



NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Manatū Aorere

# Agriculture Activity Insights







# Activity insights

*Activity insights is a series of reports about the New Zealand Aid Programme's activities. They tell us what our activity managers and independent evaluators think make our activities successful and what causes them to underperform. They also tell us the types of outcomes we're achieving in a sector and what we're doing to improve the situation for women, human rights and the environment.*

## This report

This report draws on 37 activity monitoring assessment (AMA) and 12 activity completion assessment (ACA) reports for agriculture-focused activities that were being implemented between 2014 and 2018 (AMAs and ACAs are internal reports prepared by the Ministry's activity managers); and seven independent evaluations of agriculture activities that the Ministry commissioned between 2014 and 2018.

Of the activities reported on, 49 percent were implemented in Asia, 22 percent were implemented in the Pacific, 12 percent were implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean, 12 percent were implemented in Africa and 5 percent were implemented worldwide.

This report is intended for:

- four-year-plan owners and governance groups who assess whether to invest in an agriculture activity
- agriculture specialists who advise the Ministry on its agriculture strategy
- appraisers who assess the suitability of an agriculture activity concept or design
- activity managers who manage agriculture activities.

There are five sections in this report:

### Insights:

This section summarises the main insights we've gained about our agriculture activities.

### Outcomes:

This section summarises the outcomes we're contributing to through our agriculture activities.

### Crosscutting issues:

This section explains how we're trying to ensure our activities benefit women, human rights and the environment.

### Appendix 1:

This appendix lists all the insights we've gained about our agriculture activities, and which activities led to these insights.

### Appendix 2:

This appendix lists the AMAs, ACAs and evaluations that we used to create this report.



# Insights

## about our agriculture activities

The AMAs, ACAs and evaluations of our agriculture activities remind us what makes an agriculture activity succeed or fail. By describing why activities went well, or did not go well, our activity managers and independent evaluators tell us what factors they think need to be in place for activities to achieve their outcomes and make a difference to people's lives. Many of these factors may apply to activities in other sectors.

We've identified 20 factors and grouped them into four themes:

- activity design
- activity partners and suppliers
- activity enabling environment
- activity management.

Whether you are designing, appraising, approving or implementing an activity, these insights will help you consider whether an activity has the right factors in place for it to succeed. They will also help you identify risks and problems to avoid.

This section describes the success factors and risk factors that are most frequently mentioned in the AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports.<sup>1</sup> We identified many less common, but equally useful, success factors and risk factors, and have listed these in Appendix 1.

If you want to find out which activities describe a success factor or risk factor, refer first to Appendix 1 and then cross reference the factor with the list of AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports in Appendix 2.

## Pay attention to the design

When we design an activity, we influence how successful it will be. In this section we list the most common success factors and risk factors to consider when you design, appraise or approve an activity.

### 1 | Design an activity to suit the local circumstances

Common success factors are:

- a design that aligns with the partner government's priorities
- a design that considers, from the outset, how the activity can respond to climate change and environment
- a design that is adapted to fit the local situation and ways of doing things

- a design that reflects what communities want.

Common risks factors are:

- an unrealistic design that's based on inadequate analysis and understanding of local context
- a design that doesn't include gender analysis and plan how it will respond to the different needs of men and women, or the needs of the environment
- an activity that duplicates, or doesn't align with, what others are doing
- a design that doesn't take account of what local partners think
- a design that doesn't take account of what the private sector thinks.

### 2 | Use evidence to design an activity and then test the designs works

Common success factors are:

- an inception phase to test and refine the design
- enough design time to collect baseline data or research the right inputs for the market and industry.

### 3 | Design an activity to suit the market and be commercially sustainable

A common success factor is:

- an activity that's designed to work across different points of the value chain.

Common risks factors are:

- an activity whose timeframe is too short to achieve sustainable outputs and outcomes
- a design that doesn't plan the activity's approach to exit and sustainability
- a design that doesn't plan how to scale up the activity to get the full impact
- a design that doesn't consider how extension services will be carried out and paid for.

### 4 | Pay attention to *how* an activity will be implemented, not just *what* it will produce

A common success factor is:

- a design that has a good management structure and clear roles and responsibilities.

A common risk factor is:

- a design that relies too heavily on external consultants or doesn't have a mechanism to transfer knowledge to local people.

### 5 | Include a complete monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) system in the design

Common risk factors are:

- a design that has missing or incorrect baseline data, which affects how we assess and monitor change
- a design that doesn't have a good MERL (formerly results) framework
- a design that doesn't have a comprehensive theory of change<sup>2</sup>
- a MERL framework that doesn't disaggregate results for men and women
- a design with no interim targets.

<sup>1</sup> Several activities have been reported on more than once. When these multiple reports mention the same factor, it has only been referred to once in this section.

<sup>2</sup> A theory of change is a logical representation of the causal relationships expected for achieving the desired short-, medium- and long-term outcomes of an activity or programme.



## Choose partners and suppliers carefully

The way we work with our partners and suppliers makes a difference to how successful an activity is. In this section we list the most common success factors and risk factors related to our choice of partners. Consider these when you design, appraise, approve or implement an activity.

### 6 | Choose partners that have the capacity and capability to implement an activity well

Common success factors are:

- partners that have the right technical and development knowledge and expertise to implement the activity
- partners that review progress and adapt to changes in circumstances or incorporate lessons learned from past donor-funded activities
- partners that have good project management skills
- partners that use data or the MERL framework to monitor and manage the activity

- partners that supplement a “fly-in, fly-out” model with dedicated local staff or regular remote communication.

