



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere

Agriculture Activity Insights

Insights about our agriculture activities
between 2019 and 2021



The New Zealand Aid Programme delivers New Zealand's official support for developing countries, with a particular focus on the Pacific Islands region.

The purpose of New Zealand's aid is to develop shared prosperity and stability in the Pacific and beyond, drawing on the best of New Zealand's knowledge and skills. We support sustainable development in developing countries to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world. We follow the principles of understanding, friendship, mutual benefit and collective ambition in how we design and deliver our aid programme.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (The Ministry or MFAT) staff in Wellington and overseas are responsible for managing the New Zealand Aid Programme, working with a wide range of partners.

Activity insights

Activity Insights is a series of reports about the New Zealand International Development Cooperation Programme's programmes and activities (projects). They tell us what our activity managers and implementing partners think make our programmes and activities successful, and what causes them to underperform. They also tell us the types of outcomes we are achieving in a sector, country or region, and what we are doing to improve the situation for women, human rights and the environment.

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About our agriculture activities

In 2019, the Ministry commissioned analysis of a sample of 56 internal reports and independent evaluations of agriculture activities that were implemented between 2014 and 2018. The analysis generated some useful insights into what makes agriculture activities successful.

Consequently, we have repeated this analysis for agriculture activities implemented between 2019 and 2021. This time, by using a large and complete dataset, the analysis provides more comprehensive findings.

Agriculture Activity Insights draws insights from 257 reports about the Ministry's agriculture activities that were being implemented between 2019 and 2021. Of the reports, 73 percent were written by the Ministry;¹ 26 percent were written by the Ministry's implementing partners;² and 1 percent were written by independent evaluators.

¹ These reports are 124 activity monitoring assessments, 45 activity completion assessments, 5 activity monitoring summaries, 9 file notes and 4 monitoring visit reports.

² These reports are 52 activity annual reports or completion reports and 15 MERL frameworks.

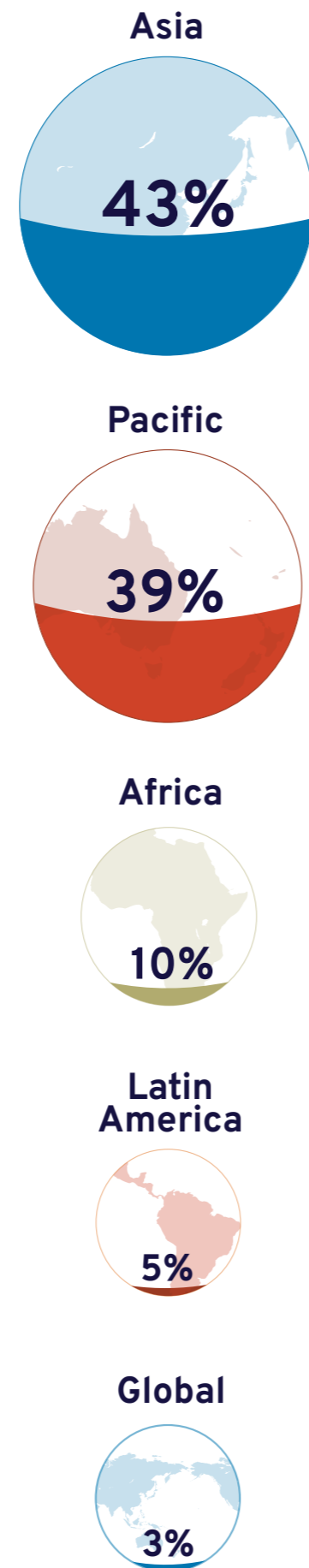
Locations of our agriculture activities

The reports provide information on 93 different agriculture activities

in 26 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. Most of the activities are being implemented in Asia (43 percent) and the Pacific (39 percent).

Since our last analysis of agriculture activities in 2019, the Ministry has increased its focus on the Pacific. This is borne out in the proportion of agriculture activities being implemented between 2019 and 2021 in different regions. The percentage of our agriculture activities that were being implemented in the Pacific rose by 17 percentage points, from 22 percent in 2019 to 39 percent in 2022. Conversely, the percentage of our agriculture activities that were being implemented in Latin America, Asia and Africa dropped 7, 6 and 2 percentage points respectively.

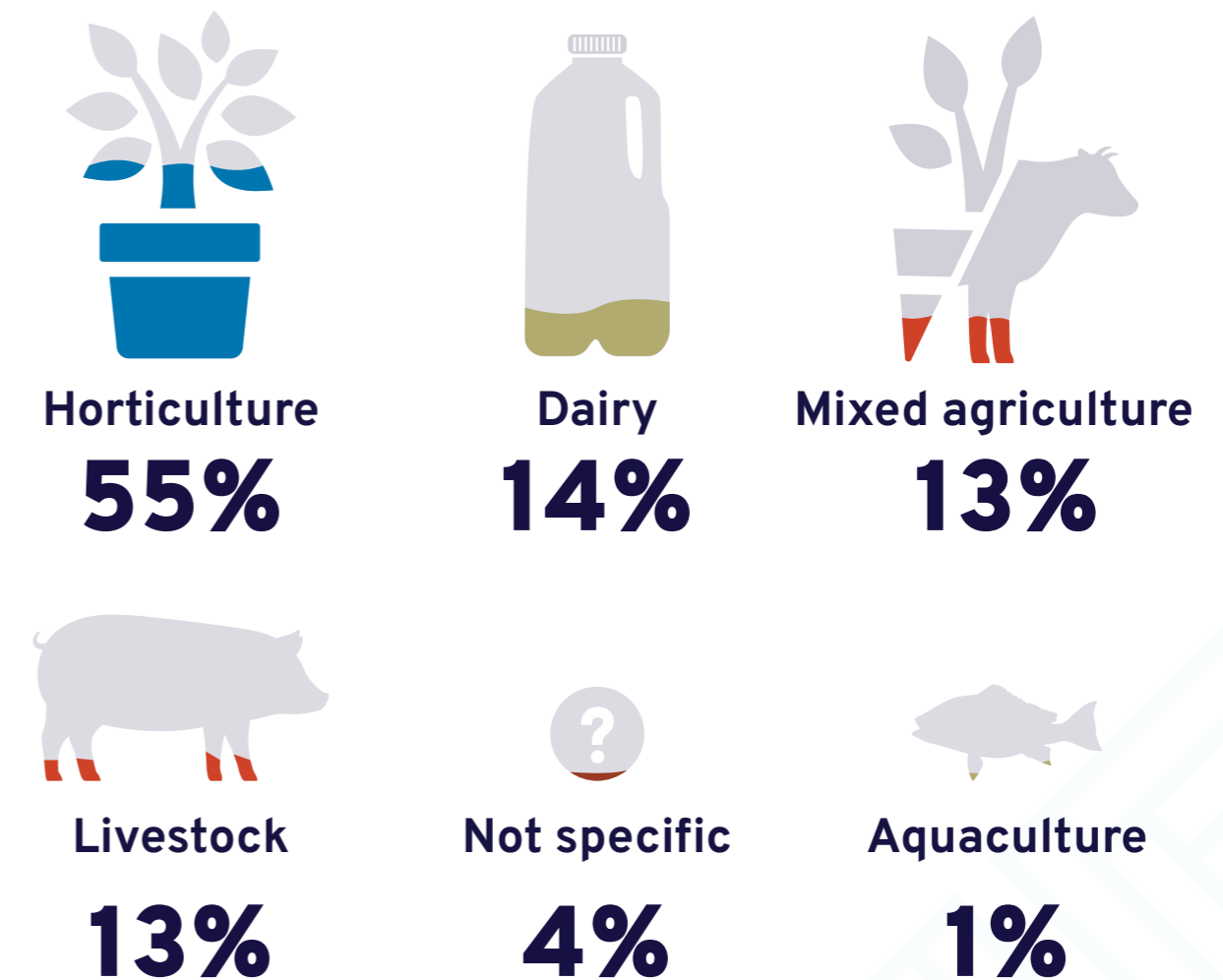
Regions where agriculture activities are located



Sectors in which our agriculture activities operate

The majority (55 percent) of the agriculture activities focus on horticulture while the others are evenly split between dairy (14 percent), livestock (13 percent) and mixed agriculture (13 percent).

Sectors that agriculture activities focus on



Why we created *Agriculture Activity Insights*

For most activities, our basic reporting requirement is an annual and final report by the implementing partner and an annual and final report by our activity manager. Given we funded 93 agriculture activities between 2019 and 2021, we have a large volume of reports to draw knowledge from.

While every activity is unique, and the circumstances in which activities are implemented vary significantly, we know from previous analysis that there are some common themes. We wanted to extract these themes from our reports to:

- identify the most common factors that enable or hinder agriculture activities achieving their outcomes
- understand the most common ways that activities are making a difference to women, the environment and human rights
- understand how agriculture activities are responding to climate change
- understand the most common effects of COVID-19 on agriculture activities.

The reports of our agriculture activities remind us of what makes an agriculture activity succeed or fail. By describing why activities are going well, or why they are having problems, our activity managers, partners 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.



How to use this report

Whether you are designing, appraising, approving, implementing, monitoring or evaluating an agriculture activity, this report will help you consider whether the activity has the right factors in place to succeed. It will also help you identify potential risks and problems, so you can investigate them further and plan how to mitigate or manage them.

We expect *Agriculture Activity Insights* will be especially useful for:

- our agriculture team, who advise the Ministry on its agriculture strategy
- our activity managers, who design, implement and monitor agriculture activities
- our people leaders, who decide which agriculture activities the Ministry will fund
- our suppliers, who design and implement agriculture activities funded by the Ministry
- international development organisations and researchers, who can learn from the Ministry's experience in the agriculture sector.

Using what we have learnt from *Agriculture Activity Insights*, we have created a tool to use when you are designing, appraising, approving or implementing an agriculture activity (see page 44). The items in this tool are based on what factors we know help activities to succeed or fail.

