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Policy Brief on “2014/15 Imihigo Evaluation

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Policy Brief on “2014/15 Imihigo Evaluation - January 2016

1. Introduction

Rwanda has made remarkable progress towards achieving the goal of becoming a middle income country as reflected by Vision 2020. This is evident through significant socio-economic transformation observed in the last decade as a result of the implementation of programs under the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, EDPRS 1&2.

Rwanda’s progress is mainly attributed to implementation of Performance contracts (Imihigo). These performance contracts have proved to be a planning and monitoring tool to deliver the EDPRS targets and to sustain the momentum towards delivering the sustainable development goals.

Imihigo approach has been operational since 2006. Every year both central and local government sign Imihigo/ Performance Contracts with His Excellence the President of the Republic, Paul Kagame. Though IMIHIGO was an ancestral approach/ home grown, its modernization and use to setting objectives is one of the innovative approaches to development planning and evaluation. It is increasingly becoming one of home grown initiatives that are changing the face of Rwanda as an invaluable tool for planning and effective implementation of the development policies. Since then IMIHIGO is used in Rwanda to design performance management contracts signed at the level of all public institutions including Ministries, embassies and Districts with the President of the Republic. At the end of every fiscal year, a performance evaluation is also conducted by independent evaluators with the coordination of the Prime Minister’s Office to assess the performance achieved against Imihigo targets and identify gaps to inform potential improvements in the following year’s Imihigo planning and implementation process. The public engagement is recorded publicly in a written contract that presents a set of development targets backed by specific performance indicators over a period of one year.

The purpose of this policy brief is to present key highlights from the 2014/2015 Imihigo evaluation and lessons learnt for the next generation of Imihigo evaluation process. The intention is also to shed more light on the extent to which Imihigo are producing transformative outcomes in response to development targets set

in the national development frameworks namely the Vision 2020, EDPRS, and the Sector Strategic Plans.

2. The approach

This policy brief draws from the overall 2014/15 Imihigo evaluation commissioned by the Prime Minister' Office to the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda). Various techniques were used to collect information needed to respond to the evaluation questions. Evaluators audited all pledged targets through a verification of support evidences of reported achievements.

During the audit, particular attention was paid to the extent to which: Central government institutions and District targets are aligned to Sector Strategic Plans and District development priorities, respectively; if planned outputs are achieved or whether the outputs have the potential for social and economic transformation; the solutions are innovative towards the outcomes; availability of supporting documents and the quality and accuracy of information provided, and the role of various partners. About 865 outputs were audited at District level with 52.6% from the economic cluster, 24.5% of the social development, and 22.8 % for the Governance and Justice cluster. At Ministerial level 392 outputs representing, 50% of the total outputs were also assessed (see Table 1). These were complemented by key informants' interviews at Ministry level (2 high officials at Ministry level). In addition, about 60 focus group discussions with citizens were held in all 30 districts (2 per District) as well as an active observation of Imihigo implementation through spot checking of sampled Imihigo. This helped to learn more on how Imihigo are contributing to the transformative development and how challenging issues are being addressed at community level.

Table 1. Estimates of Imihigo outputs and targets per province

Province/ City	Outputs Per Cluster				Targets Per Cluster			
	Economic	Social Development	Governance & Justice	Total	Economic	Social Development	Governance & Justice	Total
City of Kigali	41	40	38	119	95	75	51	221
Southern	132	49	43	224	326	97	111	534
Northern	92	49	36	177	223	75	56	354
Eastern	118	51	51	220	305	94	76	475
Western	72	23	30	125	283	63	78	424
Total	455	212	198	865	1232	404	372	2008
% weight	52.60	24.5	22.9	100	61.4	20.1	18.5	100

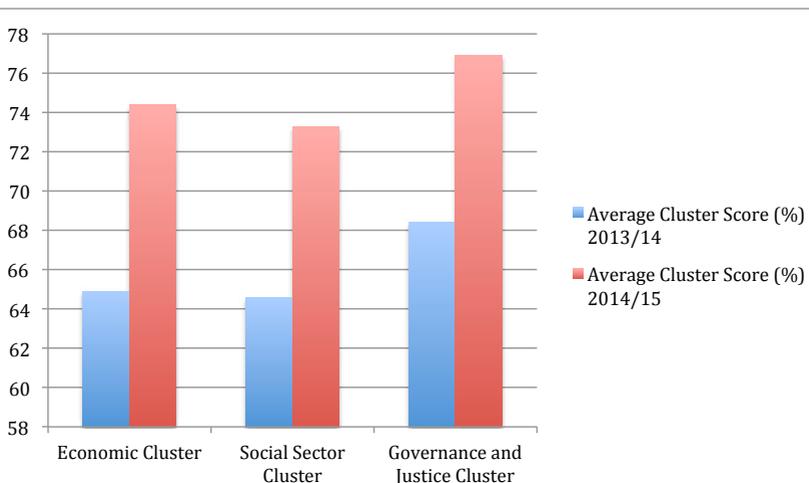
Source: Imihigo Performance Contracts (FY 2014-2015)

Furthermore, the districts performances were obtained using a “Balanced Score Card” that takes into account the relevance of the set targets, the level of efforts required to deliver on the targets and the quality of the information supporting the reported level of achievement. This was further informed by the findings from the audit, the satisfaction survey with members of District Council and Joint Development Action Forum (JDAF) and the results from the Citizen Report Card (CRC 2015) produced annually by the Rwanda Governance Board.

