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## Farmers’ Views on Innovation Outcomes: Participatory Outcome Evaluation with Smallholder Farmer Groups in Tanzania

ESTHER MIEVES<sup>1</sup>, PAMELA NGWENYA<sup>2</sup>, BRIGITTE KAUFMANN<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DiTSL) GmbH, Germany*

<sup>2</sup>*German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DiTSL), Germany*

<sup>3</sup>*German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DiTSL), Germany*

### Abstract

Improving food security and livelihood conditions of vulnerable rural populations in Sub-Saharan Africa has been an on-going challenge. Innovations, suitable to context-specific circumstances of small-scale farmers, are intended to reduce poverty and increase food security. Therefore, it is indispensable to collaboratively identify farmers’ views about the factors that influence their action possibilities with regard to the development, adaptation and adoption of innovations. Within the frame of a transdisciplinary research project focused on improving household food security in Tanzania, the aim of this research was to collaboratively assess differences in farmers’ expectations, experiences and valuations regarding their innovation outcomes.

Field work took place from January to March 2016 in the Morogoro and Dodoma regions. We present detailed results from two farmer groups that implemented different innovations. A participatory approach guided the use of qualitative tools, including “outcome rating” and “opinion line”. These outcome evaluation tools were applied to learn about farmers’ perceptions in terms of individuals’ valuations and satisfaction regarding their outcomes and to gain insight into what and how different factors, from the farmers’ perspective, have influenced these outcomes which were then categorised in terms of different domains of well-being.

The extent in how far farmers’ initial expectations matched up with actual outcomes is expressed through farmers’ degree of satisfaction, combined with their stated reasons. Interestingly, the individual farmers’ valuation of outcomes revealed that their prioritised outcomes were most often related to the “Intellectual” domain, which indicates that gaining knowledge was the most important issue for the farmers. Concerning outcomes assigned to the “Financial” domain, most farmers were not satisfied with the financial benefits gained through the innovation implementation, which indicates that their financial resources to improve their livelihoods and influence the innovation system remain low. Age and gender were identified as key factors influencing experienced innovation outcomes.

The elucidation of the farmers’ perspectives concerning the relevance of certain innovation outcomes and the identification of those that are most important through collaborative evaluation provides important information for potential scaling of the innovation processes. Critically, the results of this study can guide strategies for enhancing social inclusion and pro-poor innovation processes.

**Keywords:** Farmers' valuation and satisfaction, innovation, participatory outcome evaluation tools, Tanzania, Trans-SEC