

NEADAP Report

Dairy extension by consultants

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Introduction

The Netherlands East Africa Dairy Partnership (NEADAP) is committed to supporting dairy advisory services in East Africa. As part of this work, we explored the existing diversity of extension models in the six countries of NEADAP and provided representatives of different dairy advisory services with an opportunity to reflect on their success factors and their own capabilities and performance so they could identify areas for improvement.

Building on this initial analysis and data, we will organize a collaborative process that brings together professionals from East Africa to gain a better understanding of dairy advisory services in the different countries and explore strategies to foster a sustainable and impactful dairy extension service ecosystem. This collaborative effort will shed light on the priority investments required to strengthen different types of dairy extension services and how they can mutually benefit from one another.

Ultimately, our aim is to create a roadmap for decision-makers to foster an environment conducive to dairy farmers thriving and experiencing the positive impact of these services.

This document gives more detail about the consultant dairy advisory services. Find out other parts of the study through these links:

- [Exploring dairy extension in East Africa: study methodology and findings: key features, services offered, success factors.](#)
- [Dairy advisory services: Consultants \(this report\)](#)
- [Dairy advisory services: Cooperatives](#)
- [Dairy advisory services: Digital platforms](#)
- [Dairy advisory services: Financial institutions](#)
- [Dairy advisory services: Input suppliers](#)
- [Dairy advisory services: Processors](#)
- [Back to the overview at NFPCconnects](#)

Key features of consultancies

NEADAP conducted a survey to map and assess the capacity of consultants to offer sustainable dairy advisory services in six East African countries. The 39 consultancies that responded to this survey are distributed as follows: Kenya (38.46%), Rwanda (28.21%), Uganda (17.95%) and Burundi, Ethiopia and Tanzania (5.13% each).

The consultancies have been operating for 0–3 years (25.64%), 4–7 years (30.77%), 8–11 years (25.64%), 12–15 years (7.69%) and more than 15 years (10.26%).

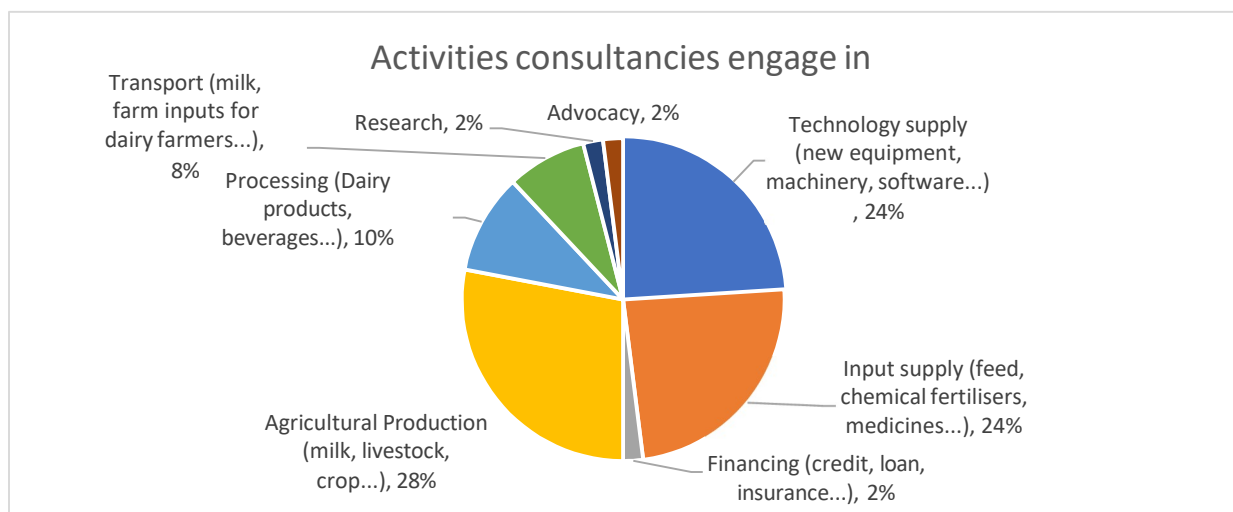


Figure 1: Activities consultancies engage in

The three major activities the consultants engage in are agricultural production (28%), technology supply (24%) and input supply (24%). They also engage in agricultural processing (10%); transportation (8%); and research, financing and advocacy (2% each).

Close to half the consultancies have a small staff comprising 1–5 members (46.15%), of which 77.5% are females and 64.1% are younger than 30. This is followed by consultancies with 6–10 members of staff (28.2%), with 10% being female and 23.08% being younger than 30.

