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the way organizations make decisions and may be influenced by evaluation findings. Theories enable us to learn from the experience of others (as the saying goes, we don't live long enough to learn everything from our own mistakes). George, Michael and Daniel had this function of evaluation theory in mind when they said that evaluators who are unknowledgeable about theory are “doomed to repeat past mistakes and, equally debilitating, will fail to sustain and build on past successes (George et al., 1999).

Second, comparing evaluation theories is a useful way of identifying and better understanding the key areas of debate within the field. Comparative study of evaluation theory likewise helps crystallize what the unsettled issues are for practice. When we read the classic exchange between Michael Patton and Carol Weiss, for example, we learn about very different perspectives on what evaluation use can or should look like (Michael and Carol, 1988).

A third reason for studying evaluation theory is that theory should be an important part of our identities as evaluators, both individually and collectively. If we think of ourselves in terms of our methodological skills, what is it that differentiates us from many other people with equal (or even superior) methodological expertise? Evaluation theory. Evaluation theory, as Will Shadish said in his presidential address to the American Evaluation Association, is “who we are. But people come to evaluation through quite varied pathways, many of which don’t involve explicit training in evaluation. That there
are myriad pathways into evaluation is, of course, a source of great strength for the field, bringing diversity of skills, opinions, knowledge sets (Will, 1994).

**What is Evaluation?**

As defined by the American Evaluation Association (1993), evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programs, policies, personnel, products, and organizations to improve their effectiveness.

Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of data needed to make decisions, a process in which most well-run programs engage from the outset. Here are just some of the evaluation activities that are already likely to be incorporated into many programs or that can be added easily:

- Pinpointing the services needed for example, finding out what knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors a program should address

- Establishing program objectives and deciding the particular evidence (such as the specific knowledge, attitudes, or behavior) that will demonstrate that the objectives have been met. A key to successful evaluation is a set of clear, measurable, and realistic program objectives. If objectives are unrealistically optimistic or are not measurable, the program may not be able to demonstrate that it has been successful even if it has done a good job

- Developing or selecting from among alternative program approaches for example, trying different curricula or policies and determining which ones best achieve the goals
- Tracking program objectives for example, setting up a system that shows who gets services, how much service is delivered, how participants rate the services they receive, and which approaches are most readily adopted by staff.

- Trying out and assessing new program designs determining the extent to which a particular approach is being implemented faithfully by school or agency personnel or the extent to which it attracts or retains participants.

Through these types of activities, those who provide or administer services determine what to offer and how well they are offering those services. In addition, evaluation in education can identify program effects, helping staff and others to find out whether their programs have an impact on participants' knowledge or attitudes (American Evaluation Association, 1993).

The different dimensions of evaluation have formal names: process, outcome, and impact evaluation.

Rossi and Freeman (1993) define evaluation as "the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation, and utility of programs." There are many other similar definitions and explanations of "what evaluation is" in the literature. Our view is that, although each definition, and in fact, each evaluation is slightly different, there are several different steps that are usually followed in any evaluation. It is these steps which guide the questions organizing this handbook.
An overview of the steps of a "typical" evaluation follows:

**Step 1:** Get an Overview of the Program

**Step 2:** Determine Why You Are Evaluating

**Step 3:** Determine What You Need to Know and Formulate Research Questions

**Step 4:** Figure Out What Information You Need to Answer Questions

**Step 5:** Design the Evaluation

**Step 6:** Collect Information/Data

**Step 7:** Analyze Information

**Step 8:** Formulate Conclusions

**Step 9:** Communicate Results

**Step 10:** Use Results to Modify Program

Source: Rossi and Freeman, 1993.
Characteristics of a good evaluation process

Project Management Docs (2009) underlined that the evaluation process is to contribute to performance; it must also ensure stakeholders that it is:

*Impartial:*

Impartiality implies neutrality, transparency and fairness of the evaluation process, analysis and findings. There can be no vested interest or conflict by the evaluator the impartiality should come through in all aspects of the evaluation.

*Credible:*

The first essential for credibility is the trust stakeholders place on evaluator’s expertise and impartiality. Good evaluation research follows standards of discipline related to the appropriateness of the evaluation design and the reliability and validity of the data analysis, and makes explicit the logical connection between the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations.

*Useful:*

The full measure of an evaluation process is its effect on the people and organizations and the learn from it. Effects on evaluation consumers can scarcely be expected to be positive unless the evaluation products are timely contributions to decision making presented in clear and language that stakeholders could easily understand.
Participatory:

Contemporary evaluation practice places great emphasis on participation of all involved stakeholders, including mutual sharing of experience at all levels. Thus, the evaluation should reflect different stakeholder interests and perceptions.

Provide feedback:

The evaluation must be seen as a process that feeds back into decision making and organizational learning. Thus, the evaluation manager has particular responsibility for ensuring the systematic dissemination of findings to stakeholders, including project planners and policy makers.

Cost- beneficial:

As an investment, evaluations must balance the need for thoroughness and validity with validity of getting an appropriate return. They should add value to stakeholders experience with the project and tend to have the greatest impact when stakeholders invest in their own resources in the evaluation.

Why do Evaluation?