What we learnt about agriculture activities



KEY FACTORS
88



SUCCESS FACTORS
32



RISK FACTORS
56

From the reports we gained a wide range of insights into what factors affect our agriculture activities and what make them successful. We consolidated the factors into 88 success and risk factors that our activity managers and implementing partners tell us affect the performance of agriculture activities.

Some of the success and risk factors are mentioned in many reports, for activities in different sectors and regions; others are more specific to a country, region, sector or type of implementing partner.

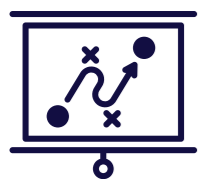
From the success and risk factors, we drew out 18 lessons for us to learn from and use in our work. These lessons draw on the 18 most common success factors and 38 most common risk factors, so we can be confident that they are likely to apply in most situations.

The lessons fall into eight themes.

It is not surprising that we discovered more risk factors than success factors, given that they mostly draw from progress reports and evaluations. While the report writers do comment on the reasons initiatives are working well and achieving results, they are more likely to explain in detail the reasons for problems, delays and any disappointing results.

	18 lessons for our work	✓ 18 most common success factors	⚠ 38 most common risk factors
 Activity design	4	3	5
 Activity stakeholders	2	4	5
 Social inclusion and the environment	1	1	2
 Implementing partners	3	5	6
 Local conditions	2	0	5
 Commercial success	1	2	3
 Our approach	3	2	8
 Our management	2	1	4

Lessons for our work



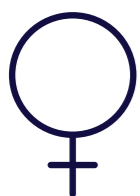
Activity design

- 1 Design activities that focus on local priorities
- 2 Tailor activity designs to the local situation
- 3 Design activities that will coordinate with, not duplicate, other initiatives
- 4 Develop a good theory of change and MERL framework, and use them to manage the activity



Activity stakeholders

- 5 Make sure that the partner government, private sector and other stakeholders are committed to a planned activity, and want to engage with it, before proceeding
- 6 Make sure that the planned beneficiaries want to take part in the activity, and are willing to change their practices



Social inclusion and the environment

- 7 Analyse and plan how the activity could improve the situation for women, human rights, the environment and climate change



Implementing partners

- 8 Choose partners with the right technical, development and project-management expertise
- 9 Choose partners with a local presence and enough staff to manage the activity well
- 10 Choose partners that already have good relationships with the right people and organisations



Local conditions

- 11 Make sure critical agreements, arrangements, supplies and conditions are in place before starting to implement an activity
- 12 Weigh up the risks of adverse weather, natural disasters and civil unrest and understand the impact they will have on an activity's results



Commercial success

- 13 Design activities that suit the market and can become commercially sustainable



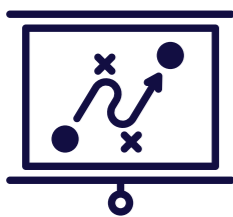
Our approach

- 14 Be realistic about what an activity can achieve, how long it will take and how results will be sustained
- 15 Be realistic about what an activity can achieve in a country with poorly functioning markets
- 16 Design flexible activities, and adapt to change and opportunities



Our management

- 17 Support activities with enough people, efficient systems and proactive advice and decisions
- 18 Nurture relationships with partners and important stakeholders



Insights about activity design

45%

Activities say aligning with partner government priorities is important

38%

Activities say not having a good MERL framework is a problem

During the activity-design stage, we can control several factors that influence how well the activity will be implemented and achieve its intended outcomes. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about activity design.

1. Design activities that focus on local priorities

An activity should align with the priorities of the partner government, local authorities, participating organisations and individuals, and reflect what communities want.

2. Tailor activity designs to the local situation

An activity should suit the local context (political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental), market conditions, infrastructure and climate. It should also suit the capability, aspirations, potential and gender dynamics of the people involved. Activities should have all the right components in place to suit the local situation, if those components are not available through another programme. For example, a horticulture training activity may need to include access to finance, horticulture inputs and markets; product development; and support to influence policies.

3. Design activities that will coordinate with, not duplicate, other initiatives

An activity needs to complement the partner government's programmes and those of other development partners and the private sector. The activity should work alongside the other programmes and adapt to accommodate new or changing programmes.

4. Develop a good theory of change and MERL framework,³ and use them to manage the activity

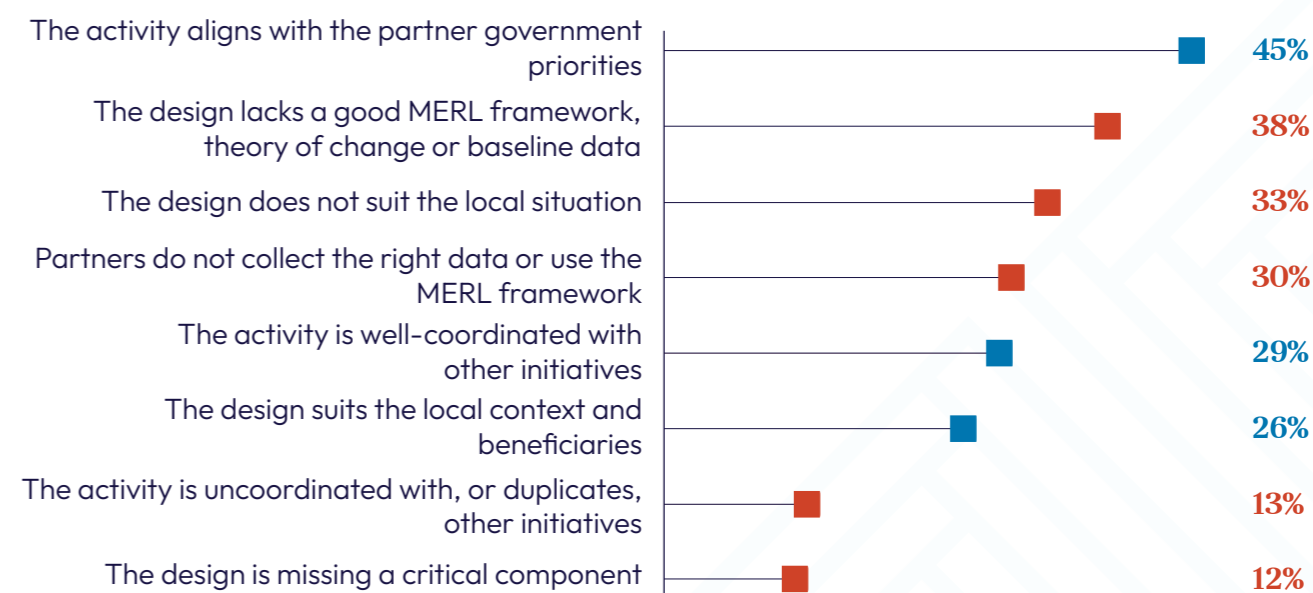
An activity needs a clear, feasible theory of how it will bring about change. The design should include a good-quality MERL framework and baseline data. The implementing partner should use these tools to monitor, review, manage and learn from the activity. Partners need the right resources and capability to collect and use monitoring data.

These lessons are based on eight success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 45 percent of the activities indicate that an aspect of the activity was successful because it aligned with the partner government's priorities.

³Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning framework

Most common success factors and risk factors related to activity designs

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about activity stakeholders

40%

Activities say having beneficiaries who are engaged with the activity is important

34%

Activities say a bureaucratic partner government with high staff turnover is a problem

Our activity implementing partners work with our partner governments, private sector companies, community organisations, training and research organisations and people who will immediately benefit from the activity, such as farmers. All these individuals and organisations have a stake in our activities and influence how successful they will be. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about working with stakeholders.

5. Make sure that the partner government, private sector and other stakeholders are committed to a planned activity, and want to engage with it, before proceeding

An activity needs the backing of the partner government and other stakeholders, including the private sector. Stakeholders should be motivated and ready to take part in the activity and understand and be willing to sustain it when funding ends. When the partner government has bureaucratic systems and processes, and high staff turnover, this can cause delays, create barriers and negatively affect the activity.