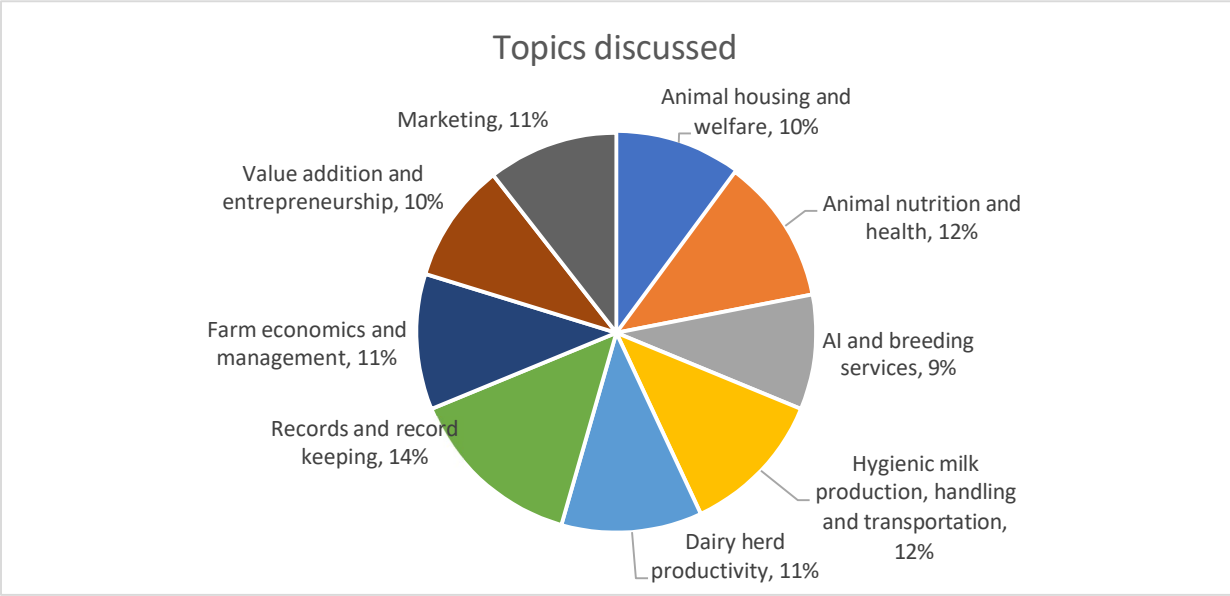


Figure 2: Advisory topic areas

Consultants cover a fairly even **distribution of dairy advisory topic areas** as illustrated in Figure 2. They also use a **variety of media to deliver their advisory services including in-person (29%), on-farm demonstrations (24%), classrooms (17%), peer-farmers (16%),** online (8%), traditional media channels (5%) and farmer field days (1%). Just over half of their audiences are majority male (51.28%), followed by balanced gender audiences (33.33%) and majority female audiences (15.38%). Also, the majority of the audiences are aged between 30 and 60 years (69.23%).

The main target clients for consultancies tend to be small-scale specialized dairy farms (24%), small-scale mixed crop and dairy farms (23%), medium-scale specialized dairy farms (21%) and medium-scale mixed crop and dairy farms (18%). Of the consultancies surveyed, 94.87% indicated that they monitor the impact of their advisory services through feedback reports (56%) and follow-up farm visits (44%). Those that do not monitor impact cite not having any plans to do so at the moment.

