

THE RWANDA POULTRY INNOVATION CENTRE: LEVERAGING THE TRIPLE HELIX APPROACH TO DRIVE FRUGAL INNOVATIONS AND BUILD A POULTRY CLUSTER

MEINE PIETER VAN DIJK* AND JULIUS GATUNE

Maastricht School of Management, Maastricht University, The Netherlands

Abstract: A Poultry Innovation Centre initiated by the Rwandan government with a donor country produces frugal innovations using a Triple Helix approach, where research organizations work with both the government and the private sector to develop and implement the innovations. The governance structure involves a public-private partnership, with educational institution as one of the partners. The mechanism is supposed to generate education, research and innovation platforms. Thus, in this regard, the crucial questions are: Did the sectoral innovation centre work? Was the governance structure successful and did it create dynamic education, research and innovation platforms? This research shows that the Innovation Centre was successful; key partners are on board; and a win-win situation was created. The Innovation Centre developed education, research, and innovation platforms. The Triple Helix approach guarantees involvement of all stakeholders, and the Innovation Centre generates frugal innovations and drives local economic development, although improvements are possible and necessary to build a real poultry cluster.

Key words: Innovation centre; Public private partnership; Triple Helix approach; Frugal innovations; Poultry; Rwanda

Introduction

The poultry sector is important for Rwanda because of its potential to provide additional income to poor families, contribute to food security (proteins), and export or diminish imports of chicken and eggs. The challenges in the poultry sector include low productivity, fluctuating feed prices, vaccine availability and market volatility. Mazimpaka et al. (2018) noted in a field survey that half of the poultry farmers were in dire need of veterinary assistance and financial support to improve their poultry enterprises.

* Correspondence to: Meine Pieter van Dijk, Professor Emeritus in Economics, Maastricht School of Management, Maastricht University, Tapijnkazerne 11, 6211 ME Maastricht, The Netherlands. Email: DijkM@msm.nl