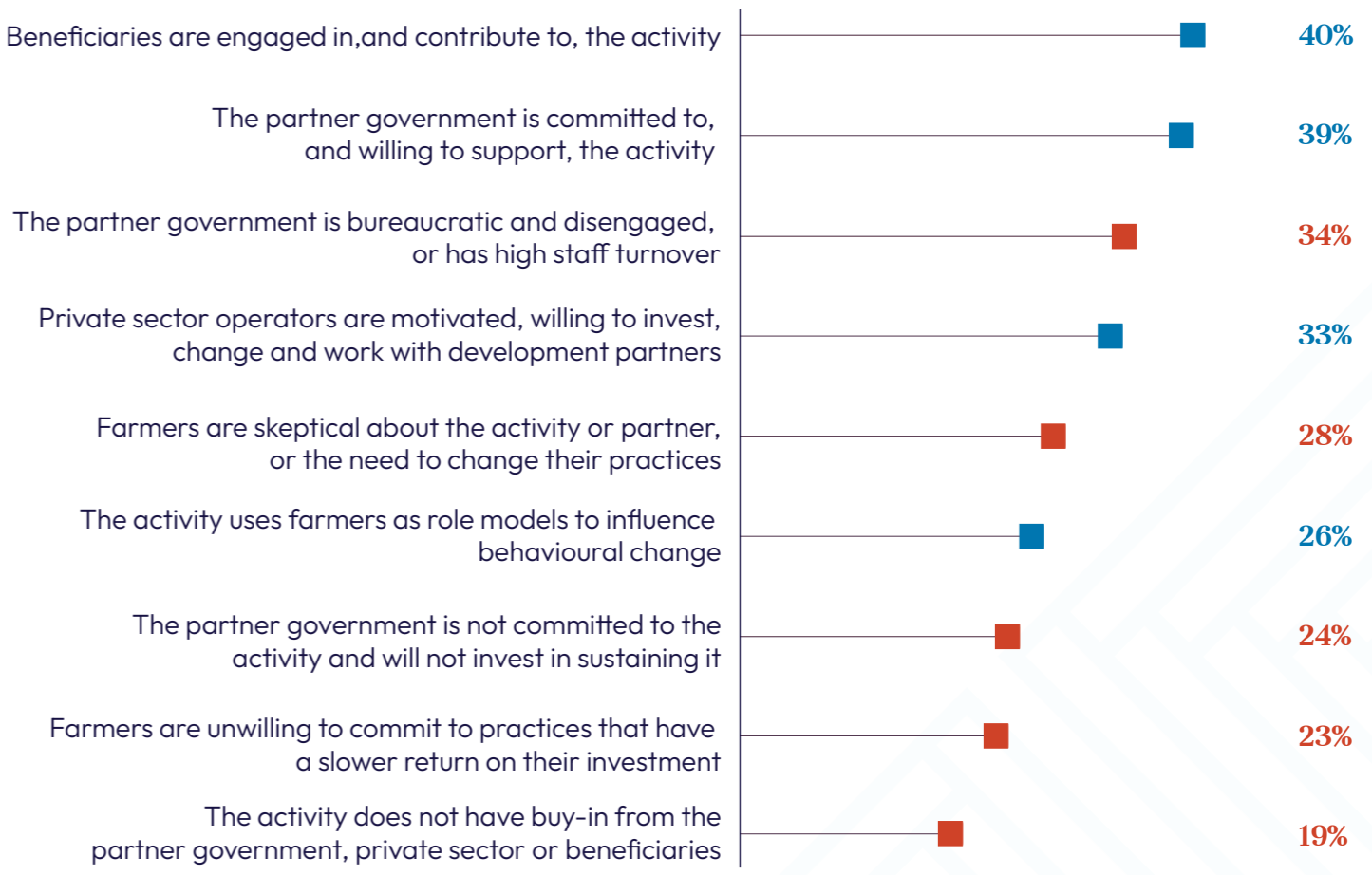
6. Make sure that the planned beneficiaries want to take part in the activity, and are willing to change their practices

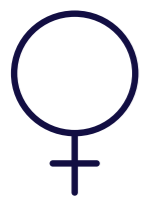
For an activity to succeed, the immediate beneficiaries (such as farmers) must want to take part, and be willing to contribute their time and energy. They must be prepared to change their practices, even when this means the return on investment takes longer. Activities that use model farms and farmers to model good practice work well.

These lessons are based on nine success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 39 percent of the activities indicate that the activity was successful because the partner government was committed to, and ready to support, it and get involved.

Most common success factors and risk factors related to stakeholders

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about social inclusion and the environment

The Ministry is committed to ensuring that women and vulnerable groups benefit from agriculture activities as much as men; and that human rights and the natural environment are protected or enhanced. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about what is most important to ensure social inclusion and protect the environment.

29%

Activities say not analysing different gender needs, and planning how to meet them, is a problem

7 Analyse and plan how the activity could improve the situation for women, human rights, the environment and climate change

Activity design should include gender and social analysis, so that the needs of men and women, and vulnerable groups such as disabled people, children and the elderly, are understood and accommodated in the design and approach for the activity. Designs should also examine environmental and climate-change issues and plan how to improve them through the activity.

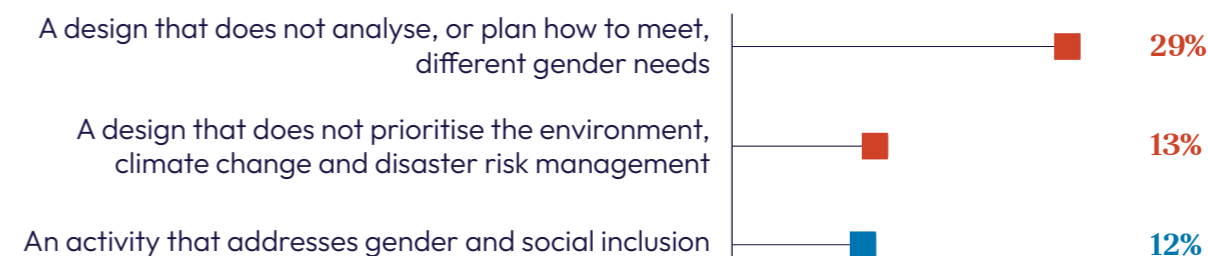


Photo credit: PHAMA Plus

This lesson is based on three success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 29 percent of the activities indicate that when there is no analysis of different gender needs at the design stage, and no plans about how to meet the different needs of men and women, then the activity will be less successful.

Most common success factors and risk factors related to inclusion

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about our implementing partners

67%

Activities say partners having good relationships with local stakeholders is important

33%

Activities say partners not having enough of the right staff is a problem

The Ministry contracts various types of partners to design and implement its agriculture activities. These include partner governments, international organisations, NGOs, private companies, Crown research institutions, agriculture consultants and universities. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about the partners who implement our activities.

8. Choose partners with the right technical, development and project-management experience

Activities are most successful when the implementing partner is knowledgeable and experienced about agriculture and related subjects (such as value chains, product development and agriculture policy); understands and applies good development practices (such as participatory methodologies, stakeholder engagement and gender analysis); can manage projects well (this includes managing and monitoring activities, risk, finance and relationships); can handle and learn from problems and risks, and adapt to change; and can write reports that meet the Ministry's requirements as the donor.

9. Choose partners with a local presence and enough staff to manage the activity well

Regardless of the home base of the implementing partner, activities work best when the partner has staff based near the activity location, and who are known to, and frequently engage with, the activity's stakeholders and beneficiaries. When activities use visiting ("fly-in, fly-out") agriculture specialists they should supplement with them local staff. All activities should avoid relying heavily on a particular individual, as this can delay or disrupt the activity when they are not available. A third of agriculture activities are affected by the implementing partner not having the budget to hire, or not being able to find enough staff or staff with the right skills, or experiencing high turnover. We experienced the importance of this lesson during the COVID-19 pandemic, when international travel was restricted for long periods.

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

Activities work best when the implementing partner already knows the activity's stakeholders and beneficiaries, and has good trusting relationships with them. When more than one partner is implementing an activity, it is important that they work together well.

These lessons are based on 11 success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 67 percent of the activities indicate that the activity was successful because the implementing partner had good relationships with the activity’s stakeholders.

Most common **success factors** and **risk factors** related to implementing partners

Percentage of activities where the factor is present

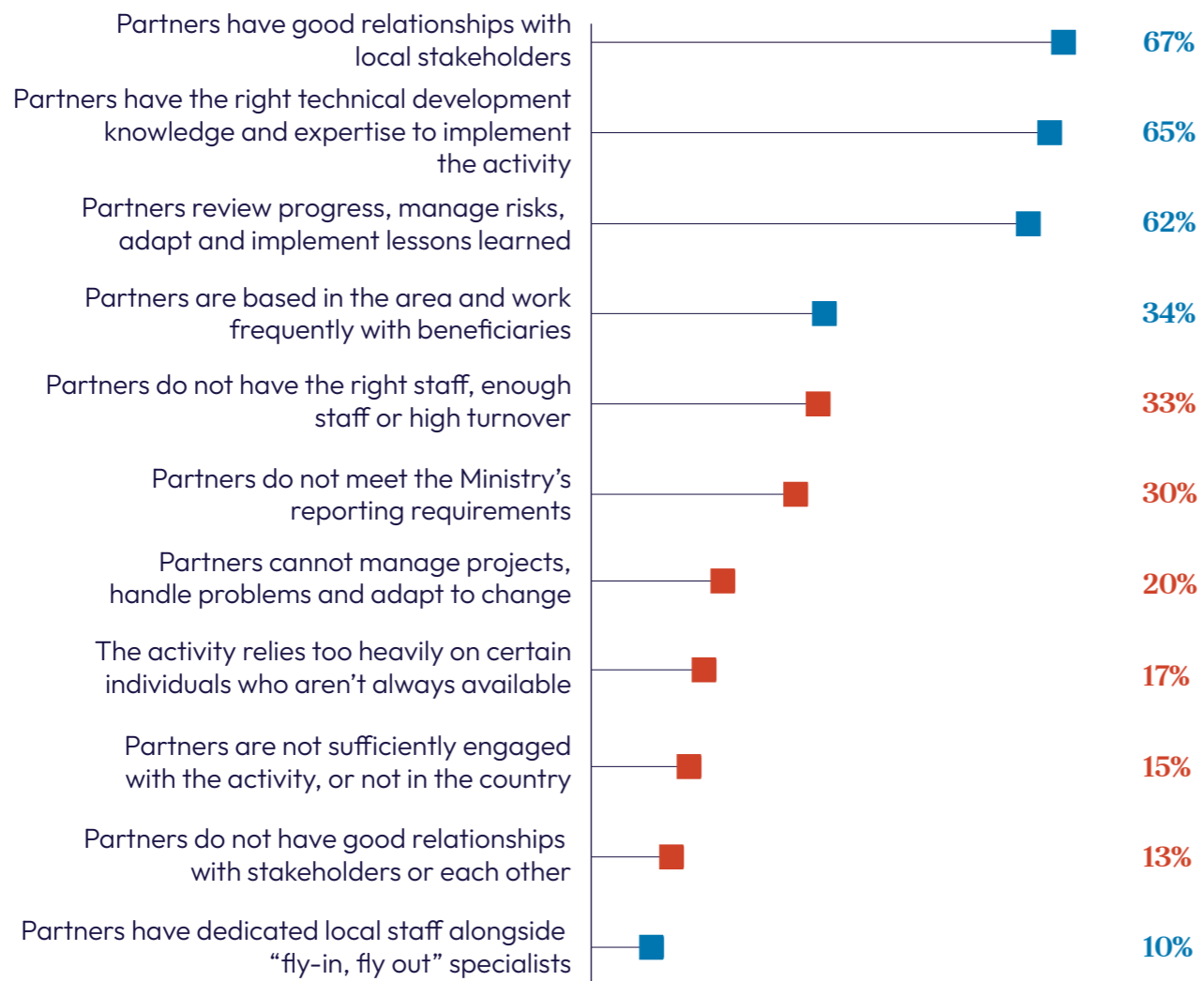


Photo credit: PHAMA Plus



Insights about local conditions

The environment we work in has a big impact on an activity. An activity that works well in one country will not necessarily work well in another. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about which conditions are needed to implement an activity successfully.