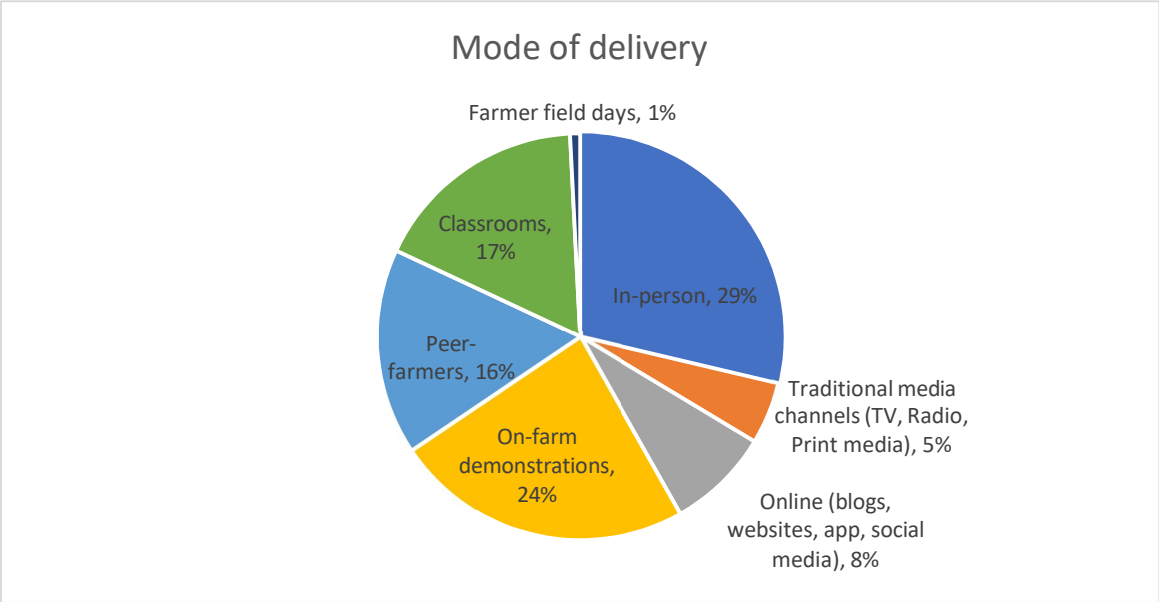


Figure 3: Mode of advisory service delivery

Overall, 97.44% of consultancies said that they collaborate with peers in the industry who complement their services, and they described the relationship as mutually beneficial.

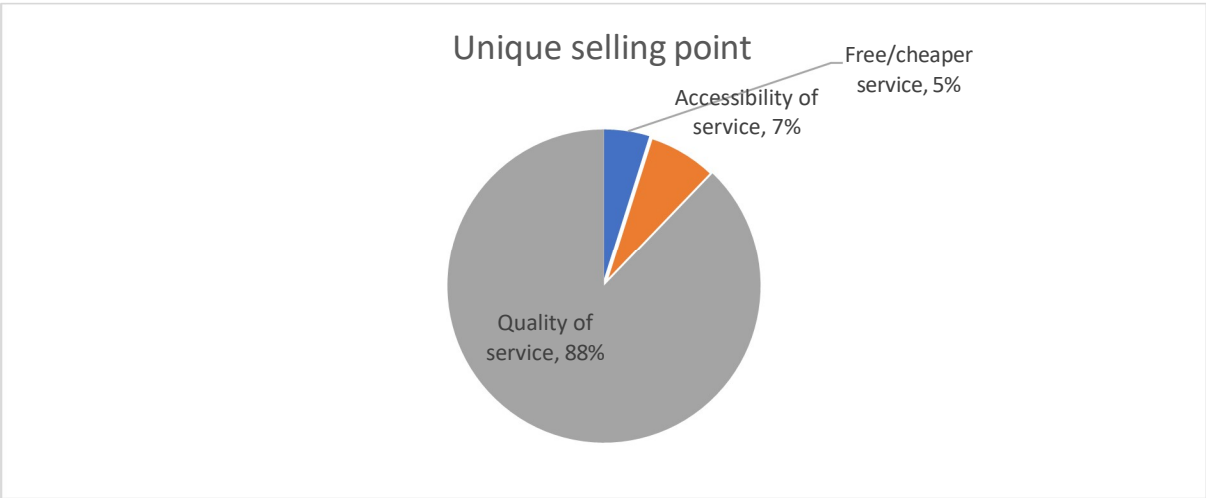


Figure 4: Unique selling point

Quality of service accounts for 88% of the reasons clients are loyal to the consultancy service. This is followed by accessibility of the service (7%) and affordability (5%).

SWOT analysis

<p>Strengths (answers = 46)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• experienced staff (53%)• client relations (18%)• strategic plan (16%)• service packaging/adaptability (7%)• capital (7%)	<p>Weaknesses (answers = 43)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fund constraints (51%)• inexperience (14%)• farmers unwilling to pay (9%)• weak structures/inefficiencies (9%)• few staff (5%)• poor brand visibility (5%)• bureaucracy (5%)• poor technology (2%)
<p>Opportunities (answers = 45)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased investments in dairy value chain (33%)• increasing demand for dairy extension services (24%)• new technologies (18%)• networking (9%)• political goodwill (9%)• social capital/trust (7%)	<p>Threats (answers = 44)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• limited access to (financial) resources (27%)• high prices leading to high operational costs (14%)• new entrants/competitors (11%)• limited skilled employees (11%)• natural calamities (7%)• trust issues (7%)• poor policies (7%)• poor infrastructure (5%)• poor technology (5%)• insecurity (2%)• poor networking (2%)• benefactor over-reliance (2%)

Self-assessment of the critical success factors for dairy advisory service provision by consultancies

The capacity of consultancies to offer dairy advisory services can be assessed and monitored via the Five Capabilities (5C) framework (Huisman & Ruijschoot, 2013). Five interlinked capabilities, none of which is sufficient by itself, overlap in the assessment of organizational capacity to deliver a sustainable dairy advisory service.