Common risk factors are:

- partners that can’t meet our reporting requirements
- partners that don’t collect the right baseline or ongoing monitoring information
- partners that can’t handle problems or manage projects well
- an activity that relies too heavily on certain personnel who aren’t always available
- partners that can’t achieve the activity’s targets
- partners that have weak financial controls, systems and processes
- partners that have slow or complex procurement processes.

### 7 | Choose partners that already have good relationships with the right people and organisations

Common success factors are:

- partners that have good relationships with local stakeholders
- partners that are based in the area and work frequently with the activity’s beneficiaries
- partners that have good relationships with technical experts involved in the activity.

### 8 | Choose partners that are motivated to succeed

Common success factors are:

- New Zealand partners that want to continue working in the country after the activity ends
- local commercial partners that are motivated to develop, and willing to use a donor to help them succeed
- local commercial partners that are willing to invest in skilled, qualified personnel

- local commercial partners that are willing to change and invest in their business
- partners that participate in a well-functioning governance group.

A common risk factor is:

- partners that focus more on implementing activities than achieving results.

### 9 | Choose partners that will use good development practices and methods to implement the activity

Common risk factors are:

- partners that don’t adapt their activities for gender differences
- partners that don’t prioritise good environmental practices
- suppliers that are unwilling to listen to the Ministry’s ideas
- partners that don’t test the design’s assumptions.

## Choose a receptive environment

The environment we’re working in has a big impact on an activity. A design that works well in one country won’t necessarily work in another. In this section we list the most common success factors and risk factors to consider about an activity’s enabling environment, when you design, appraise, approve or implement an activity.

### 10 | Work in a country whose enabling environment supports the activity, not blocks it

The AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports offer some useful insights into how a country’s enabling environment can affect an activity’s success.

### 11 | Work with a government that is committed to the activity and to its own extension services

A common success factor is:

- politicians and institutions that are committed to, and prepared to invest in, the sector.

Common risk factors are:

- low-quality, insufficient or infrequent extension services
- insufficient political commitment or intention to invest in continuing the activity’s outputs
- government partners that are bureaucratic, don’t plan or report well and can’t engage with the activity
- a government that wants to change the design because of other political priorities
- a government that doesn’t tackle illegal activities (such as logging) and difficulties farmers face securing land tenure.



## 12 | Work with farmers who are willing to change practices or invest in their farms

Our activity managers tell us that farmers will listen, learn, invest and take calculated risks if they believe the benefits outweigh the costs. Inputs that give farmers a “hand up” are better than those that give them a “hand out”.

A common success factor is:

- communities that are engaged in the activity.

Common risk factors are:

- farmers who are unwilling to commit to approaches that have a slower return on their investment
- farmers who are unaware of, and skeptical about, the need to change.

## 13 | Make sure that the finance and supplies the activity needs are available and affordable

Having access to affordable finance and supplies affects the success of an activity. The most common risk factor is:

- insufficient local agricultural inputs, of the right quality, to achieve and sustain the activity’s targets.

## 14 | Understand and weigh up the risks of adverse weather, natural disasters and civil unrest

The most common risk factors are:

- diseases or adverse weather that disrupt the activity or affect harvests or crop quality
- elections or civil unrest that delay implementation, or stop partners and specialists visiting the activity’s sites.

# Manage the activity well

The way we manage an activity can make a difference to how successful it is. In this section we list the most common success factors and risk factors to consider when you manage an activity, or when you manage an activity manager.

## 15 | Nurture relationships with partners and important stakeholders

The most common success factors are:

- the Ministry having good relationships with partners
- the Ministry having relationships with the right government institutions
- the Ministry investing time in developing the right relationships.

## 16 | Respond and adapt to contextual changes that affect the activity

The most common success factor is:

- the Ministry having systems and contracts that allow partners to adapt to local changes and respond to new opportunities.

## 17 | Provide the right support at the right time

The most common success factor is:

- the Ministry recognising that a country can benefit from an opportunity to visit New Zealand and observe New Zealand’s approach.

## 18 | Commit to a realistic timeframe and allocate the right resources

The AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports offer some useful insights into how the Ministry’s willingness to consider the right timeframe and resources needed for an activity can affect its success.

## 19 | Manage risks from the Ministry having no staff present locally, having high staff turnover or having staff without the right skills

The most common risk factors are:

- the Ministry having high staff turnover with insufficient handover, and lots of organisational change
- the Ministry having no staff in the region or making infrequent visits to partners

- the Ministry relying on other organisations to liaise with partners or governments on its behalf
- the Ministry not managing inactive or ineffective governance groups.

## 20 | Make sure important arrangements are in place before proceeding with an activity

The AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports offer some useful insights into how the Ministry can affect an activity’s success by making sure important arrangements are in place before proceeding.





# Outcomes

## of our agriculture activities

The AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports indicate that our activities are contributing to these types of results.

### Short-term outcomes

- Increasing people's knowledge about agricultural practices.
- Increasing people's access to credit and support services.
- Creating new varieties of produce and preserving native species.
- Influencing farmers to adopt new practices and invest more in their farms.
- Making agricultural technology, equipment and infrastructure available to farmers.
- Improving community facilities and equipment.

### Medium-term outcomes

- Improving management of supply chains and reducing wasted produce.
- Improving manufacturing processes.
- Influencing governments to adopt relevant laws.
- Increasing producers' access to new markets.
- Establishing market access for New Zealand products.
- Creating new supply chains into New Zealand.
- Creating jobs.
- Diversifying people's sources of income.
- Increasing productivity and quality of produce.
- Increasing the amount of produce grown organically.

- Increasing the number of Fairtrade-certified<sup>3</sup> producers and crops.
- Extending the growing season.
- Increasing sales, income and profit for farmers.
- Improving customer satisfaction and confidence in locally produced goods.