Evaluations serve many purposes. Before assessing a program, it is critical to consider who is most likely to need and use the information that will be obtained and for what purposes. Listed below are some of the most common reasons to conduct evaluations. These reasons cut across the three types of evaluation just mentioned. The degree to which the perspectives of the most important potential users are incorporated into an evaluation design will determine the usefulness of the effort. (Bamberger, 1995)
According to Weiss and Patton (1988), there are three reasons of evaluation:

- Evaluation for Project Management
- Evaluation for Staying on Track
- Evaluation for Project Efficiency

**Evaluation for Project Management**

Administrators are often most interested in keeping track of program activities and documenting the nature and extent of service delivery. The type of information they seek to collect might be called a "management information system" (MIS). An evaluation for project management monitors the routines of program operations. It can provide program staff or administrators with information on such items as participant characteristics, program activities, allocation of staff resources, or program costs. Analyzing information of this type (a kind of process evaluation) can help program staff to make short-term corrections ensuring, for example, that planned program activities are conducted in a timely manner. This analysis can also help staff to plan future program direction such as determining resource needs for the coming school year. Operations data are important for responding to information requests from constituents, such as funding agencies, school boards, boards of directors, or community leaders. Also, descriptive program data are one of the bases upon which assessments of program outcome are built it does not make sense to conduct an outcome study if results cannot be connected to specific program activities. An MIS also can keep track of students when the program ends to make future follow-up possible.
**Evaluation for Staying on Track**

Evaluation can help to ensure that project activities continue to reflect project plans and goals. Data collection for project management may be similar to data collection for staying on track, but more information might also be needed. An MIS could indicate how many students participated in a prevention club meeting, but additional information would be needed to reveal why participants attended, what occurred at the meeting, how useful participants found the session, or what changes the club leader would recommend. This type of evaluation can help to strengthen service delivery and to maintain the connection between program goals, objectives, and services.

**Evaluation for Project Efficiency**

Evaluation can help to streamline service delivery or to enhance coordination among various program components, lowering the cost of service. Increased efficiency can enable a program to serve more people, offer more services, or target services to those whose needs are greatest. Evaluation for program efficiency might focus on identifying the areas in which a program is most successful in order to capitalize upon them. It might also identify weaknesses or duplication in order to make improvements, eliminate some services, or refer participants to services elsewhere. Evaluations of both program process and program outcomes are used to determine efficiency.
Related studies

Several studies were related to this study and some researchers gave their opinions on the effect of evaluation in improving the project’s performance.

When a successful company invests time, money, and other resources in a project, its primary concern is always what it is getting in return for its investment. It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure these projects stay on schedule and within their approved budget. Performance measurement provides the project manager with visibility to make sure he is operating within the approved time and cost constraints and that the project is performing according to plan. It also alerts management if a project begins to run over budget or behind schedule so actions can quickly be taken to get the project back on track. (Wholey, 2003).

Measuring project performance is an important part of project and program management. It allows the project manager to identify cost and schedule problems early and take steps for remediation quickly. It starts with setting the standards for the size of work packages, applying credit for work performed, and which earned value metrics to track, which should be included in the project’s cost management plan. Measuring project performance provides the organization with a clear picture of the health of its projects and can instill confidence in the project teams. Additionally, these performance measures can help the project manager establish continuous improvement initiatives in areas where projects commonly perform at lower levels. The usefulness of measuring project performance is evident and as long as organizations do not become overwhelmed with them, these measures will remain important contributors to organizational success (David, 1997).
Common Challenges

House (2003) stated that the Project Managers can expect to face a number of challenges as they take on the responsibility of managing projects in your organization. Whatever the specifics of a particular situation, however, many of the challenges are faced by most project managers. Let’s review a few of these common challenges:

- **The Responsibility vs. Authority Trap**

  Firmly embedded in project management folklore is this one: the responsibility you’ve been given is not commensurate with the authority (or formal power) you believe you need to accomplish the mission. The size of the gap between responsibility and authority will partially depend upon the structure of your organization. If you’re in a purely functional organization – and in many cases, a matrix organization – you should not expect to be granted very much formal authority. The gap between responsibility and authority will be quite wide. To compensate for your perceived lack of formal authority, you’ll have to rely upon expert power (respect you can garner through superior knowledge or capability) or referent power (often accessed by practicing an excellent leadership style). You’ll also need to rely heavily upon your ability to influence and persuade (Guijt and Garenta, 1998).

- **Imposition of Unrealistic Targets**

  Sound project management practice suggests that project goals (cost, schedule, quality, and functionality) should be determined through a systematic process of understanding customer needs, identifying the best solution, and formal planning. Throughout this process, realistic assumptions about resource availability, quality of
materials, and work process (just to name a few factors) should be used. This approach yields a credible estimation of what is reasonably achievable. If this estimation does not meet business goals, then a systematic risk-vs.-return process should be pursued until it can be verified whether or not the targets can be met within a given level of elevated risk. That’s the process that should be followed (Gary, 1998).

Unfortunately, we live in a real world. Targets are far too often based on desire or a vague sense of what should be achievable, rather than driven by calculated business needs. In even more unfortunate circumstances, targets are developed before it’s even known what the project entails! In either case, the result is that impatience – rather than a rational process – drives the selection of the targets. From that point on, a desperate struggle begins, as the team tries to force the project to fit within the boundaries that have been drawn (Patton, 1997).

This practice puts project managers in a very difficult position, as it often sets them up for certain failure and severely undermines the planning process. Unfortunately, this phenomenon seems to have reached epidemic proportion: it’s one of the biggest complaints of practicing project managers today (Kesav, 1999).