The critical factors that can lead to consultancies successfully delivering dairy advisory services, as well as factors that hinder this success, were queried during a workshop with the consultancies engaged in dairy advisory service provision.

1. The capability to act and commit

This capability measures the ability of the consultancy to plan, decide and execute these decisions collectively (as an organization) in order to commit to and act on its mandate.

Critical success factors

- HR plan – adequate staff with requisite expertise and experience
- Clearly defined objectives and standard operating procedures
- Availability of funds to commit to organizational operations

Hindering factors

- Non-compliance to the regulatory requirements
- Skewed (negative) perception by potential partners
- Incompetent management/leadership
- Inadequate funding/resourcing
- Communication gaps – information distortion

2. Capability to deliver on development objectives

This capability assesses if the consultancy has the ability to develop, implement and monitor its operations with the chief aim of ensuring growth of the organization and the sector in which it operates.

Critical success factors

- Capable managers as well as capable staff with complementary competencies
- Teamwork in the consultancy
- Clear operational plan with well-defined structures and deliverables
- Stakeholder engagement plan
- Quality management to ensure service reliability

Hindering factors

- Inadequate monitoring and control measures – poor measurement of results
- Limited time frame to achieve results – especially for donor-supported projects
- Demotivated staff
- Conflicts of interest
- Poor operational mode/approach – consultant fails to mobilize farmers to adopt the service/technology (reskilling required)

3. Capability to adapt and self-renew

This capability measures the ability of the consultancy to implement monitoring and evaluation structures and learn from the results so as to stay adaptive to environmental changes and remain innovative in dairy advisory service delivery.

Critical success factors

- Continuous review and improvement of product/service
- Flexible work plan
- Continuous human resource realignment/reskilling
- Benchmarking with industry peers
- Regular performance reviews to learn from past mistakes and make better decisions going forward

Hindering factors

- Fear of change
- Resource constraints hindering adoption of new technology
- Poor team composition – lack of specialists within the team
- Rigid policies and regulations
- Rigid work plans
- Cultural hindrances on the side of farmers

4. Capability to relate to external stakeholders

This capability assesses the ability of the consultancy to collaborate with key sector players in order to achieve a sustainable dairy advisory service industry.

Critical success factors

- Transparency – documentation and sharing of information
- Robust communication strategy
- Compliance with local regulations
- Competent leadership

Hindering factors

- Poor strategic plan or lack of a plan
- Corruption – poor accountability
- Selfish agenda
- Lack of awareness on networking opportunities

5. Capability to achieve coherence

This capability assesses the ability of a consultancy to be united in its mandate to deliver core products and services.

Critical success factors

- Clear organizational structure
- Structural plan to assign responsibilities
- Fair and just conflict resolution strategy

Hindering factors

- Delay in taking action when many stakeholders are involved
- Poor stakeholder involvement
- Poor communication
- Workplace politics
- Poor team selection and inadequate retooling
- Conflicts of interest

Figure 5 below summarizes the average capacity of three consultancies, considered by the sector as successful, that responded to a detailed survey to deliver sustainable dairy advisory services (0 is very poor; 5 is very strong). Via a questionnaire, these consultancies did a self-assessment and compared their capacity when they first started delivering dairy advisory services (two of them were established 12–15 years ago and another less than three years ago) and their current capacity at the time of the survey.