### Long-term outcomes

- Improving producers' income stability through consistent sales and guaranteed minimum prices.
- Making farming a viable and profitable business.
- Reducing producers' vulnerability through intercropping and rearing small animals.
- Increasing food security and nutrition.
- Improving animal health.
- Reducing the incidence of plant and animal diseases.
- Increasing access to clean water and reducing the incidence of water- and mosquito-borne diseases.
- Reducing the amount of time that children spend out of school to help with farm work.
- Reducing the need for family members to migrate for work.
- Reducing the volume of crops imported
- Increasing awareness in New Zealand about fair trade and increasing interest in Fairtrade products.

<sup>3</sup> Being Fairtrade-certified generally means generating more income, having more diversified crops and more ecologically-sound production methods.



# Crosscutting issues in our agriculture activities

In the AMAs, ACAs and evaluation reports, our activity managers and independent evaluators tell us how our activities are trying to benefit women, human rights and the environment.

## Promoting gender equality and empowering women

- Our agriculture activities are:

  - building women’s skills in agriculture and involving them in decision-making
  - providing women-only activities and helping women build connections with other women
  - challenging gender norms and improving the role of women in their family and society
  - tailoring initiatives to suit what women need
  - helping women access work experience and complementary services such as financial literacy

- reducing women’s barriers to using cooperatives
  - creating jobs for women who don’t own a farm or don’t have a family with a farm
  - deliberately targeting women as their beneficiaries
  - employing women.

Refer to Table 1 for some examples.

**Table 1: Approaches and activities the agriculture activities are using to promote gender equality and empower women<sup>4</sup>**

| Approach or activity  | Refer to these reports   |
|---|--|
| Women are training in agriculture subjects.   | 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 19, 29, 35, 37, 40, 43, 44, 45, 47, 50, 52, 55, 56 |
| Women are getting involved in project-related activities, meetings and committees.  | 4, 6, 7, 10, 31, 39, 41, 56  |
| Women are training to become trainers or lead farmers.  | 31, 44, 49, 50, 56   |
| Women are being given access to complementary help such as financial-literacy training and income-generating opportunities. | 27, 35, 52   |
| Activities are focusing on livelihoods in which women have autonomy. <sup>5</sup>   | 34, 35, 52   |

<sup>4</sup> Several activities have been reported on more than once. When these multiple reports mention the same factor, it has only been referred to once in this section.

<sup>5</sup> Examples include beekeeping and keeping livestock in Afghanistan, and food-based income-generating activities in The Philippines.

**Table 1: (Continued)**

| Approach or activity   | Refer to these reports |
|--|------------------------|
| Activities are targeting female-headed households as their beneficiaries.  | 39, 44                 |
| Women are being employed in activities run by our partners.  | 34, 52, 56             |
| Women are taking part in women’s networks.   | 42, 52                 |
| Women’s needs are being targeted in activity designs. <sup>6</sup>   | 16, 41                 |
| Husbands and wives are taking part in participatory rural appraisal discussions and gender training.                                     | 27                     |
| Women farmers are being given the opportunity to go on DFAT’s seasonal worker scheme to learn about commercial practices and earn money. | 27                     |
| The number and cost of barriers – to women who want to register with, and supply produce to, cooperatives – is being reduced.            | 30                     |
| Women-only activities are being used to ensure that women can take part.   | 34                     |
| Producers are being given tools to help them protect children and eliminate gender discrimination.                                       | 52                     |
| Producers that have a strong female input are being supported by a Producer Development Fund.  | 52                     |

## Protecting the environment

- Our agriculture activities are:

  - creating tools to protect the environment
  - conserving water and introducing drought-resistant crops
  - saving diesel and emissions
  - training farmers to use environmentally sustainable methods
  - training farmers to safely use organic materials and agrochemicals

- guiding partners on how to use premiums to finance subsidies that support better environmental practices
  - improving waste management
  - introducing agriculture methods that will adapt to climate change
  - incorporating disaster-risk-management practices into agriculture.

Refer to Table 2 for some examples.

<sup>6</sup> The design for Gordons Market includes clear lighting and observation lines. The design for Wannii Dairy Regeneration Programme ensures that women don’t need to travel to the market in the dark and can work at home while looking after their children.





Table 2: Approaches and activities the agriculture activities are using to protect the environment<sup>7</sup>

| Approach or activity   | Refer to these reports            |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Activities are using environmentally sustainable agriculture methods.  | 7, 19, 38, 39, 44, 47, 48, 50, 52 |
| Farmers are training to use animal manure and agrochemicals efficiently and safely.  | 6, 19, 21, 29, 38, 52             |
| Efficient irrigation methods are being used to save water.   | 6, 19, 38                         |
| Farmers are learning how to manage waste; effluent-management systems have been introduced.  | 26, 52                            |
| Farmers are training in recycling, composting, making soap from animal fat, and using biogas and liquid fertilizer from biodegradable waste. | 44, 52, 53                        |
| Disaster-risk-management practices have been incorporated into agriculture.  | 35, 41                            |
| A sluice gate and water-catchment pools have been constructed to protect communities from drought.   | 3, 6                              |
| Drainage and culverts have been installed in fields to manage run-off after heavy rain.  | 52                                |
| Re-planting is replacing old stock.  | 52                                |
| Environmental protection groups are meeting.   | 1                                 |
| An environmental tool is being used to measure indicators like nutrient outputs, GHG emissions and nutrient balance.                         | 42                                |
| A farm-resilience index and a farm-sustainability index have been developed.   | 1                                 |
| Drought-resistant crops have been developed.   | 28                                |
| Solar pumps have been installed to irrigate planting areas, and save diesel, emissions and money.  | 3                                 |
| Standard-operating procedures have been developed on food-safety testing and phytosanitary measures related to managing laboratory waste.    | 37                                |
| Activities are using techniques and inputs that will perform in the local climate and will adapt to climate change.                          | 10                                |
| Fruit waste is being used to feed biogas digesters and produce organic fertiliser.   | 53                                |
| The capacity of laboratory staff, to test for agricultural residues, is being built.   | 55                                |

<sup>7</sup> Several activities have been reported on more than once. When these multiple reports mention the same factor, it has only been referred to once in this section.