* Perpetual Emphasis on Function*

If you’re managing a project in a functionally oriented organization, one of the more difficult challenges that you’ll face is getting team members to overcome their inherent tendency to think and act in terms of optimizing their own discipline, technical field, or department. It’s important to recognize that this phenomenon is fueled by three powerful influences. First, by definition, projects are temporary, but functions live on. In other words, a person often considers his or her work group to be home; the project is just a passing state of existence. Second, unless contemplating a formal career change to project management, a person considers his or her discipline or area of expertise as
the work focus. This means that he or she will likely be committed to ensuring the well-being of that area. This strong loyalty could, for example, give rise to counterproductive situations, such as team members using your project funds to advance their discipline—perhaps in excess of what customer requirements dictate. Finally, there’s the power of the paycheck. Simply stated, most people tend to pledge allegiance to the source of their paycheck. For most people in most organizations, that’s their work group or functional department, not you (Herman, 1987).

* The Dual Responsibility Trap

Most project managers are asked to wear two hats. They must perform their job duties while acting as the project manager. This situation may present additional challenges for you. At the center of this dilemma is the issue of allegiance. Imagine for a moment that you’re facing a critical decision. Unfortunately, what’s best for the project will negatively impact your work group but what benefits your work group will hurt your project. What’s the right decision? What do you do? A more fundamental problem of the dual responsibility trap is figuring out how to divide your time and attention between the two roles. How much should you allocate to each? How long can you try to satisfy both before you realize you’re working most nights and weekends? Finally, a third issue often surfaces in the form of the two boss syndrome.

The project manager reports to his or her functional supervisor and to the person who manages the project management function in the organization. Again, this is a difficult situation for most project managers (Casley and Kumar, 1987).
Many misunderstandings and disconnects between project managers and organizational management can be traced to the fundamental conflict between the certainty that management requires to properly run the business and the inherent uncertainty of project work. Cost and schedule estimating provides us with an excellent example (Cadle and Yeates, 2004).

Suppose you’re just beginning a project. It’s likely that you have limited information on this project and there’s a significant degree of uncertainty. In a situation such as this, project management practice suggests that you would be well advised to use ranges of values when providing estimates on cost and schedule. The size of your range would reflect a level of accuracy consistent with the extent of your knowledge and the amount of uncertainty. Unfortunately, many project managers today would receive a very unfavorable response from their organizational management to that type of “crude” estimate. It doesn’t provide the certainty that management requires for approval.

The uncertainty associated with projects exists throughout the life of the project: it simply never goes away—nor does management’s craving for certainty (Mel Mark 2002).

When engaging in any business training initiative, companies want to establish methods of evaluation for that training. The key issue is whether the training was worthwhile, not only for the employees but for the organization’s financial outlay. With project management training, you will find that extensive studies are not as prevalent as individual internal ones and they are commonly guided by similar theoretical models (Basu, 1998).
Project Management Problem-Solving Skills

http://www.artemisintl.com

Project managers face problems with every project.

According to Steve Yager, when building problem-solving into your project and problem collaboration into your project team you will ensure that problems are dealt with promptly. You will also establish a track record of being able to identify and deal with problems. This is a useful slice on your project manager’s belt.

Your goal is to identify problems early before they have an impact on the project. It is far easier to deal with a problem before it becomes a crisis. Here are some tips on problem-solving methods your project.

Build a Problem Solving Atmosphere

- Encourage team members to bring their concerns forward. They may see a problem you do not. They may have solutions you have not thought of.
- Raise the issue of possible problems at each project meeting.
- Explain to team members how important it is to bring any problems forward and encourage them to offer solutions as well.
- Often project managers are known for not wanting to hear about problems. Team members may be reluctant to share their concerns. Examine yourself as a project manager and see if you have this flaw. If so, you should address it immediately.
Use Structured Problem-Solving

- Define a structured step-by-step method for solving problems. The method should be clear to all team members. When a problem is suspected or arises you will already have the process in place for dealing with it.
- Root cause analysis of the problem is the first step in problem-solving. Not only does it expose the cause of the problem, but it may reveal other problems that were not exposed.
- Don’t rush into solutions. It is always tempting to propose a solution to a problem to get it taken care of. The first and most important step is not to find a solution. It is to identify the root cause of the problem so you can clearly understand it.
- Once you know the root cause of a problem you should discuss the impact on the project and explore all options. Examine all alternatives. The first option may not always be the best. Brainstorming sessions are a good method to find alternative answers to a problem.
- Select an approach to solve the problem and examine the impact the solution will have on the project. Once again do not jump into implementing a solution. If the solution makes the problem worse your problem just got bigger.
- Plan and execute the solution. Verify the results of the solution actually solve the problem and does not create additional problems or issues.
- If the solution involves changes to the project, update the project plan and notify any relevant stakeholders.
- The last step should be to deal with the root cause of the problem. If it is a team member coach them or examine their role on the team. If a process is flawed implement a process improvement plan. The goal is not to place blame. The goal is to improve your problem-solving skills and those of your team.
When a project is delivered with a hidden problem it exposes the company to risks. Every effort should be taken to find problems early in the project stage. Using structured problem-solving techniques and developing an open approach to problems with team members will help expose them early.

Not only will this help keep the project on track, but it will help you deliver a project on time, on budget and problem free.

