Contribution of innovation intermediaries in agricultural innovation: the case of agricultural R&D in Tanzania

Author(s)
Athman H. Mgumia, Amon Z. Mattee & Beatus A.T. Kundi

Abstract
With the current global economic reforms and advances in science, the move has been towards privatisation of the agricultural knowledge infrastructure. However, inadequate capacity of agricultural entrepreneurs and the diversity in the characteristics of the agricultural technologies have created market and system failures, resulting in imbalances of the supply and demand of technologies and hampering private agricultural business development. Experience from countries with mature innovation systems indicates the emergence of innovation intermediaries that facilitate agricultural entrepreneurs to innovate. Using a case-study approach, the present study identified and mapped the recipients of technologies from agricultural research institutions in Tanzania and analysed the extent to which 'innovation intermediation roles' have been applied by recipients in relation to demand articulation, network brokerage and innovation process management. Through an in-depth analysis of twelve cases, the study revealed the role of innovation intermediation performed by NGOs and R&D as project interventions not as their core activities. The study demonstrates the potential contributions of innovation intermediaries in agricultural innovation processes and recommends official recognition and government support in the establishment and implementation of innovation intermediation activities outside the project set-ups.

Keywords:
Innovation,
Innovation intermediaries,
National Agricultural Research System,
Marketable technologies,
Innovation networks,
Tanzania,