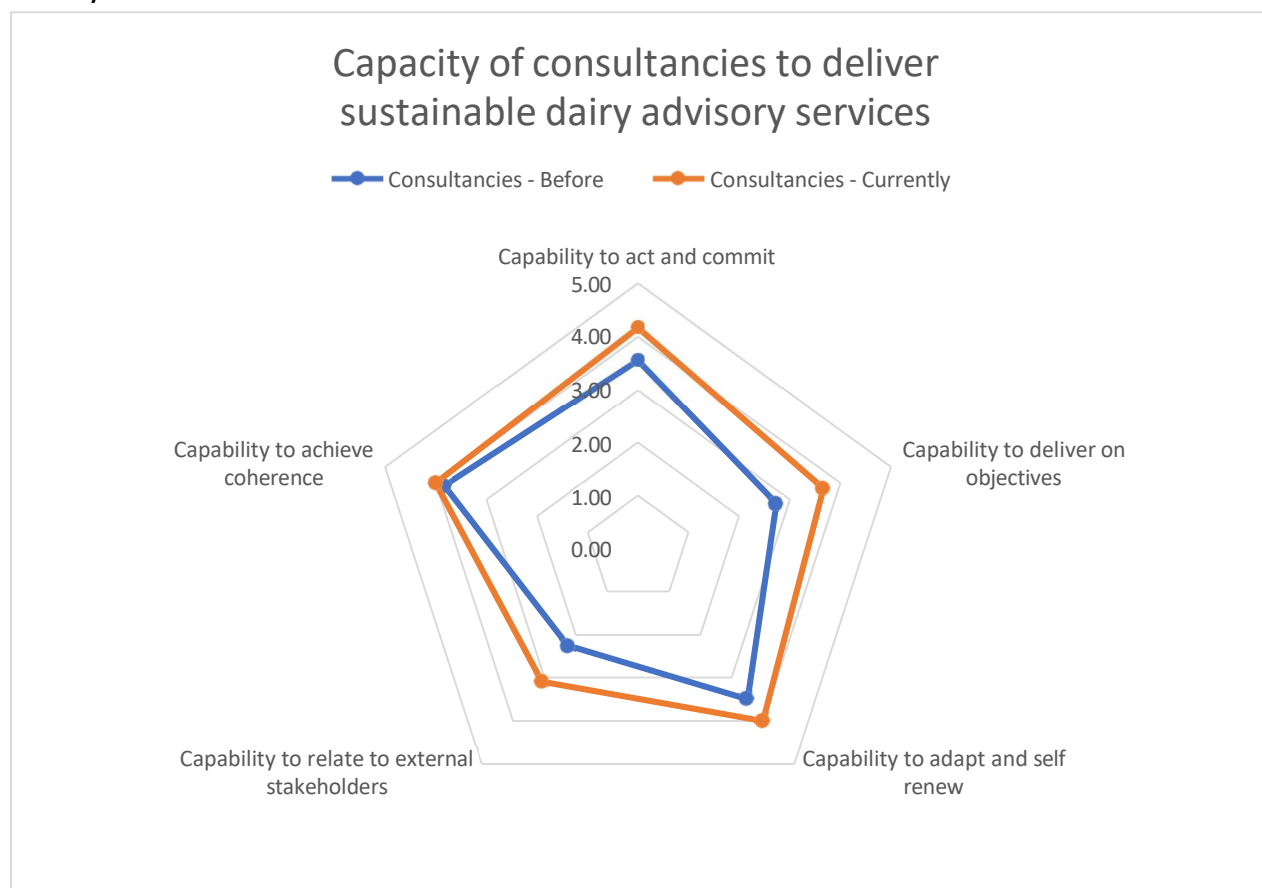


Figure 5: Consultancy 5C analysis

The results show that successful organizations perceive themselves as having strong capabilities in four of the capacities but being weaker in their ability to relate to external stakeholders. Since their creation, they have progressed the most in their ability to deliver on objectives and to connect to external stakeholders.

Recommendations from professionals for professionals

During a workshop, the consultancies themselves identified several critical factors that a consultancy should prioritize in the early stages of setting up a dairy advisory service:

- Identify the dairy farmers who are the target audience the company will work with.
- Identify a strategic location for the office of the company.
- Market the company among the dairy farmers.

Recommendations drawn from results for decision-makers

- Enable collaboration/networking of dairy consultants and other dairy value chain actors to foster mutuality and sustainable dairy advisory service networks.
- Facilitate access to finance to help struggling consultancies secure their business model.
- Provide training on soft skills and business modelling to help consultancies build self-sustaining enterprises.
- Consultants can bridge the gap that exists in the dairy advisory service through highly customized and efficient services. Connecting them can help to match specific extension needs from the dairy sector.

Questions for your organization

We invite you to reflect on the capabilities of your organization:

- What was the capability status of your dairy advisory service when it started?
- What has improved since then?
- What capability is still lacking?

You can use the pdf questionnaire (see intro – methodology report) to guide you in a more detailed reflection.