**Considerations**

According to Boddy (2002), it is difficult to present studies that have treated general aspects of project management training in all industries. This is due to the fact that the needs and mechanisms that define various industries are frequently diverse. Therefore, studies done in this field are often individual case studies that focus on a particular organization’s internal performance, an industry sector or a specific index of investigation. There are, however, two primary studies:

The Kirkpatricks’s study (1959) included four essential levels for evaluation. These levels, or focuses, were designed to provide the optimal reflection of whether a training program was effective. The first evaluation relied on employee feedback as to whether or not they liked the program. The second sought to determine if the employees believed that the program had been truly instructive. The third evaluation considered whether the employees could introduce the principles of the program into their actual behaviors. The final step was to see if those changed behaviors yielded any tangible benefits in business practice (Donald and Kirkpatrick, 1959)

In 1970, Jack Phillips added a fifth evaluation measure called ROI, or return on investment. Despite the fact that companies often want the feedback of trainers and
trainees involved in related initiatives, they must determine if the project management training is cost-effective; it must be fiscally sound in order to warrant further efforts. This is why many organizations will add a return on investment element to their studies. Related investments that are targeted for investment include, but are not limited to, human resources, equipment used, training costs and labor expenses.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research methodology included the research design methods and techniques of data collection which were used in conducting the research study.

Research design

The study used descriptive research design. Descriptive studies are non-experimental researches that describe the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. The researcher used this type of design to describe quantitatively how evaluation has impact in improving the performance of projects.

The design was based on the result from the questionnaire and interviews with staff of RSSP and its beneficiaries.

Research population

The population for this study was obtained from the staff of RSSP and its beneficiaries, staff of MINAGRI as the ministry in charge of the supervision of RSSP in Rwanda. The total target population was 491 employees.
Sample size

The sample for this study was 220 respondents chosen from all concerned officials of RSSP, MINAGRIAR and the RSSP’s beneficiaries.

The Simple random sampling method was used with a view of selecting respondents and the Sloven’s formula was used to determine the sample size.

Sloven’s formula:

\[
N
\]

\[
n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}
\]

Where

- \( n \) = number of sample
- \( N \) = total population
- \( e \) = level of significance 0.05

This table shows the number of respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSSP staff</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries of RSSP</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINAGRIAR staff</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sampling procedure

The probability and non probability sampling techniques were used. In determining the sample, the simple random sampling was used; Sloven’s formula was used to determine the sample size and purposive sampling to pick the key respondents for interview.

Research instruments

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through the following instruments; questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were collected from the internet, books, magazines, bulletins and reports.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were given to the staff of RSSP and its beneficiaries, and to the staff of MINIGRIAR. The questionnaire was constructed in the format of a likert scare 4 points (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree).

Interviews

These consisted of face to face oral questions between the interviewer and the interviewee in order to get depth response.
Validity and reliability of research instruments

The validity of a research instrument is the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure, while its reliability is the degree to which it consistently measures whatever it is measuring (Amin, 2005).

A pre-test was conducted in order to test and improve on the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and interview guide. The panel of three students in postgraduate studies was used to evaluate whether each question has provided ample information; this panel has evaluated questionnaires and interview guide.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated from the formula below:

\[
CVI = \frac{n}{N}
\]

Where, \( N \): Total number of items
\( n \): number of items declared valid in the questionnaire/interview

\[
\frac{23}{26} = 0.8 \text{ for the questionnaire}
\]
\[
\frac{24}{25} = 0.9 \text{ for the interview}
\]

Since the CVI of both instruments were greater than 0.7, both instruments were valid.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the administration of the questionnaires

1. An introduction letter was obtained from the School of Post Graduate Studies and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective respondents.

2. When approved, the researcher secured a list of the qualified respondents from the projects' authorities in charge and select through systematic random sampling from this list to arrive at the minimum sample size.

3. The respondents were explained about the study.
4. The researcher has reproduced more than enough questionnaires for distribution.

*During the administration of the questionnaires*

1. The respondents were requested to answer completely and not to leave any part of the questionnaires unanswered.
2. The researcher emphasized on the retrieval of the questionnaires within five days from the date of distribution.
3. On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked if all were answered.

*After the administration of the questionnaires*

The data was gathered, collated, encoded into the computer and statistically treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Data Analysis and interpretation**

The data collected were coded and presented by using statistical tabulation through Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS). To interpret the responses of the respondents, the following values and interpretation were used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean range</th>
<th>Response mode</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.26- 4.00</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51-3.25</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.76-2.50</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.175</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher:

1. Seek permission to adopt the standardized questionnaire on projects’ performance through a written communication to the author.
2. The respondents were coded instead of reflecting the names.
3. Solicit permission through a written request to the concerned officials of the projects included in the study.
4. Request the respondents to sign in the *Informed Consent Form*
5. Acknowledge the authors quoted in this study and the author of the standardized instrument through citations and referencing.
6. Present the findings in a generalized manner.

Limitation during research work

It was difficult to collect required information from respondents because of the lack of sufficient time to respond properly to the questionnaire since all respondents have responsibilities at their jobs; so it was quite hard to make appropriate schedules for proper information gathering. In addressing this problem, the researcher sought the help of research assistants. The researcher is therefore sure that the above constraint did not compromise the research exercise and the findings of the study in any way.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Performance of RSSP in Rwanda

Under this statement, the researcher intended to find out the performance of RSSP in Rwanda. The answers to this statement were obtained from project manager, RSSP staff, beneficiaries of RSSP, MINAGRIAR staff and their responses were summarized as below:

Table 2: Respondents' views on performance of RSSP in Rwanda (n=220)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and the approval of a national strategy and action</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project has provided financing to help improve productivity and production through sustainable intensification of farming systems</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project has supported the commercialization of smallholder agriculture</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents' views on whether the project had strengthened farmers' organizations and cooperatives</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Total</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in the table 2 indicated that the respondents rated the level of preparation and the approval of a national strategy and action to be high (3.30).