11. Make sure critical agreements, arrangements, supplies and conditions are in place before starting to implement an activity

When agriculture activities are designed, it is important to identify what arrangements, supplies, services and conditions they will need to succeed, and check that these are already available and affordable. These include agriculture extension services; banking and credit; agricultural supplies and materials; suitable soil, land, water, power, transport, infrastructure and equipment; staff and volunteers; and agreements with the partner government or other stakeholders. Many activities are delayed – sometimes for years – because agreements are not completed before the activity starts, or adversely affected because necessary inputs are unavailable.

46%

Activities say adverse weather, natural disasters and diseases are a problem

12. Weigh up the risks of adverse weather, natural disasters and civil unrest and understand the impact they will have on an activity's results

Almost half of the agriculture activities are disrupted by adverse weather, natural disasters, or civil unrest related to elections and other political issues. When these factors occur, they can cause delays, affect people and supplies, and damage crops and the environment. They often change the priorities of stakeholders and beneficiaries, and can affect the long-term relevance and feasibility of the activity. While implementing partners cannot control these factors – the factors may be one reason for prioritising support to agriculture in the country – it is important to understand and weigh up the risks and benefits.

These lessons are based on five risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 22 percent of the activities indicate that not having enough of the right agricultural inputs affects the activity achieving its targets.

Most common risk factors related to local conditions

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about commercial success

28%

Activities say working across different points of the value chain is important

16%

Activities say not planning how to scale up and maximise the investment is a problem

Many of our agriculture activities work with private sector operators in competitive markets. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about what is most important for activities to become commercially successful and sustainable.

13. Design activities that suit the market and can become commercially sustainable

It is not easy or guaranteed that agriculture activities will become commercially sustainable. However, the reports tell us what to be mindful of when we design and implement activities in a competitive market. Activities should work across the value chain (for example, production, processing, marketing and export). When they focus on high-value crops with good market potential they tend to more successful, but targeting only one crop is risky, as the value of that crop may be affected by market changes. We experienced the importance of this lesson during the COVID-19 pandemic, when export markets were affected, or local people could not afford to buy high-value crops.



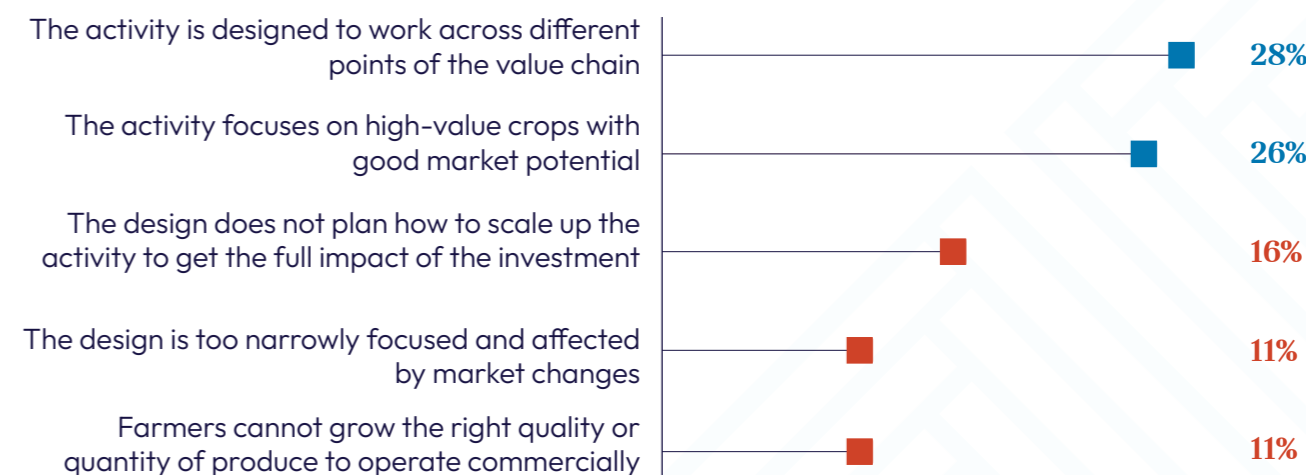
Photo credit: Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

Activities that start on a small scale, to test the design, must have a plan of how they will scale-up to achieve the benefit of the investment and become financially sustainable. This relates to the problem, experienced by over 10 percent of activities, that farmers cannot grow enough of the right quality of produce to operate commercially.

This lesson is based on five success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 26 percent of the activities indicate that focusing on high-value crops with good market potential helps an activity succeed.

Most common success factors and risk factors related to commercial success

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about our approach

14%

Activities say having a flexible design that can be adapted is important

When the Ministry, our implementing partners and our stakeholders are flexible and realistic about what activities can achieve, our activities are more likely to succeed. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about our approach, especially in countries with poorly functioning markets.

14. Be realistic about what an activity can achieve, how long it will take and how results will be sustained

Over one-third of agriculture activities have unrealistic targets. Many of our activities are too short to achieve sustainable results. When designing activities, we and our partners need to be realistic about how long it takes to achieve sustainable results, so we design longer activities and set realistic, achievable targets.

35%

Activities say having unrealistic targets is a problem

15. Be realistic about what an activity can achieve in a country with poorly functioning markets

Many of our agriculture activities operate in countries with sub-optimal market conditions. The success of our activities is hampered when the agriculture sector is fragmented, rather than coherent; when the activities focus on cash crops and exports, but the partner government and producers are focused on food security; when the country's laws, practices (such as farming methods) and infrastructure (such as transport and marketplaces) hinder a competitive market; when laws and policies exist but the government does not enforce them (such as food safety regulations); and when market prices are kept low or are subject to volatility.

While implementing partners cannot control these factors – the factors may be one reason for prioritising support to agriculture in the country – it is important to understand and weigh up the risks and benefits, and anticipate that results will take longer and be less significant than in countries with more favourable market conditions.

16. Design flexible activities, and adapt to change and opportunities

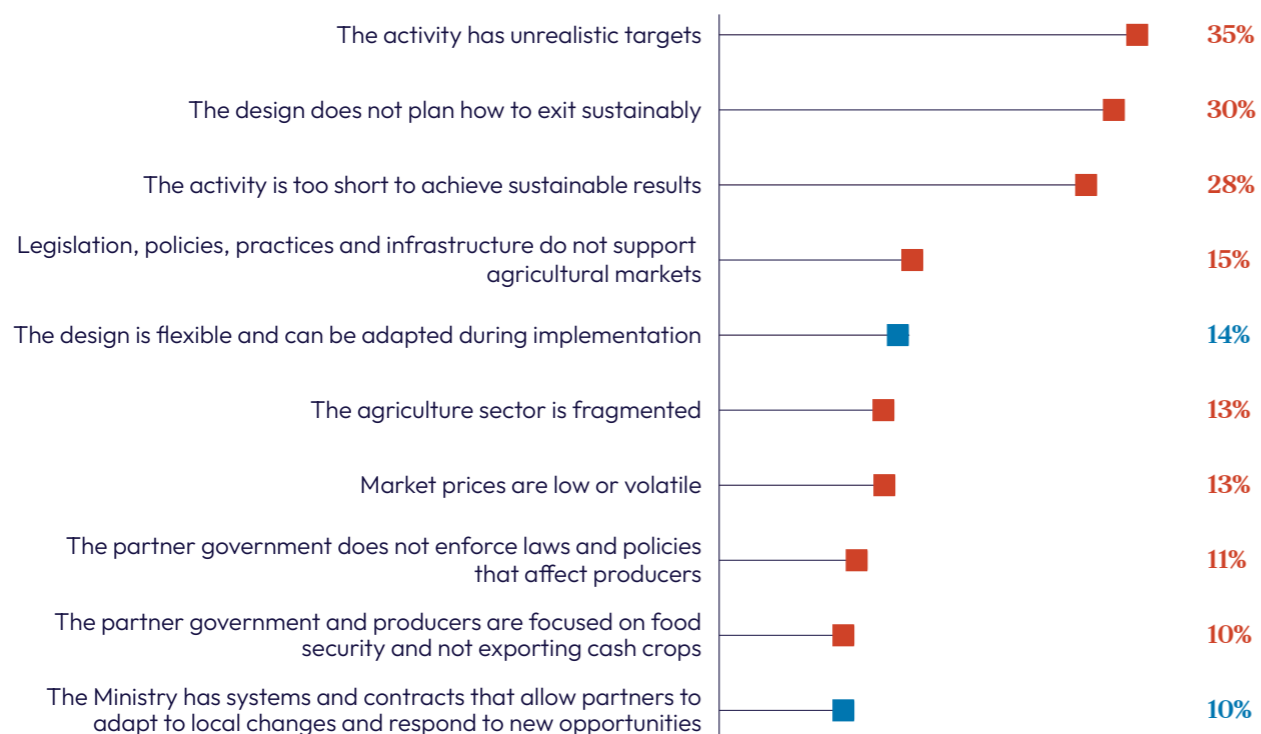
Our activities are implemented in dynamic circumstances over several years. An activity is more likely to achieve good outcomes if the design is flexible and can be adapted while the activity is being implemented. That way it can respond to risks, problems and changes and take advantage of new opportunities. We should also use our systems and contracts in ways that allow our implementing partners to adapt and respond to change and opportunities.



These lessons are based on 10 success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 35 percent of the activities indicate that having unrealistic targets was a problem.