3. Key Results

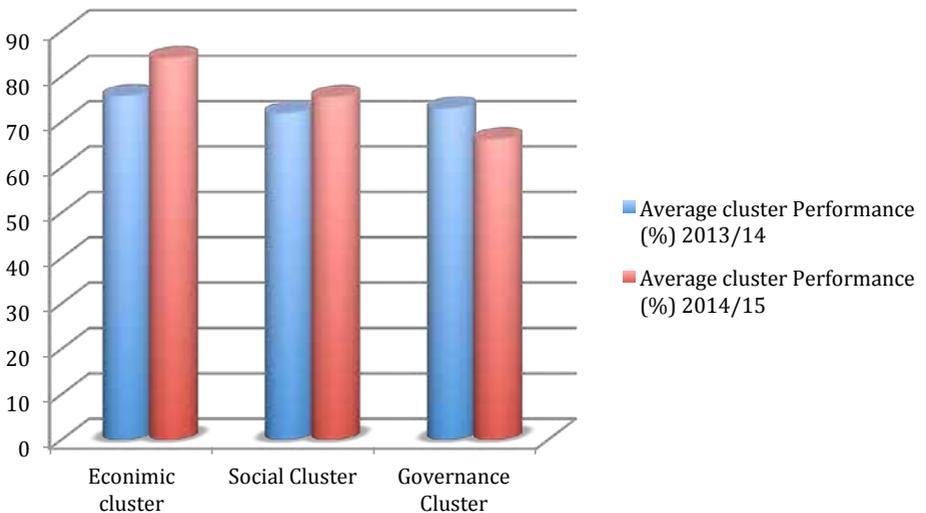
Results obtained from the 2014/15 Imihigo evaluation reveal overall positive performance at both Central and Local Government. For the Ministries, the overall average performance of Ministries is estimated at 74.8% compared to 66.5% of the last year’s Imihigo performance. The economic cluster scored high 74.4% compared to 64.9% of last year; while the social and governance and justice cluster scored less than last year’s performance with 73.3% compared to 76.9%, respectively (see Figure 1).

Figure (1). Average performance per development cluster



The findings from the districts evaluation show an overall average performance of 74.3% compared to 73.5% achieved last year (FY2013-2014). Significant improvement is observed in the economic cluster that scored 81.4% compared to last year's performance of 75.7%. This is mainly explained by the improvement in target setting especially in areas of the economic cluster. The observed performance in the social cluster is 75.5% compared to 72% of last year. However, a decline was noted in the performance of the Governance and Justice Sector which scored 66.2% performance level when compared to 73% previously achieved (see Figure 2). Some of the explanations for this decline include the change of District leadership in the course of Imihigo implementation due to accountability issues, inability of the top leaders to engage peer officials, development partners, and citizens; leading to some breaks in the chain of collaboration and moderate to lower performance in Citizen's satisfaction.

Figure 2. Average Performance per Cluster (2013/14 and 2014-2015)



Overall, the performance observed is explained by a commendable improvement in setting Imihigo targets; Imihigo that are more transformative, converted into tangible benefits, services, and outputs meant to address the needs of citizens. Furthermore, the results show an increased engagement of different partners through Public Private Partnership (PPP), increased citizen's involvement in implementation, and improved levels of citizen satisfaction in terms of service delivery.

The following are some of the key development benefits from this year's Imihigo performance. More than 150,000 short term off-farm jobs were created (compared to 126815 planned) , more than 690,000 people have been provided with clean water within a range of 500m (43.1% of the planned) , about 45,000 households accessed electricity (71.5%), , about 161 km of newly constructed roads and 1253km of roads rehabilitated (91.5% of achievement). In the agriculture sector, there has been land consolidation of about 809573Ha (season A) and 571350 Ha (season B) which led to increased agricultural production. More than 26,000 cows were distributed (i.e. 101.9% achievement) through Girinka Program and this helps to address issue of nutrition and people to graduate out of poverty, among others. Implemented Imihigo have also contributed to the access of education and health health facilities (57 health facilities newly constructed compared to 47 planned), and financial inclusion through support of women and youth cooperatives in accessing small loans for their businesses. About 291 (87.1%) Women and Youth cooperatives have been supported financially and provision of other materials)out of 334 planned through Imihigo performance contracts during FY2014-2015. These cooperatives allow to bulking up the economies of scale and constitute greater channels of support from development partners such as credits facilities.. Although the overall credit to the private sector /GDP is still low (about 16.8% - 2014), credits obtained from their small-scale saving schemes and SACCOs Cooperatives lead them to be financially included.