The respondents’ views clarify how RSSP effectiveness is in implementing the national strategy and action plan. The same respondents rated the level of finance and improvement of productivity and production to be moderate (mean=3.00). The interview with some of the respondents mainly with the project manager, RSSP staff and MINAGRIAR staff revealed that:

The project has supported the improvement of farming practices using the farmer based extension approach. Under this approach, lead farmers are trained in the use of improved inputs and improved crop management practices, and they have received support to enable them to transmit their knowledge to other farmers in their communities.

The project has increased the availability and use of improved seed and planting materials in the irrigated marshlands and surrounding hillsides. An interview with the respondents indicated that the project has financed two main activities; (i) provision of improved seed and planting materials for use by the farmers and (ii) establishment of selected cooperatives and farmers as certified seed producers.

The project has promoted increased use of integrated pest management practices in areas targeted by the project. The project has financed (i) production and distribution of integrated pest management instructional materials (ii) training of farmers in integrated pest management practices and (iii) establishment of pest monitoring programs in the areas targeted by the project.

The project has supported the commercialization of smallholder agriculture through intensification of production, expansion of access to markets, and promotion of agricultural value addition. The study also revealed that, using a holistic approach, the project had simultaneously addressed constraints in the upper (production), middle (processing), and lower (marketing) stages of the commodity chain.
However, on the other side the respondents who disagreed indicated that project has failed to show performance indicators that includes increased production, increased professionalism of farmers’ associations and cooperatives, increased value adding activity and increased market participation of project beneficiaries.

With the guide of interview, the respondents noted that the project had dedicated significant resources to developing farmer’s organizations and cooperatives, with an eye to rationalizing organizational structures and functions, strengthening member commitment, and increasing participation. The project had also continued to use farmer-based extension approach to stimulate the formation of new farmer organizations and cooperatives.

Support to business planning and management: based on the commercial opportunities identified in each action plan, the project had provided training and advisory services to support the preparation of business plans. The business plan not only the details of proposed commercial activities, but also the mechanisms to be used for sharing costs and benefits of commercial activities among members. The training and adversary services varied according to specific business needs. Training topics included budgeting and financial analysis, capital management, sales management and marketing, risk management, quality management, and personnel management.
The effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goals

The respondents were asked about the effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goal and their responses were recorded by the researcher as below:

Table 3: Responses on the effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goals (n=220)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The effectiveness of RSSP</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents’ views on whether the project staff (central and local) and beneficiary are trained in project management.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake jointly the preparation of annual programs which aim at poverty eradication</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training of the project beneficiaries in participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inclusion of a full section on performance in social development in the RSSP annual activity monitoring report</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Total</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it is shown in the table 3 above, the respondents were asked a question on whether RSSP is effective in meeting its goals. The respondents rated the level of trainings in project management to be high (mean=3.35). For this case, the respondents revealed that the project had built a critical mass of trained individuals at the central, regional and local levels. The trained individuals were helping in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project activities. Direct technical assistance, workshops, on- the job training, degree training and empowerment of local communities in the project management through technical strengthening were identified as the ways that were helping the government fill the project development and implementation capacity gap.

The same respondents rated the level of undertaking jointly the preparation of annual programs which aim at poverty eradication to be moderate (mean=3.20). According to the study, the respondents agreed that the project undertake jointly the preparation of budgets, organize and finance training, consult and collaborate with NGOs.

The researcher’s interview with the respondents revealed the following:

- RSSP follows a decentralized and participatory implementation framework of the project
- Developed and put in place an effective implementation and impact monitoring work plan (based on the project log frame) that fits the tasks of the different monitoring and evaluation level (that is central, regional/ district and beneficiaries)
- Undertake baseline surveys (when available, the project use the results of the baseline surveys) to define the bench mark conditions against which accomplishment of the project will be measured.
- Undertake and oversee the periodic collection and analysis of data, and conduct periodic evaluation studies in order to assess the effectiveness and impact of the project activities.

An interview with the RSSP manager and MINAGRI staff also revealed RSSP had effectively met its goals by ensuring;
- efficient execution of administrative, financial management and procurement functions
- coordination of project activities among the various stakeholders
- timely implementation and monitoring of project activities
- establishment and operation of an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system

**Challenges faced by RSSP**

The respondents were asked about the challenges faced by RSSP and they ranked the challenges as in the table below:

**Table 4: Respondents’ views on challenges faced by RSSP (n=220)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>interpretation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited capacity of implementation unit</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack/unavailability of local expertise</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak policy framework for project management</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor project management and coordination</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak monitoring and evaluation capacity</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of adequate skills and capabilities in line ministries</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management issues</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Issues</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.55</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it is indicated in the table 4 above, the respondents were asked a question on the challenges that RSSP faces; the study gave out eight challenges and the results were the following: the respondents rated the level of limited capacity of implementation unit to be high (mean=3.26), lack/unavailability of local expertise to be high (mean=3.40), weak policy framework for project management to be moderate (mean=3.13), poor project management and coordination to be low (mean=2.08). The same respondents rated the level of weak monitoring and evaluation capacity to low (mean=1.79), lack of adequate skills and capabilities in line ministries to be very low (mean=1.63), financial management issues to be high (mean=3.38) and procurement issues to be very low (mean=1.75).