Most common success factors and risk factors related to how we work, especially in countries with poorly functioning markets

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about our management

58%

Activities say the Ministry having good relationships with stakeholders is important

33%

Activities say partners not communicating well with the Ministry is a problem

The way the Ministry manages activities can make a difference to how successful they are. From these reports on agriculture activities, we learnt the following lessons about what is most important about what is most important about our activity management.

17. Support activities with enough people, efficient systems and proactive advice and decisions

Almost a quarter of activities suffered because the activity manager changed once or more during the activity’s lifetime. Sometimes an activity had multiple activity managers, gaps between activity managers or insufficient handover between activity managers. Our staff and partners both say this affects continuity and consistency of relationships and advice. Sometimes, we might have negative effects on activities by taking too long to make decisions; using systems or processes that are time consuming or difficult for implementing partners to adhere to; and not proactively managing risks to activities, poor performance of implementing partners, or ineffective governance of activities.

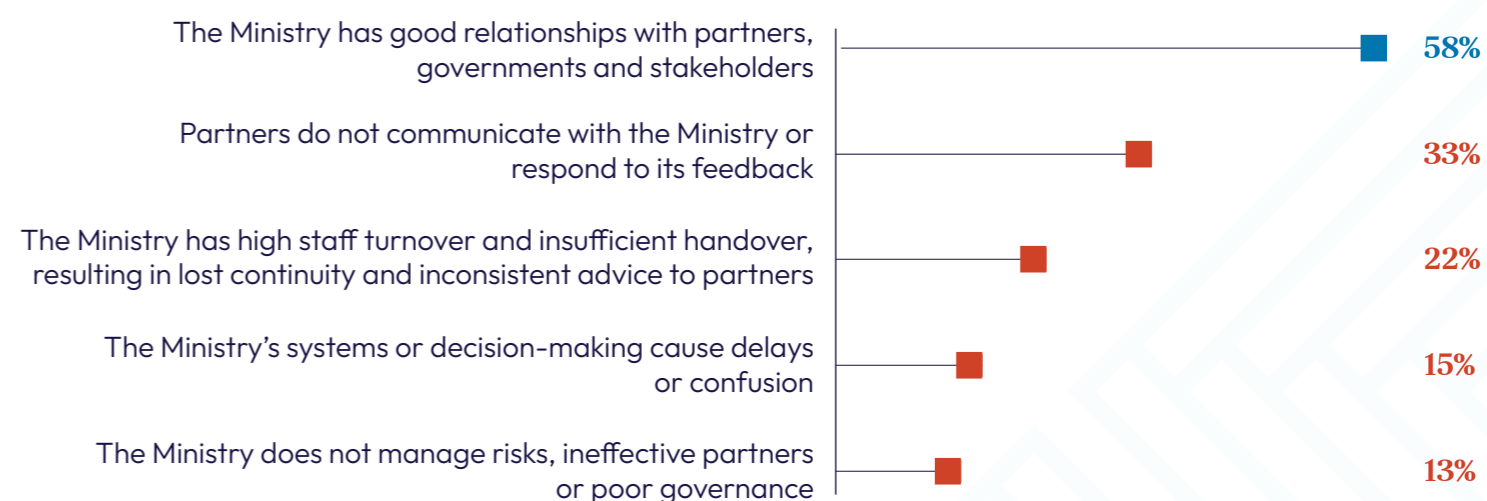
18. Nurture relationships with partners and important stakeholders

Almost 60 percent of agriculture activities benefit because we invest time in developing and maintaining relationships with implementing partners, governments and stakeholders. It is important that we work with implementing partners that invest time in their relationship with us, communicate well with us and are willing to work as our partners and respond to our feedback.

These lessons are based on five success or risk factors that are mentioned in reports on at least 10 percent of activities. The percentages in the chart mean the percentage of activities whose reports mention the factor. For example, reports on 58 percent of the activities indicate that activities are more successful when we have good relationships with the implementing partner, partner government and other stakeholders.

Most common success factors and risk factors related to the Ministry managing activities

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Top 10 success factors

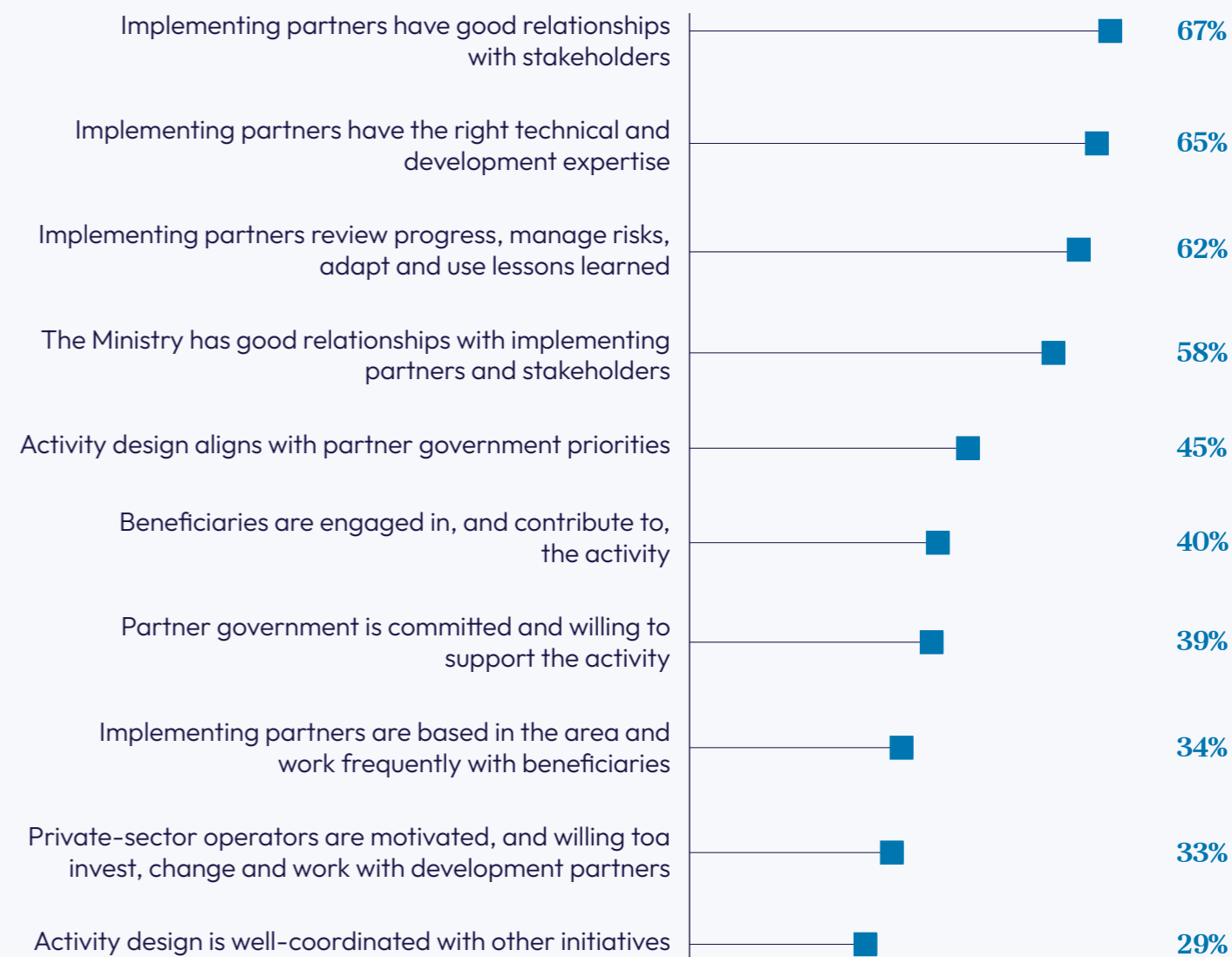
Of the 32 success factors we identified, the 10 most common feature in at least 29 percent of the activities. When we design, appraise or approve an agriculture activity, we should assess if these “Top 10” factors are present. If they are not present, they could become a risk to the success of the activity.

Nine of these success factors were factors we identified in our analysis in 2019; however, all nine are mentioned more frequently in the reports we looked at for this current analysis.



10 most common success factors of agriculture activities

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Top 10 risk factors

Of the 56 risk factors we identified, the 10 most common feature in at least 29 percent of the activities. When we design, appraise or approve an agriculture activity, we should assess if these “Top 10” factors are present. If they are present, they may prevent the activity achieving its expected outcomes.

All these risk factors were factors we identified in our analysis in 2019; however, they are mentioned more frequently in reports we looked at for this current analysis. Five risk factors are mentioned much more often:

- ‘Partner government is bureaucratic and disengaged, and staff turnover is high’ increased by 29 percentage points (from 5 percent to 34 percent).
- ‘Adverse weather, natural disasters and diseases that affect production’ increased by 28 percentage points (from 18 percent to 46 percent).
- ‘Implementing partners do not have the right staff, enough staff or have high staff turnover’ increased by 28 percentage points (from 5 percent to 33 percent).
- ‘Design does not plan how to exit sustainably’ increased by 25 percentage points (from 5 percent to 30 percent).
- ‘Design does not analyse or plan to meet different gender needs’ increased by 20 percentage points (from 9 percent to 29 percent).



Photo credit: PHAMA Plus

10 most common risk factors of agriculture activities

Percentage of activities where the factor is present





Insights about COVID-19

73%

Activities were disrupted by international travel restrictions

58%

Activities used the internet and technology to keep activities and communication going

73%

Activities were disrupted by restricted access to markets, fields and group activities

Agriculture Activity Insights draws insights from the Ministry's agriculture activities that were being implemented between 2019 and 2021. This period coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a major impact on our work in all sectors.

Most of our agriculture activities are implemented in the Pacific, Asia and Africa. The reports indicate that 69 percent of activities were affected by the pandemic, although there were some differences between the regions.