# Protecting human rights

Our agriculture activities are:

- reducing the health and safety risks related to handling and using pesticides
- increasing food security, income and nutrition
- targeting support to the most vulnerable groups.



# Appendix 1: All insights from our agriculture activities

## Pay attention to the design

| 1. Design an activity to suit the local circumstances  |   |
|--|---|
| Success factors  | Refer to these reports                                |
| A design that aligns with the partner government’s priorities.   | 1, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55     |
| A design that considers, from the outset, how the activity can respond to climate change and environment.  | 39, 41, 52, 53  |
| A design that’s adapted to fit the local situation and ways of doing things.   | 1, 35, 41, 52   |
| A design that reflects what communities want.  | 20, 35, 56  |
| A design that uses strategies to involve women that reflect the local culture.   | 33, 43  |
| A design that complements other initiatives in the same sector.  | 45  |
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports                                |
| An unrealistic design that’s based on inadequate analysis and understanding of local context.  | 2, 10, 15, 17, 37, 38, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 51, 54 |
| A design that doesn’t include gender analysis and plan how it will respond to the different needs of men and women, or the needs of the environment. | 51, 52, 54, 55, 56                                    |
| An activity that duplicates, or doesn’t align with, what others are doing.   | 22, 47, 53  |
| A design that doesn’t take account of what local partners think.   | 12, 37, 54  |
| A design that doesn’t take account of what the private sector thinks.  | 33, 51, 56  |
| A design that doesn’t consider exchange rate fluctuation.  | 6, 11   |
| A design that doesn’t plan how to communicate research findings and lessons to stakeholders and communities.   | 53  |
| An activity that partners can’t distinguish from other projects.   | 2   |



| 2. Use evidence to design an activity and then test the designs works                                 |  |
|---|--|
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports                 |
| An inception phase to test and refine the design.   | 1, 6, 20, 45, 46                       |
| Enough design time to collect baseline data or research the right inputs for the market and industry. | 32, 46, 56                             |
| A design that replicates previous activities that were successful.                                    | 34                                     |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports                 |
| A design that doesn't learn from previous failed activities.  | 33                                     |
| 3. Design an activity to suit the market and be commercially sustainable                              |  |
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports                 |
| An activity that's designed to work across different points of the value chain.                       | 26, 31, 33, 41                         |
| An activity that's designed to focus on an aspect of agriculture with good economic prospects.        | 8, 17                                  |
| An activity that's designed to have long-term commercial sustainability.                              | 31, 41                                 |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports                 |
| An activity that's too short to achieve sustainable outputs or outcomes.                              | 12, 32, 37, 40, 42, 45, 51, 52, 53, 56 |
| A design that doesn't plan the activity's approach to exit and sustainability.                        | 37, 49, 54                             |
| A design that doesn't plan how to scale up the activity to get the full impact.                       | 48, 49, 51                             |
| A design that doesn't consider how extension services will be carried out and paid for.               | 48, 55, 56                             |
| A design that includes systems that are too complex for the local partner to sustain.                 | 26, 41                                 |
| A design that pilots new initiatives at the expense of consolidating and sustaining outputs.          | 7, 8                                   |
| A design that doesn't consider the impact of fluctuating commodity prices or foresee all the costs.   | 7, 23                                  |
| A design that doesn't take the full value chain into account.   | 15, 51                                 |
| A design that creates a new value chain instead of improving an existing one.                         | 33                                     |

| 4. Pay attention to <i>how</i> an activity will be implemented, not just <i>what</i> it will produce   |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Success factors  | Refer to these reports |
| A design with a good management structure and clear roles and responsibilities.  | 33, 35, 52             |
| An activity that's designed to treat farmers as small business operators who can manage their enterprises.   | 51, 52                 |
| A design with stretch targets to motivate everyone involved in the activity.   | 45, 52                 |
| A design with a good approach to transferring skills.  | 32, 52                 |
| An activity that's designed to involve farmers and their organisations in every aspect.  | 42                     |
| A design that includes a dedicated gender adviser to empower women.  | 27                     |
| A design that uses ICT to reach distributed island communities.  | 45                     |
| A design that establishes a donor governance group that uses common reporting arrangements and shares information.                                   | 11                     |
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports |
| A design that relies too heavily on consultants or doesn't have a mechanism to transfer knowledge to local people.                                   | 3, 8, 51, 56           |
| A design that uses a technical adviser who isn't based in the country.   | 21, 51                 |
| A design that duplicates roles among several partners.   | 30                     |
| A reporting cycle that doesn't align with the governance meeting timeframe.  | 20                     |
| A design that doesn't define the roles, functions, membership and decision-making powers of the governance group, and the frequency of its meetings. | 55                     |



| 5. Include a complete monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) system in the design          |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports             |
| A design that has missing or incorrect baseline data, which affects how we assess and measure change.    | 38, 44, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56 |
| A design that doesn't have a good MERL (formerly results) framework.                                     | 38, 43, 47, 51, 52, 55             |
| A design that doesn't have a comprehensive theory of change.   | 15, 25, 53                         |
| A MERL framework that doesn't disaggregate results for men and women.                                    | 52, 53, 56                         |
| A design with no interim targets.  | 1, 28, 51                          |
| A monitoring system that's too difficult for the partner to use.   | 38, 52                             |
| A design with too many outputs and outcomes.   | 4                                  |
| A MERL framework that doesn't include indicators to track necessary changes in the enabling environment. | 51                                 |
| A monitoring system that's designed too late.  | 10                                 |
| A MERL framework that doesn't include value-for-money indicators.  | 54                                 |
| A monitoring system that is not sufficiently resourced.  | 55                                 |