From the analysis above, it is clear that a lot of progress has been made. However, RSSP still faces a big challenge. It was evident that Rwanda's institutions, especially RIAM, SFB, KIST, CAPMER and Centre Iwacu Kabusunzu, play a big role in capacity building. However, their capacities both human and institutional need to be improved to match demand and the requirement for expertise. The biggest challenge for the Government also remains: to create a critical mass of trained nationals to fill the skill gaps in the project, effect changes in management practices and develops and implement policies.

As a result of its turbulent recent history, one of the most significant challenges for Rwanda was that it has been left with a huge governance and capacity gap. In broader terms, the resulting absence of comprehensive and coherent governance structures currently represents a major constraint for the sustainable management of RSSP. A number of deficiencies were identified with regard to the “system of policies, rules, procedures and institutions that sets out the powers and responsibilities of Government and other stakeholders with regard to RSSP management”. These include: a) Absence of legal-regulatory framework; b) Lack of coordinated policy-making; c) Weak enforcement capacities; d) Basic technical, scientific data and information gaps; e) Lack of infrastructure and equipment; and f) Weak institutional structures.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the last chapter of the present study. In this chapter, the conclusions from the study and the recommendations made are presented. The area of further research has been identified at the end of this chapter.

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

Performance of RSSP in Rwanda

The interview with some of the respondents mainly with the project manager, RSSP staff and MINAGRIAR staff revealed that, the project has supported the improvement of farming practices using the farmer based extension approach. Under this approach, lead farmers are trained in the use of improved inputs and improved crop management practices, and they have received support to enable them to transmit their knowledge to other farmers in their communities.

The project has supported the commercialization of smallholder agriculture; the project had intensified production, expanded access to markets, and promoted agricultural value addition. Observation by the researcher revealed that, using a holistic approach, the project had simultaneously addressed constraints in the upper (production), middle (processing), and lower (marketing) stages of the commodity chain.

Support to business planning and management: based on the commercial opportunities identified in each action plan, the project had provided training and advisory services to support the preparation of business plans.
The business plan not only specified not only the details of proposed commercial activities, but also the mechanisms to be used for sharing costs and benefits of commercial activities among members. The training and adversary services varied according to specific business needs. Training topics included budgeting and financial analysis, capital management, sales management and marketing, risk management, quality management, and personnel management

**The effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goals**

The project had built a critical mass of trained individuals at the central, regional and local levels. The trained individuals were helping in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project activities. Direct technical assistance, workshops, on- the job training, degree training and empowerment of local communities in the project management through technical strengthening were identified as the ways that were helping the government fill the project development and implementation capacity gap.

The researcher's interview with the respondents revealed that;

- RSSP follows a decentralized and participatory implementation framework of the project
- Developed and put in place an effective implementation and impact monitoring work plan (based on the project log frame) that fits the tasks of the different monitoring and evaluation level (that is central, regional/ district and beneficiaries)
- Undertake baseline surveys (when available, the project use the results of the baseline surveys) to define the benchmark conditions against which accomplishment of the project will be measured.
- Undertake and oversee the periodic collection and analysis of data, and conduct periodic evaluation studies in order to assess the effectiveness and impact of the project activities.
Challenges faced by RSSP

As a result of its turbulent recent history, one of the most significant challenges for Rwanda was that it had been left with a huge governance and capacity gap. In broader terms, the resulting absence of comprehensive and coherent governance structures currently represents a major constraint for the sustainable management of RSSP. A number of deficiencies were identified with regard to the “system of policies, rules, procedures and institutions that sets out the powers and responsibilities of Government and other stakeholders with regard to RSSP management”. These include: a) Absence of legal-regulatory framework; b) Lack of coordinated policy-making; c) Weak enforcement capacities; d) Basic technical, scientific data and information gaps; e) Lack of infrastructure and equipment; and f) Weak institutional structures.

CONCLUSION

A sustained source of demand for performance information should be encouraged and supported, putting the government on notice that it will need to demonstrate results that is, governments will need to demonstrate that the RSSP projects being implemented are meeting expectations. Government needs prodding to ensure that reporting results becomes a regular and routine activity. A successful RSSP must have sustained leadership. While it is important to have good program managers overseeing the implementation of RSSP and projects, there must also be strong political support at the very highest levels of government. The country, through its government, must be in the driver’s seat in developing RSSP to ensure ownership. Without a strong, well placed champion who is willing to take on the ownership of RSSP, the program will not be sustainable or useful.

Continued upgrading and improvement is important in sustaining RSSP. RSSP should be evaluated periodically, using internal or external evaluators. “Evaluator can assist in validating performance data and improving performance measurement systems.
Evaluations of performance measurement systems should focus both on the technical quality of the measurement system and on the extent to which performance information is used in managing to achieve performance goals and in providing accountability to key stakeholders and the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Monitoring and Evaluation support should be provided to national and local systems to improve the evaluation of performance and outcomes in line with the program objectives. Resources should be provided to strengthen the capacity of local actors to plan and measure RSSP results. Standardized tools for local government reporting and accounting should be rolled out to ensure consistency with local government Monitoring and Evaluation reforms.