Percentage of agriculture activities that were affected by COVID-19

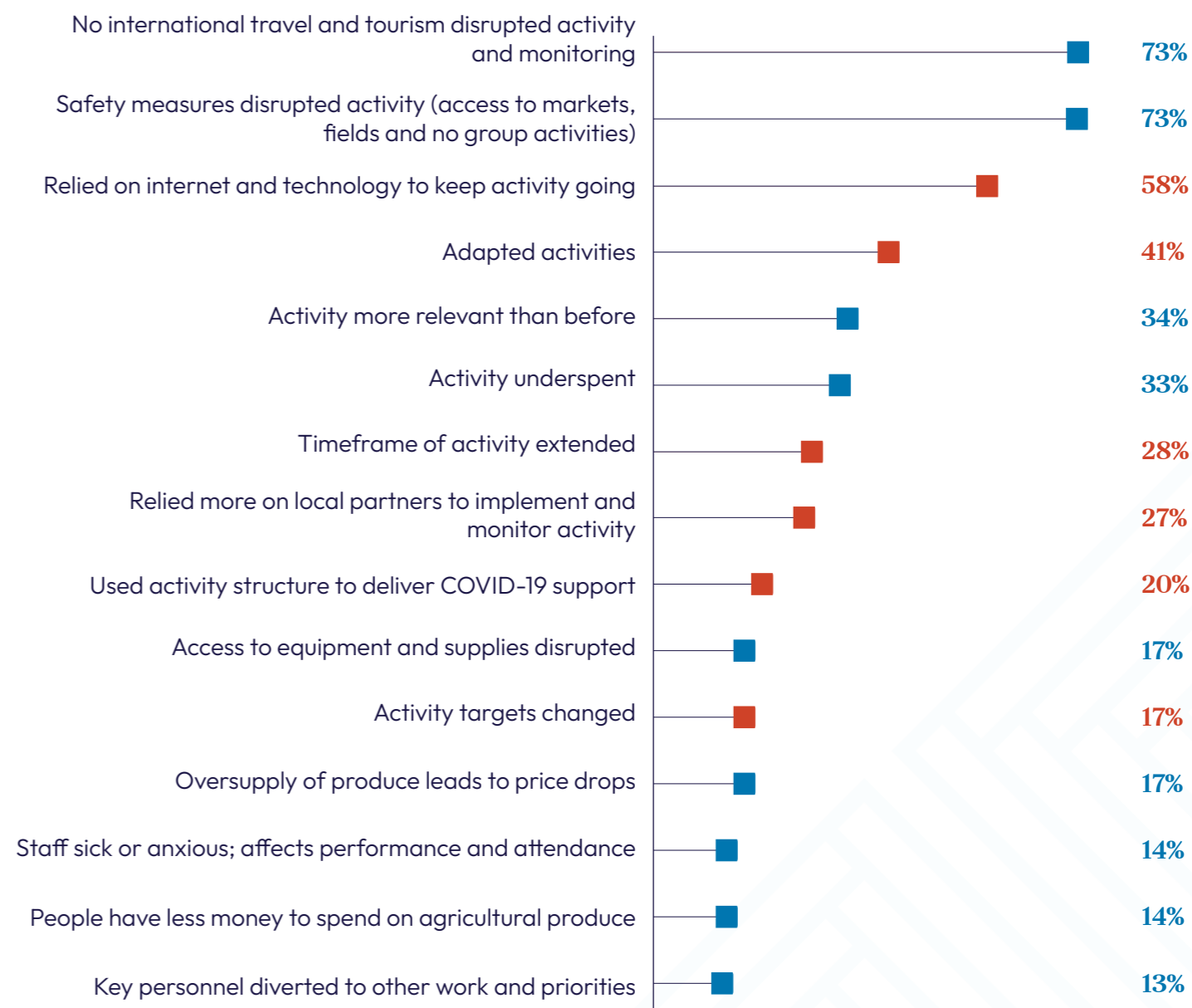


The reports reveal 28 different effects of COVID-19 on agriculture activities and responses to it by implementing partners, stakeholders and the Ministry. Of the 69 percent of activities affected by COVID-19,⁴ these are the most common effects and responses.

⁴ This percentage does not take the timeframe of activities into account. While reports on 31 percent of activities did not mention the activity was affected by COVID-19, in some cases this may be because the activity ended before the pandemic started.

Effects of COVID-19 on agriculture activities and responses to COVID-19

Percentage of activities that experienced the effect



Outcomes of our agriculture activities

88%

Increased skills and knowledge in agriculture, agribusiness and research

73%

Higher quality and volume of produce

72%

Higher sales, income and profit for farmers

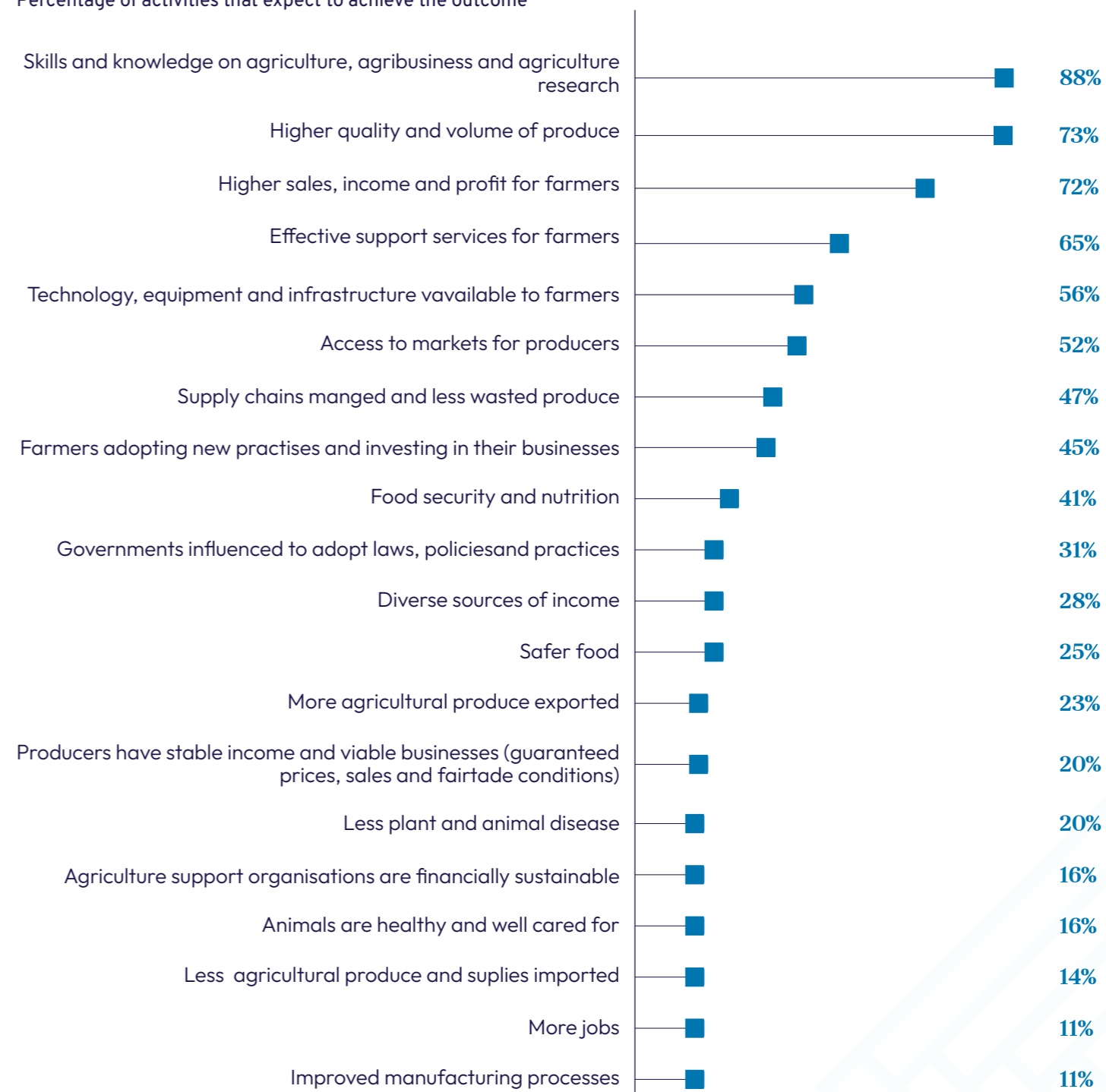
The reports indicate what types of outcomes our agriculture activities intend to achieve or contribute to. These are the most common outcomes recorded.



Photo credit: Plant & Food Research

Expected outcomes of agriculture activities

Percentage of activities that expect to achieve the outcome



Crosscutting issues in our agriculture activities

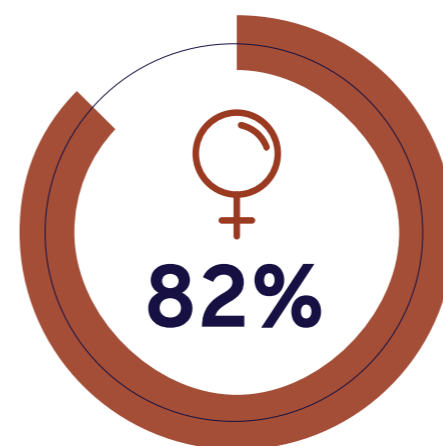
In the reports, our activity managers, implementing partners and independent evaluators describe how our agriculture activities are trying to benefit women, human rights and the environment; and what they are doing to help mitigate climate change or adapt to its effects.