## Choose partners and suppliers carefully

| 6. Choose partners that have the capacity and capability to implement an activity well  |   |
|---|---|
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports  |
| Partners that have the right technical and development knowledge and expertise to implement the activity.                             | 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 35, 41, 44, 45, 47, 51, 52, 53 |
| Partners that review progress and adapt to changes in circumstances or incorporate lessons learned from past donor-funded activities. | 18, 20, 23, 27, 29, 32, 34, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 52, 55                      |
| Partners that have good project management skills.  | 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 29, 36, 39, 41, 52                                   |
| Partners that use data or the MERL framework to monitor and manage the activity.  | 20, 22, 29, 32, 34, 45, 52  |
| Partners that supplement a “fly-in, fly-out” approach with dedicated local staff or regular remote communication.                     | 1, 40, 43, 45, 55   |

| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports                                    |
|--|---|
| Partners that can't meet our reporting requirements.   | 4, 12, 15, 23, 25, 33, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43, 46, 47, 49     |
| Partners that don't collect the right baseline or ongoing monitoring information.  | 8, 10, 12, 15, 21, 25, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38, 42, 43, 49, 52 |
| Partners that can't handle problems or manage projects well.   | 15, 16, 25, 37, 38, 43, 44, 46, 49                        |
| An activity that relies too heavily on certain personnel who aren't always available.  | 12, 16, 17, 36, 43, 47, 51, 56                            |
| Partners that can't achieve the activity's targets.  | 2, 33, 44, 45, 46   |
| Partners that have weak financial controls, systems and processes.   | 10, 13, 16, 46  |
| Partners that have slow or complex procurement processes.  | 16, 36, 56  |
| Partners that have frequent changes of personnel.  | 5, 52   |
| Partners that don't measure how farmers use new crop varieties and practices and use the lessons to improve farm extension work. | 28  |
| Partners that delay implementation.  | 47  |
| A technical committee that can't make decisions and prioritise activities.   | 3   |
| Partners that have insufficient people working “on the ground”.  | 55  |

### 7. Choose partners that already have good relationships with the right people and organisations

| Success factors  | Refer to these reports  |
|--|---|
| Partners that have good relationships with local stakeholders.                               | 1, 6, 8, 14, 15, 20, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 35, 39, 41, 44, 52 |
| Partners who are based in the area and work frequently with the activity's beneficiaries.    | 6, 14, 20, 27, 29, 35, 41, 52, 53, 55                           |
| Partners that have good relationships with the technical experts involved with the activity. | 12, 17, 20, 26, 29, 40, 45                                      |
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports  |
| Partners that have incompatible approaches and cultures.                                     | 12, 32  |
| Private-sector partners that don't cooperate in the way the design envisaged.                | 15, 22  |
| Ministry suppliers that don't communicate well with the Ministry's partners.                 | 23, 49  |



| 8. Choose partners that are motivated to succeed  |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports |
| New Zealand partners that want to continue working in the country after the activity ends.                | 1, 4, 20, 52           |
| Local commercial partners that are motivated to develop, and willing to use a donor to help them succeed. | 3, 27, 29, 52          |
| Local commercial partners that are willing to invest in skilled, qualified personnel.                     | 3, 27, 29, 52          |
| Local commercial partners that are willing to change and invest in their business.                        | 27, 29, 52             |
| Partners that participate in a well-functioning governance group.   | 26, 31, 37, 40         |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports |
| Partners that focus more on implementing activities than achieving results.                               | 23, 25, 55             |
| Suppliers that spend too little time in the country where the activity is being implemented.              | 49                     |
| Commercial partners than have conflicting development and profitmaking objectives.                        | 46                     |
| Partners that give inaccurate or inconsistent messages to the media.                                      | 16                     |
| 9. Choose partners that will use good development practices and methods to implement the activity         |                        |
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports |
| Partners that understand, and use appropriate methods for, adult learning and behaviour change.           | 52, 56                 |
| Partners that identify “champions” in the community who have the mana to be effective change agents.      | 52                     |
| Partners that regularly audit agroecological production and processing methods.                           | 52                     |

| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports |
|--|------------------------|
| Partners that don’t adapt their activities for gender differences.   | 22, 33, 46, 55, 56     |
| Partners that don’t prioritise good environmental practices.   | 15, 22, 25, 56         |
| Suppliers that are unwilling to listen to the Ministry’s ideas.  | 33, 37, 40, 49         |
| Partners that don’t test the design’s assumptions.   | 25, 33, 37             |
| Partners that don’t align the activity sufficiently with those of other influential investors in the sector. | 48, 56                 |
| Partners that don’t prioritise health and safety.  | 25, 46                 |
| Suppliers that don’t use good development practices that NGOs use.   | 46, 47                 |
| Suppliers that challenge the theory of change in the design.   | 23                     |
| Suppliers whose teams are too large or uncoordinated.  | 51                     |
| Private-sector partners that don’t pay for their own costs of participating in the activity.                 | 48                     |