The major challenge in RSSP evaluation is to gather, store and use information that serves different levels of assessment. RSSP evaluation should be multifunctional so that information generated at one level is useful at the next. RSSP evaluation should also go beyond checking whether events are taking place as planned. The quality of the two-way flow of information at the ministry level between the project staff and the program staff must be regularly investigated. The same is true for the flow of information within the district among program staff engaged in managing different programs and monitoring the outputs produced by projects and their effect on outcomes. This can be achieved through periodic interviews, review of annual and other program and project reports, and independent observation of events. The RSSP evaluation process should be committed to improving the lateral linkages among project and program staff, including feedback processes, for learning purposes. Analysis of the existing or possible linkages across programs and projects should be as critical, objective and exhaustive as possible. Managers, including at the senior ministry level, must be involved in the entire RSSP evaluation process.
On the other hand, RSSP Evaluation must be a process-oriented exercise that requires establishing common baseline data for making comparisons. The problem knows from the outset every factor that is relevant and how all factors affect each other. Before any evaluation, the RSSP Evaluation unit must take the following steps:

**Agree on the priority issues demanding information:** Secure agreement on those issues that most urgently require information to make the most of the resources available for information management, which tend to be limited and complex. A high degree of consultation is required during the agreement process since stakeholders may have widely differing views on priorities. A draft list of priority issues could be prepared and distributed to stakeholders for comment. Alternatively, a workshop or other discussion forum could be held specifically to reach consensus. Reconciling different viewpoints by negotiating a consensus on priority issues can help build ties between stakeholders and facilitate cooperation.

**Determine the information needs of decision-making groups:** The key to effective use of information is to focus only on essential information. Ask decision makers to articulate their needs directly before embarking on a review of ministry, district or RSSP corporate databases and other sources of information. A thorough assessment of information needs is a critical initial step.

One of the most efficient ways of arriving at transferable information (lessons) is through outcome evaluations, the sharing of which can facilitate learning across different Ministries.

Focusing on outcomes means that RSSP deals with donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, parliament whose development activities, like RSSP, depend for their success upon the performance of other agencies under separate control. These agencies often accumulate a large stock of qualitative information that might change
how development results are viewed if it were fully taken into account. As partners, they may be engaged to assist and facilitate the monitoring and evaluation process but not to direct or prescribe what should be done. This involvement of partners is likely to foster greater exchanges for learning and knowledge building.

Without reliable and regular feedback, RSSP monitoring and evaluation cannot serve their purposes. In particular, emphasis must be given to drawing lessons that have the potential for broader application, lessons that are useful not only to a particular project but also to broader development contexts.

**Areas for Further Research**

Other researchers can take opportunities to research on:

1. The monitoring and evaluation of public projects

2. The effect of evaluation in the increasable performance of public projects
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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE CHECKLIST

KAMALIZA Merveille

Dear Sir/Madam,

Greetings!

Dear respondent,

I am doing a research on the evaluation of Rural Sector Support Project-RSSP and its performance in Rwanda. I kindly need your attention and cooperation as this research is basically for academic purposes and I will maintain high confidentiality on the information you will give.

May I retrieve the questionnaires 2 weeks after you receive them?

Thank you for your cooperation.

What is the effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goals?

1. A national strategy and action plan is prepared and approved for the project first year?

   Agree □  Disagree □  Strongly Agree □  Strongly Disagree □

2. Has the project provided financing to help improve productivity and production through sustainable intensification of farming systems?

   Agree □  Disagree □  Strongly Agree □  Strongly Disagree □

3. Has the project supported the commercialization of smallholder agriculture?

   Agree □  Disagree □  Strongly Agree □  Strongly Disagree □

4. The project has strengthened farmers’ organizations and cooperatives?

   Agree □  Disagree □  Strongly Agree □  Strongly Disagree □
5. All the project staff (central and local) and beneficiary people (training of
trainers) are trained in project management?
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

6. Among other things, RSSP emphasizes the need to:
   a) Undertake jointly the preparation of annual programs which aim at poverty
      eradication
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
   b) Prepare jointly task budgets for activities implemented
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
   c) Organize and finance jointly training sessions in developmental projects area.
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
   d) Share relevant information related to the management of financed projects
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
   e) Consultation or collaboration with NGOs or other civil society in line with
      poverty reduction.
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

7. The following mechanisms ensure that the performance of RSSP in terms of
   social and economic development outcomes are monitored adequately:
   a) The mainstreaming of the social and economic development into the project
      activities
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
   b) The training of the project beneficiaries in participatory monitoring and
      evaluation techniques
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
   c) The inclusion of a full section on performance in social development in the
      RSSP annual activity monitoring report
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
What are the challenges faced by RSSP?

8. Limited capacity of implementation units
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

9. Lack of or unavailability of local expertise
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

10. Weak policy framework for project management
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

11. Poor project management and coordination
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

12. Weak monitoring and evaluation capacity
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

13. Inadequacy of local community capacity
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

14. Lack of adequate skills and capabilities in line ministries
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

15. Financial management issues are still encountered
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

16. Procurement Issues are still observed
Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □

How does the performance of RSSP be measured in Rwanda?