Photo credit: PHAMA Plus

Percentage of agriculture activities that are doing something related to gender, environment, human rights and climate change

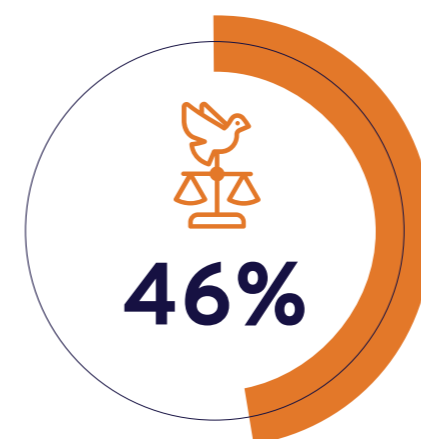
Gender



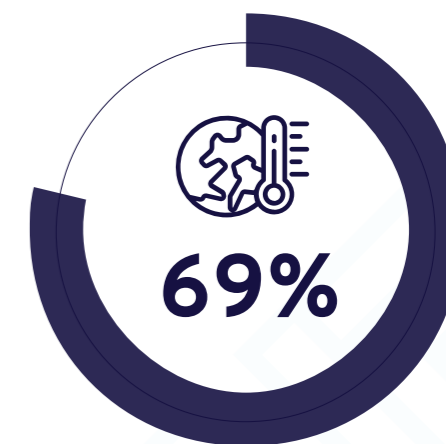
Environment



Human rights

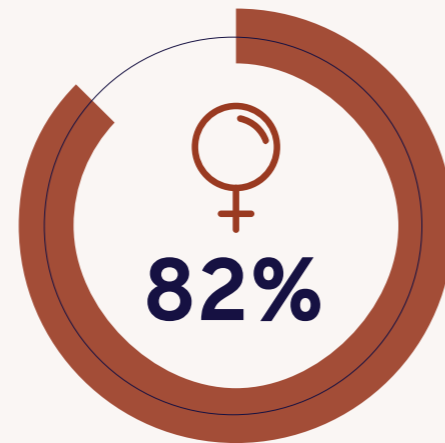


Climate change



Gender

Reports on over 80 percent of our agriculture activities say the activities are doing something related to gender. The actions and approaches vary considerably in how targeted they are towards women, from simply including women alongside men in an agriculture training course through to tailoring the activity exclusively to women in agriculture.



The most commonly mentioned ways our activities are addressing gender are training women in agriculture subjects and specifically targeting women (for example, reaching out to women’s groups and inviting them to join in with activities).

Most common ways that agriculture activities include women

Percentage of activities that are using the method

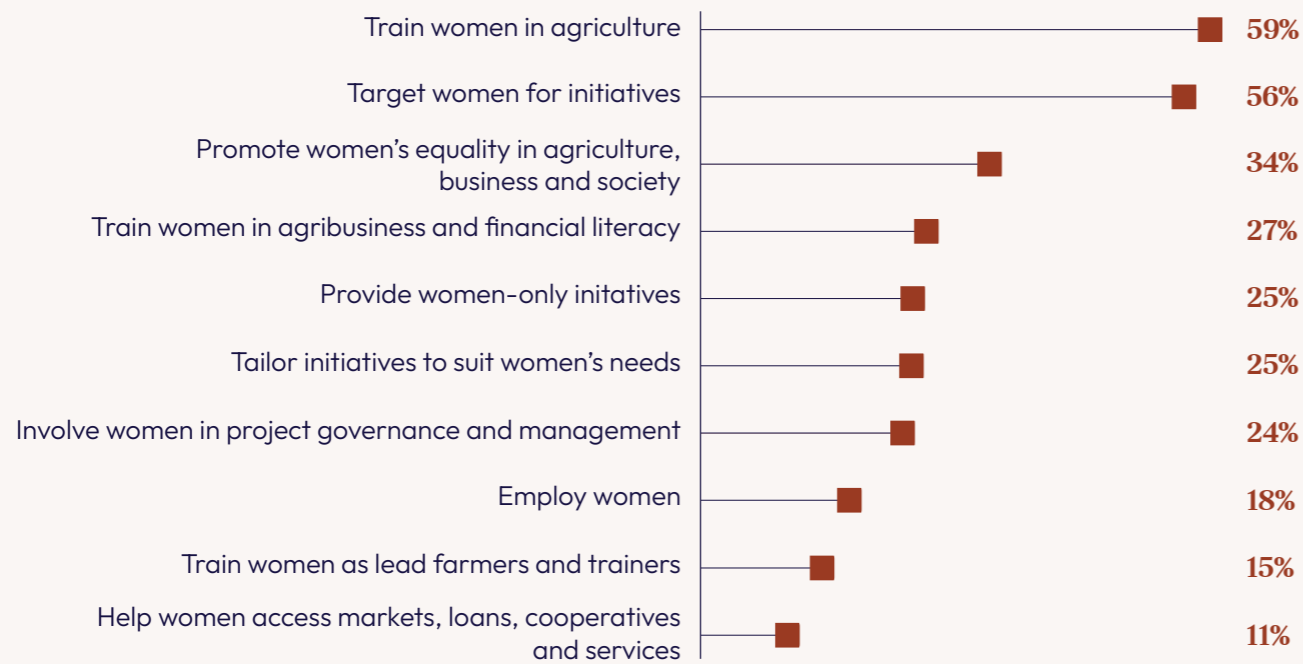


Photo credit: Plant & Food Research



Environment

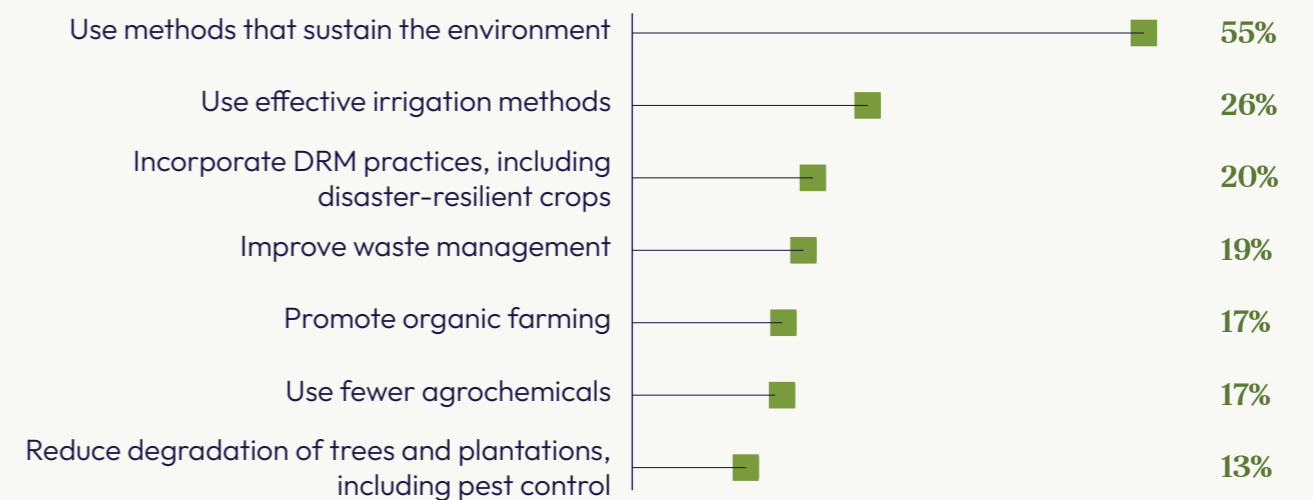
Reports on almost three-quarters of our agriculture activities say the activities are doing something to protect or enhance the environment. The actions and approaches vary considerably in terms of how significant a focus of the activity they are.

The most commonly mentioned ways our activities are addressing the environment are using agricultural methods that will sustain the environment, using efficient irrigation methods, incorporating disaster-risk-management practices into agriculture (such as using disaster-resilient crops) and improving how waste resulting from agriculture is managed.



Most common ways that agriculture activities support the environment

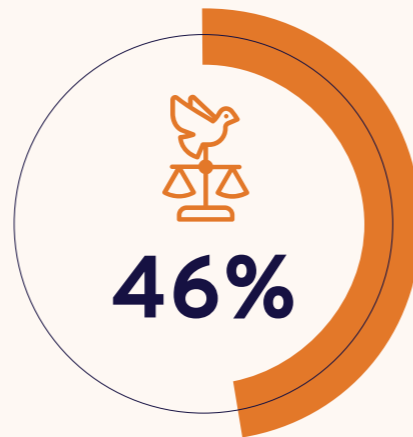
Percentage of activities that are using the method





Human rights

Reports on almost half of our agriculture activities say the activities are doing something to protect or improve human rights. The actions and approaches mentioned fall into fewer categories than those for the other crosscutting issues. The most commonly mentioned are targeting the activities towards the most vulnerable and marginalised groups (such as disabled people, people in very remote areas, ethnic minorities and very poor communities), improving food security and nutrition through agriculture, and reducing the health and safety risks related to agriculture.



Ways that agriculture activities support human rights

Percentage of activities that are using the method

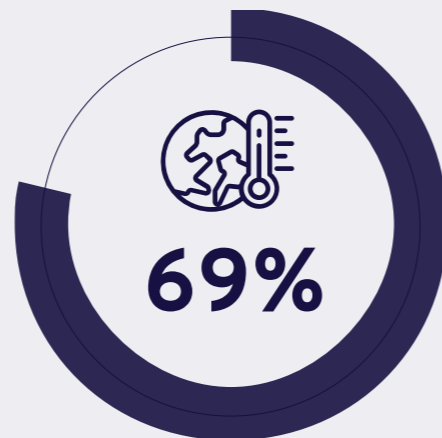




Climate change

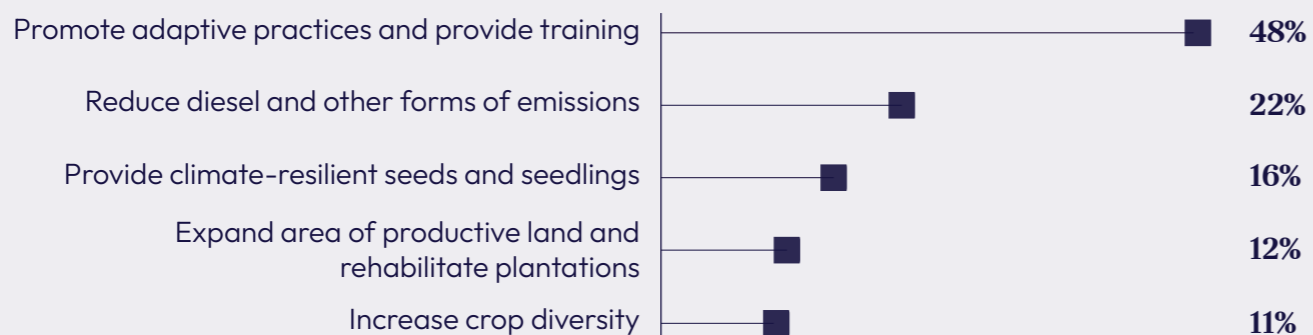
Reports on almost 70 percent of our agriculture activities say the activities are doing something to mitigate or adapt to climate change. The actions and approaches vary considerably in how targeted they are, from simply promoting a climate-adaptive practice (such as more efficient irrigation methods) through to using climate-resilient crops, increasing crop diversity and reducing emissions.