Choose a receptive environment

| 10. Work in a country whose enabling environment supports the activity, not blocks it   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports       |
| Market value chains that are already robust and not dependent on a single link.   | 11, 23                       |
| Regulations (in areas such as phytosanitary, export licenses and product quality) already exist and are imposed.                | 53                           |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports       |
| An industry that imposes minimum prices, and restrictions on competition and free trade.  | 51                           |
| Locally produced milk that's priced low, which affects profitability.   | 55                           |
| High school fees, which make it more profitable for children to work on farms than go to school.                                | 52                           |
| Gaps in electricity supply, which affect the cold chain for the milk industry and people's ability to refrigerate milk at home. | 55                           |
| 11. Work with a government that is committed to the activity and to its own extension services                                  |                              |
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports       |
| Politicians and institutions that are committed to, and prepared to invest in, the sector.                                      | 1, 8, 11, 20, 22, 41, 43, 51 |
| A government that is prepared to make land, buildings and other resources available to the activity.                            | 11, 33                       |
| A government that is willing to make supportive policy changes.   | 48, 51                       |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports       |
| Low-quality, insufficient or infrequent extension services.   | 11, 15, 41, 48, 51, 56       |
| Insufficient political commitment or intention to invest in continuing the activity's outputs.                                  | 2, 36, 49, 56                |
| Government partners that are bureaucratic, don't plan or report well and can't engage with the activity.                        | 5, 49, 56                    |
| A government that wants to change the design because of other political priorities.   | 16, 40, 47                   |
| A government that doesn't tackle illegal activities (such as logging) and difficulties farmers face securing land tenure.       | 39, 41, 55                   |
| A government that changes its agriculture priorities.   | 10, 40                       |
| A government that doesn't promote and regulate trading standards and good practices.  | 53                           |

| 12. Work with farmers who are willing to change practices or invest in their farms                                   |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Success factors  | Refer to these reports                |
| Communities that are engaged in the activity.  | 20, 24, 42, 55                        |
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports                |
| Farmers who are unwilling to commit to approaches that have a slower return on investment.                           | 13, 14, 38, 48, 55                    |
| Farmers who are unaware of, and skeptical about, the need to change.   | 2, 13, 18                             |
| Farmers who leave the activity because they don't own the land they're farming.                                      | 44, 47                                |
| Insufficient young or women farmers, due to migration and land tenure issues.  | 52, 53                                |
| Farmers who are unwilling to store produce, because prices are fluctuating.  | 34                                    |
| Farmers who are unwilling to invest, because of the threat of crops being stolen.                                    | 45                                    |
| Farmers who are skeptical, because the activity follows a previous failed project.                                   | 14                                    |
| Farmers who can't provide data about their production, income or profit.   | 8                                     |
| 13. Make sure that the finance and supplies the activity needs are available and affordable                          |                                       |
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports                |
| Insufficient local agricultural inputs, of the right quality, to achieve and sustain the activity's targets.         | 8, 10, 11, 35, 41, 47, 48, 55         |
| Unaffordable finance.  | 23, 55                                |
| Bank closures.   | 8                                     |
| Difficulty recruiting skilled personnel who are willing to work in the activity's localities.                        | 41                                    |
| Overreliance on specific infrastructure.   | 29                                    |
| 14. Understand and weigh up the risks of adverse weather, natural disasters and civil unrest                         |                                       |
| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports                |
| Diseases or adverse weather that disrupt the activity or affect harvests or crop quality.                            | 8, 11, 13, 36, 38, 39, 41, 45, 46, 47 |
| Elections or civil unrest that delay implementation, or stop partners and specialists visiting the activity's sites. | 10, 11, 16, 19, 35, 41                |
| Natural disasters that change local priorities and the ongoing relevance of the activity.                            | 13, 36                                |



# Manage the activity well

| 15. Nurture relationships with partners and important stakeholders  |  |
|---|--|
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports                             |
| The Ministry having good relationships with partners.   | 11, 12, 13, 22, 29, 32, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 45, 48 |
| The Ministry having relationships with the right government institutions.   | 2, 4, 15, 34                                       |
| The Ministry investing time in developing the right relationships.  | 8, 34, 40, 44                                      |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports                             |
| The Ministry not investing enough time in checking the partner government has the right expectations about the activity.  | 47   |
| 16. Respond and adapt to contextual changes that affect the activity  |  |
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports                             |
| The Ministry having systems and contracts that allow partners to adapt to local changes and respond to new opportunities. | 8, 11, 15  |
| The Ministry responding quickly to contextual changes that affect the activity.   | 40, 45   |
| The Ministry allowing time in the activity’s timeframe for inevitable delays.   | 16   |
| The Ministry proactively keeping partners to the activity’s planned timeframe.  | 20   |
| The Ministry coordinating with other New Zealand organisations working in the country’s agriculture sector.               | 22   |
| The Ministry making regular monitoring visits.  | 41   |

| 17. Provide the right support at the right time   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports |
| The Ministry recognising that a country can benefit from an opportunity to visit New Zealand and observe New Zealand's approach.  | 12, 40, 51             |
| The Ministry recognising that a country graduating from ODA needs New Zealand’s technical expertise, not its money.   | 1, 17                  |
| The Ministry providing partners’ staff with scholarships for study that complements the activity, or using scholarship alumni in the activity.  | 6, 8                   |
| The Ministry helping its partners develop a good MERL system.   | 12                     |
| The Ministry recruiting specialists to give its partners policy advice.   | 47                     |
| The Ministry creating better opportunities for a country to access agriculture working holidays in New Zealand.   | 1                      |
| Risk factors  | Refer to these reports |
| The Ministry managing the activity through its regional programmes, which reduces its visibility and opportunities to benefit from the Ministry’s relationships and advocacy on policy matters. | 52                     |
| 18. Commit to a realistic timeframe and allocate the right resources  |                        |
| Success factors   | Refer to these reports |
| The Ministry being willing to commit to a long-term investment.   | 10                     |
| The Ministry being willing to wait for tangible results.  | 26                     |
| The Ministry being willing to co-invest in a commercial venture until it becomes commercially viable.   | 27                     |
| The Ministry being willing to pay for technical assistance in a high-cost environment.  | 19                     |
| The Ministry being willing to use specialist engineering or project management contractors for a large infrastructure project.  | 16                     |