17. The performance of RSSP is measured through:
a) The number of agricultural projects implemented and financed
   Agree □ Disagree □ Strongly Agree □ Strongly Disagree □
b) Number of livestock farming projects implemented and financed in rural areas
   Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Agree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

c) Developmental projects initiated and implemented
   Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Agree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

d) Capacity building
   Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Agree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]

18. Designing a monitoring and evaluation system that includes:
   a) The basic elements of result-based monitoring and evaluation strategic objectives
      Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Agree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]
   b) Evaluation of performance contract (Imihigo) and feedback
      Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Agree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]
   c) Training needs assessment is enhanced for proper project management.
      Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Agree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ]
Dear respondent,

I am doing a research on the evaluation of Rural Sector Support Project-RSSP and its performance in Rwanda. I kindly need your attention and cooperation as this research is basically for academic purposes and I will maintain high confidentiality on the information you will give.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**What is the effectiveness of RSSP in meeting its goals?**

1. A national strategy and action plan is prepared and approved for the project first year?

2. Has the project provided financing to help improve productivity and production through sustainable intensification of farming systems?

3. Has the project supported the commercialization of smallholder agriculture?

4. The project has strengthened farmers’ organizations and cooperatives?

5. All the project staff (central and local) and beneficiary people (training of trainers) are trained in project management?

6. Among other things, RSSP emphasizes the need to:
   a) Undertake jointly the preparation of annual programs which aim at poverty eradication
   b) Prepare jointly task budgets for activities implemented
   c) Organize and finance jointly training sessions in developmental projects area.
   d) Share relevant information related to the management of financed projects
   e) With NGOs or other civil society in line with poverty reduction.

7. The following mechanisms ensure that the performance of RSSP in terms of social and economic development outcomes are monitored adequately:
   a) The mainstreaming of the social and economic development into the project activities
b) The training of the project beneficiaries in participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques

c) The inclusion of a full section on performance in social development in the RSSP annual activity monitoring report

**What are the challenges faced by RSSP?**

a) Limited capacity of implementation units

b) Lack of or unavailability of local expertise

c) Weak policy framework for project management

d) Poor project management and coordination

e) Weak monitoring and evaluation capacity

f) Inadequacy of local community capacity

g) Lack of adequate skills and capabilities in line ministries

h) Financial management issues are still encountered

i) Procurement Issues are still observed

**How does the performance of RSSP be measured in Rwanda?**

8. The performance of RSSP is measured through:

a) The number of agricultural projects implemented and financed

b) Number of livestock farming projects implemented and financed in rural areas

c) Developmental projects initiated and implemented

d) Capacity building

9. Designing a monitoring and evaluation system that includes:

a) The basic elements of result-based monitoring and evaluation strategic objectives

b) Evaluation of performance contract (Imihigo) and feedback

c) Training needs assessment is enhanced for proper project management.
### CURRICULUM VITAE

#### 1. PERSONAL DETAILS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>KAMALIZA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>Merveille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's names</td>
<td>MUGARAGU Védaste</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother's names</td>
<td>NYIRASINE Rose</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
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#### 2. ADDRESS:

- **E-mail**: kamerveille@gmail.com
- **Mobile phone**: +250 788 745 915

**Objective**: To use theoretical and practical Management skills and experience while working hard towards the achievement of satisfactory financial performance of the Institution.
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<th>ACADEMIC PROFILE</th>
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<td>2009 – 2011</td>
<td><strong>Kampala International University</strong></td>
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<td><strong>School of Finance and Banking</strong></td>
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| | Secondary School Certificate level, Groupe Scolaire Sainte Bernadette |
| | 1996-2002 |

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<th>1990 – 1996 <strong>Primary school at Kibungo</strong></th>
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<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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<td>French</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>Swahili</td>
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| Computer skills | Ms Word, Excel, PowerPoint | Access | Internet. |

| Interests and hobbies | Reading, computers, travelling, living and experiencing a diverse and new environment and culture, music. |

| Strengths brought | Leadership, Time and Team Management, Communication and Presentation, personal planning, accountability and reliability, Projects and events Management. |

I declare that the above given information is true to the best of my knowledge.

KAMALIZA Merveille
APPENDIX IV: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN, SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SPGSR)

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR KAMILIZA MERVEILLE MPP/485-49/91/DF
TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

The above mentioned is a bonafide student of Kampala International University pursuing a Masters of Arts in Project Planning and Management.

She is currently conducting a field research of which the title is "The Evaluation of Rural Sector Support Project _ RSSP and its Performance in Rwanda."

Your organization has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to her research project. The purpose of this letter is to request you to avail her with the pertinent information she may need.

Any information shared with her from your organization shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Dr. Rosanne Mwaniki
Associate Dean Social Sciences, SPGSR)
APPENDIX V: APPOINTMENT LETTER

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL RESOURCES

RURAL SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT (RSSP) IDA GRANT N°: H 4080-RW
Tel: 580277/580280/580281/587203; Fax 587226; P.O. Box 6961, Kigali, Rwanda
E-Mail: rssp_dscw@rssp.gov.rw

Kigali 26 September 2011

Ms. KAMALIZA Merveille
Tel: 0788745915
KIGALI

Ref: 4137/RSSP/CR /BRL

RE: Your letter requesting for a research on Evaluation of RSSP & its performance in Rwanda

Dear Merveille,

Reference to your letter mentioned above and requesting for a research on Evaluation of RSSP and its performance in Rwanda for your academic work, I am glad to inform you that your request has been accepted.

You will be working with our Monitoring and Evaluation staff.

Please contact our Head of Administration for details of your internship.

I wish you the best in your work.

Ms. DUSABE Jolly
RSSP Coordinator

Copy:
- Head of Administration Unit;
- Head of Monitoring & Evaluation Unit.