The most commonly mentioned approach is promoting climate-adaptive practices and including them in training courses.



Most common ways that agriculture activities address climate change

Percentage of activities that are using the method



Agriculture Activity Success and Risk Tool

Using what we have learnt from *Agriculture Activity Insights*, we have created a list of factors to think about when designing, appraising, approving, implementing or evaluating an agriculture activity.

The items in this list are based on what we know helps activities to succeed and the most common risks they face. Not every factor will be relevant to every activity.

Our experience tells us that it is important to consider the most relevant factors for an activity at every stage, from defining the problem and developing the concept, through to designing the activity, procuring and contracting implementing partners, and managing and monitoring the activity.

Discussing and analysing these factors with others helps to identify risks, as well as opportunities to enhance the success of an activity. It also creates ownership of actions agreed to mitigate and manage risks or build on success factors.

If you find a relevant factor is missing or weak at an early stage of the activity – for example, gender analysis has not been carried out – it may not mean you cannot proceed. However, it is important to consider and manage the implications of this gap and be realistic about how it could affect the activity's implementation and results if the situation does not change.

The activity suits the local situation

- Does the activity align with the partner government's priorities?
- Has the activity design been tailored to the local context?
- Has the activity design been tailored to the needs of its intended beneficiaries?

The activity will improve people's lives and the environment

- Have the different needs of male and female beneficiaries been analysed?
- Does the activity design use methods and activities that will meet the needs of beneficiaries with different gender identities?
- Will the activity improve the natural environment?
- Will the activity help beneficiaries manage the risks they face from natural disasters?
- Will the activity help mitigate climate change or help beneficiaries adapt to its effects?

The activity suits the market and can become commercially sustainable

- Is the private sector willing to support the activity and work with the implementing partner and beneficiaries?
- Does the activity work across different points of the value chain?
- Does the activity focus on crops with good market potential?
- Does the activity have a plan to scale-up and get the full impact of the investment?
- Is the activity sufficiently broad to manage market changes and price fluctuation?
- Can producers grow enough of the right quality produce to meet demand and operate commercially?
- Does the country have legislation, policies and infrastructure that will support the activity?
- Does the government enforce laws and policies that affect producers?
- Are the government and producers interested in pursuing agribusiness and cash crops?

The activity has a good theory of change and MERL framework

- Are the activity outcomes based on a logical and realistic theory of change?
- Does the activity have a good-quality MERL framework?
- Will baseline data be available before the activity starts?
- Is the implementing partner capable of collecting monitoring data and using the MERL framework?

The intended outcomes are achievable

- Is the timeframe long enough to achieve and sustain the outcomes?
- Are the targets in the MERL framework realistic?
- Does the activity have a plan on how to exit sustainably that can be monitored during implementation?

The activity is coordinated with other initiatives

- Will the activity complement and coordinate with other relevant initiatives?
- Does the activity avoid overlapping with any existing or planned initiatives?
- Does the activity include all the necessary components to be successful?

Stakeholders are ready and able to take part in the activity

- Is the partner government committed to the activity and willing to invest in it?
- Does the partner government have the right staff, systems and resources to actively participate in, and sustain, the activity?

People want to take part and are willing to change their practices

- Are the intended beneficiaries already engaged and ready to contribute to the activity?
- Will the activity use farmers as role models to influence behaviour change?
- Will the intended beneficiaries be open to changing their behaviour and practices?

- Are the intended beneficiaries able to invest in their business and ready to make changes that may see a slower return than they are used to?

The implementing partner has the right skills, experience and approach

- Does the partner have the right technical expertise to implement the activity?
- Does the partner have the right skills, knowledge and approach to affect change in a developing country?
- Does the partner have a good track record in managing projects, problems and risks?
- Will the partner be able to use the MERL framework, and measure and review progress?
- Will the partner be willing to adapt and implement lessons learnt?
- Will the partner be willing to take and respond to feedback from others, including the donor?

The implementing partner has the right staff and relationships

- Does the partner have enough of the right staff, and not rely heavily on certain individuals?
- Does the partner have staff on the ground who can work frequently with the beneficiaries and stakeholders?
- Does the partner already have good relationships with the activity's stakeholders?

Agreements, inputs and support services are in place

- Have critical agreements been signed before the activity starts?
- Are there enough of the right quality of agricultural inputs easily available?
- Are sufficient extension services, other support services and credit available?

The donor has the right resources to support the activity

- Does your organisation already have good relationships with the implementing partner, partner government and activity stakeholders?
- Does your organisation have a dedicated activity manager and system in place to document advice and decisions about the activity?
- Will the activity manager have enough time to engage with the activity and implementing partner, and make quick, efficient decisions?
- Can the activity manager proactively manage risks to the activity and address poor performance by the implementing partner or governance group?

The activity can be adapted

- Can the activity be adapted to accommodate change and take up new opportunities?
- Will the contract give the implementing partner flexibility to adapt?

Climate, natural-disaster and political risks have been weighed up

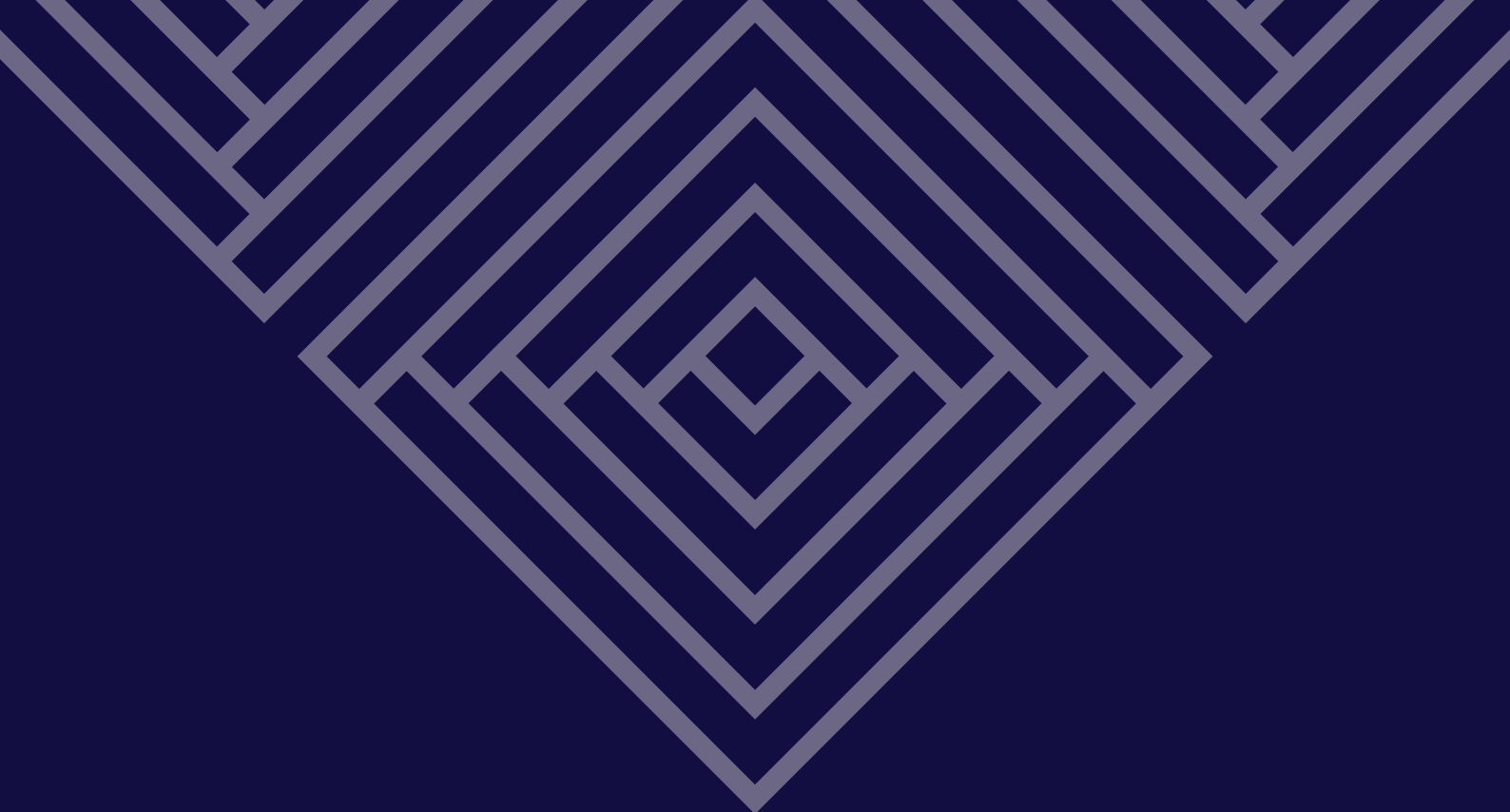
- Are there significant climate, natural-disaster and disease risks that would affect production?
- Are there significant political or civil risks that would affect the activity?

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade contracted Capire to produce this report. It highlights lessons contained in Activity Monitoring Assessments and Activity Completion Assessments prepared by the Ministry's activity managers; reports prepared by the Ministry's implementing partners; and reports of independent evaluations commissioned







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