## Appendix 2:

### AMAs, ACAs and evaluations that generated the insights

The insights in this report draw from these AMAs, ACAs and evaluations.

| No. | Type | Activity name   | Period covered |
|-----|------|---|----------------|
| 1   | AMA  | Family Farm Improvement Project (Uruguay) <sup>8</sup>  | 2014–2016      |
| 2   | AMA  | Foot and Mouth Disease Control (Myanmar and Lao PDR)  | 2015–2017      |
| 3   | AMA  | Private Sector Lead Firm – TININGA (Papua New Guinea)   | 2015–2017      |
| 4   | AMA  | Angkor Community Heritage (Cambodia)  | 2015–2017      |
| 5   | AMA  | Family Farming (Paraguay)   | 2014–2017      |
| 6   | AMA  | Commercial Development and Strengthening of Horticulture (Cambodia) <sup>9</sup>                        | 2016–2017      |
| 7   | AMA  | Ethnic Minority Economic Empowerment (Viet Nam)   | 2016–2017      |
| 8   | AMA  | Strengthened Avocado Value Chain (Kenya) <sup>10</sup>  | 2015–2016      |
| 9   | AMA  | International Fund for Agricultural Development (worldwide)   | 2015–2016      |
| 10  | AMA  | New Zealand Dairy Project (The Philippines) <sup>11</sup>   | 2016–2017      |
| 11  | AMA  | Reducing Malnutrition and Increasing Agriculture Returns to Farmers (Rwanda and Ethiopia) <sup>12</sup> | 2016–2017      |
| 12  | AMA  | Mekong Institute Food Safety Committee (ASEAN)  | 2016–2017      |
| 13  | AMA  | Nature's Way Cooperative Capacity Building (Fiji)   | 2016–2017      |
| 14  | AMA  | Rural Bee Keeping Livelihoods (Fiji)  | 2016–2017      |
| 15  | AMA  | Dairy Excellence Project (Myanmar) <sup>13</sup>  | 2016–2017      |
| 16  | AMA  | Gordons Market Upgrade (Papua New Guinea) <sup>14</sup>   | 2016–2017      |
| 17  | AMA  | New Premium Fruit Variety Development (Viet Nam) <sup>15</sup>  | 2016–2017      |
| 18  | AMA  | Dairy Excellence Training (Sri Lanka) <sup>16</sup>   | 2016–2017      |
| 19  | AMA  | Agricultural Support Programme 2 (Afghanistan) <sup>17</sup>  | 2016–2017      |

<sup>8</sup> See also number 42

<sup>9</sup> See also number 50

<sup>10</sup> See also numbers 48, 53 and 54

<sup>11</sup> See also number 56

<sup>12</sup> See also number 31

<sup>13</sup> See also numbers 26 and 55

<sup>14</sup> See also number 30

<sup>15</sup> See also number 32

<sup>16</sup> See also number 22

<sup>17</sup> See also number 34

#### 19. Manage risks from no Ministry staff present locally, high staff turnover or staff without the right skills

| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports        |
|--|-------------------------------|
| The Ministry having high staff turnover with insufficient handover, and lots of organisational change.   | 5, 11, 25, 38, 40, 42, 43, 47 |
| The Ministry having no staff in the region or making infrequent visits to its partners.                  | 5, 18, 19, 24, 25, 44         |
| The Ministry relying on other organisations to liaise with its partners or the government on its behalf. | 5, 28, 34                     |
| The Ministry ignoring inactive or ineffective governance groups.   | 10, 53, 55                    |
| The Ministry taking too long to make and communicate decisions.  | 33, 47                        |
| The Ministry giving insufficient attention to its post's views on the activity's design.                 | 32, 37                        |
| Activity managers without the skills to talk to partners about policy matters.                           | 28                            |
| The Ministry ignoring its partners' poor-quality monitoring and reporting.                               | 38                            |
| The roles of the Ministry's staff, at its posts and in Wellington, being unclear.                        | 38                            |

#### 20. Make sure important arrangements are in place before proceeding with an activity

| Risk factors   | Refer to these reports |
|--|------------------------|
| The Ministry proceeding with an activity before land tenure is secured.  | 16, 41                 |
| The Ministry having no formal arrangements between its partners about planning and reporting.  | 11, 48                 |
| The Ministry proceeding with an activity before its partnership agreements and governance arrangements are in place.                 | 23                     |
| The Ministry using complex contracting and reporting arrangements.   | 37                     |
| The Ministry distorting the market and using alleged favouritism by contracting private-sector organisations to deliver an activity. | 47                     |
| The Ministry not revealing its budget to tenderers for a large infrastructure project.   | 16                     |
| The Ministry having no contingency in its PAA.   | 34                     |
| The Ministry keeping poor records.   | 44                     |