4. Major lessons for the next generation of Imihigo

Currently there is an on-going discussion at the government level about the next generation of Imihigo bringing a new notion or approach of “ Joint Imihigo”. This implies “Imihigo” that involve more than one institution/actor in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a particular activity, output, and outcome. Therefore, from the previous evaluation (2014/15), three major lessons can be drawn to inform the next generation of Imihigo planning and implementation:

The first lesson is linked to Imihigo targeting as part of the planning process. Ministries and Districts that performed well are those that set their targets (Guhiga) in alignment with goals in the Sector Strategic Plans and District priorities as set in the District Development Plans (DDPs).

Secondly, successful implementation of Imihigo was driven by the increased role of partners, the ability of the District to mobilize resources needed to perform pledged targets among partners and citizens.

The third lesson is linked to citizen’s participation and engagement in all process of Imihigo implementation. It was revealed that level of engagement of citizens and their satisfaction on the service delivery by local entities obtained through the Citizen Report Card by Rwanda Governance Board is a major driver of better performance.

However, the evaluation revealed also some drawbacks that restrained some ministries and Districts to better perform in certain areas of their performance targets. These include the setting of some targets that are not in line with the Sector and District priorities with limited spillover effects, soft targets that are not challenging and transformative in some areas of targeting, the change of leadership and staff turnover for some districts in the course of Imihigo implementation, some emergence issues such as natural hazards, and delays of some partners in fulfilling their development commitments whilst these have been considered as part of the performance contracts.

5. Conclusions and Key Policy Recommendations

The aim of this policy brief is to highlight some of key findings from the FY2014-15 Imihigo evaluation that aimed at assessing the performance made against the targets set for both the central and local government. It is clear that Imihigo play a major role in fast-tracking different commitments made by the central and local government concerning different development programmes and projects meant to accelerate socio-economic transformation of Rwandans.

It is well noted that most of planned activities under Imihigo reflect national and sub-national development priorities as stipulated in Vision 2020, the 7Years Government Program and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS2).

The 2014/15 Imihigo evaluation covered the economic, social development, governance and justice pillars. The evaluation has revealed how Imihigo targets were translated into expected economic, social, and governance outcomes.

One of the policy questions that remain important is to know the extent to which the achieved impacts are sustained beyond the Imihigo period which is often a year. In order to sustain the positive changes resulting from Imihigo a number of considerations are needed. Apart from linking Imihigo and the national development priorities as embedded in Vision 20120, 7YGP and EDPRS2 during the preparation phase, a thorough prediction of possible spill over effects is needed to ensure that they are taken into account in a next generation of mid-term or long term District Development Plans.

Another determinant factor of sustainability of Imihigo already achieved is the level of involvement and participation of citizens who are the beneficiaries of all the projects during the period of planning and implementation of Imihigo. This helps to capitalize on their needs and hence their willingness to contribute to their own development. Moreover, technical expertise that is available needs to be optimized especially for Imihigo projects in the infrastructure and agriculture sectors for quality assurance to avoid costly rehabilitations before the expected span of life for some investments made.

Despite the positive progress observed, there are some areas that need further consideration in the next generation of Imihigo planning and implementation process.

1. More efforts to be made in terms of consultations during the preparation of Imihigo especially at community level to ensure that Imihigo customize the needs of citizens in order to produce more and sustainable impacts.
2. Strengthen the feedback mechanisms to allow citizen learn more on Imihigo priorities therein the approved performance contracts.
3. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities of partners with respect to joint Imihigo -implemented by more than one partner or entity- to ensure proper accountability, responsibility, and attribution of the performance
4. Focus more on Imihigo with larger spill-over effects, that are more challenging, innovative, and transformative to avoid setting soft Imihigo targets (have a clear demarcation between Umuhigo and routine activities in the Annual action plan).
5. Strengthen the planning and M&E framework for Imihigo performance contract to drive the implementation of the National development priorities as stated in the Vision 2020, 7 YGP, EDPRS2, Sector Strategic Plans, and District Development Plans.
6. Ensure strong follow up and execution of other planned activities within the annual action plan and unimplemented activities as per Imihigo performance contracts.
7. Ensure that Ministry targets are linked to targets at District level to enforce the bridge between the DDPs, Sector strategic plans and EDPRS2.
8. Ensure that Ministry targets are implemented within the timeframe set in the performance contract to avoid delays in the implementation of joint Imihigo at local government level.

Further Reading: This policy Brief is drawn from the Final Report of FY 2014-2015 Imihigo Evaluation conducted by the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda). This can be accessed from IPAR's website

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