| No. | Type | Activity name   | Period covered |
|-----|------|---|----------------|
| 20  | AMA  | Innovative Farm Systems and Capability for Agribusiness (Indonesia) <sup>18</sup>                       | 2016–2017      |
| 21  | AMA  | Quality Horticulture (Cambodia)   | 2017           |
| 22  | AMA  | Dairy Excellence Training (Sri Lanka) <sup>19</sup>   | 2017–2018      |
| 23  | AMA  | Dairy Transformation (Zambia)   | 2017–2018      |
| 24  | AMA  | Agriculture, Dairy and Economic Development (Kenya)   | 2017–2018      |
| 25  | AMA  | Dairy Value Chain Project (Colombia) <sup>20</sup>  | 2017–2018      |
| 26  | AMA  | Dairy Excellence Project (Myanmar) <sup>21</sup>  | 2017–2018      |
| 27  | AMA  | Private Sector Lead Firm (Papua New Guinea)   | 2017–2018      |
| 28  | AMA  | Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CIGAR) (multi-country)                       | 2017–2018      |
| 29  | AMA  | Tininga Fresh (Papua New Guinea)  | 2017–2018      |
| 30  | AMA  | Gordons Market Upgrade (Papua New Guinea) <sup>22</sup>   | 2017–2018      |
| 31  | AMA  | Reducing Malnutrition and Increasing Agriculture Returns to Farmers (Rwanda and Ethiopia) <sup>23</sup> | 2017–2018      |
| 32  | AMA  | New Premium Fruit Variety Development (Viet Nam)  | 2017–2018      |
| 33  | AMA  | Innovative Farm Systems and Capability for Agribusiness (Indonesia) <sup>24</sup>                       | 2017–2018      |
| 34  | ACA  | Agricultural Support Programme 2 (Afghanistan) <sup>25</sup>  | 2015–2017      |
| 35  | ACA  | Bangsamoro Agriculture (The Philippines)  | 2015–2018      |
| 36  | ACA  | Fiji Cooperative Dairy Company Limited Infrastructure Support (Fiji)                                    | 2015–2016      |
| 37  | ACA  | Quarantine Services Improvement (Indonesia)   | 2011–2016      |
| 38  | ACA  | Sustainable and Reliant Agribusiness Development in Mercedes (The Philippines)                          | 2013–2019      |
| 39  | ACA  | Promoting Human and Economic Development for Indigenous Communities (Cambodia)                          | 2012–2016      |
| 40  | ACA  | Agriculture Industry Training (Chile)   | 2012–2017      |
| 41  | ACA  | Wanni Dairy Regeneration Programme (Sri Lanka)  | 2012–2016      |

<sup>18</sup> See also number 33

<sup>19</sup> See also number 18

<sup>20</sup> See also number 51

<sup>21</sup> See also numbers 15 and 55

<sup>22</sup> See also number 16

<sup>23</sup> See also number 11

<sup>24</sup> See also number 20

<sup>25</sup> See also number 19

| No. | Type       | Activity name  | Period covered |
|-----|------------|--|----------------|
| 42  | ACA        | Family Farm Improvement Project (Uruguay) <sup>26</sup>  | 2012–2018      |
| 43  | ACA        | Beef Sector Training Initiative (Botswana)   | 2014–2017      |
| 44  | ACA        | Community Gardens (Mongolia)   | 2011–2017      |
| 45  | ACA        | Small Ruminants Support (CARICOM member countries)   | 2015–2018      |
| 46  | AMA        | Sandalwood Erromango (Vanuatu)   | 2016–2018      |
| 47  | AMA        | Strengthening Value Chains (Vanuatu)   | 2016–2018      |
| 48  | AMA        | Strengthened Avocado Value Chain (Kenya) <sup>27</sup>   | 2016–2018      |
| 49  | AMA        | Dairy Excellence (Indonesia)   | 2016–2018      |
| 50  | Evaluation | Commercial Development and Strengthening of Horticulture (Cambodia) <sup>28</sup>  | No dates given |
| 51  | Evaluation | Colombia Dairy Value Chain Project (Colombia) <sup>29</sup>  | 2015–2017      |
| 52  | Evaluation | Support for Fairtrade Business Development in Pacific Island Countries (PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) | 2012–2017      |
| 53  | Evaluation | Kenya Avocado Industry Support Programme (Kenya) <sup>30</sup>   | 2013–2018      |
| 54  | Evaluation | Kenya Avocado Industry Support Programme (Kenya) <sup>31</sup>   | 2013–2014      |
| 55  | Evaluation | Myanmar Dairy Excellence Project (Myanmar) <sup>32</sup>   | 2014–2018      |
| 56  | Evaluation | Philippines–New Zealand Dairy Project (The Philippines) <sup>33</sup>  | 2013–2015      |

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## If you want to read more about a particular activity or lesson:

Link to AMAs and ACAs completed up to 2019

[http://o-wln-gdm/Functions/InternationalDevelopment/DevelopmentPolicy/DevelopmentEffectiveness/IDGDSE\\_Quality%20-%20AMAs\\_and\\_ACAs%20-%20Spreadsheet.xlsx](http://o-wln-gdm/Functions/InternationalDevelopment/DevelopmentPolicy/DevelopmentEffectiveness/IDGDSE_Quality%20-%20AMAs_and_ACAs%20-%20Spreadsheet.xlsx)

Link to Activity Evaluations completed up to 2019

<http://o-wln-gdm/Functions/InternationalDevelopment/DevelopmentPolicy/StrategicEvaluationsAndResearch/evaluation%20report%20database%20for%20te%20aka.xlsx>

<sup>26</sup> See also number 1

<sup>27</sup> See also numbers 8, 53 and 54

<sup>28</sup> See also number 6

<sup>29</sup> See also number 25

<sup>30</sup> See also numbers 8, 48 and 54

<sup>31</sup> See also numbers 8, 48 and 53

<sup>32</sup> See also numbers 15 and 26

<sup>33</sup> See also number 10





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