



Survey of European Crop Diversification Experiences

- First Results of the DiverIMPACTS Project

An online survey was conducted among experts and professionals, reporting on specific experiences of crop diversification (CDEs). We received 129 valid responses from 15 European countries (fig. 1).

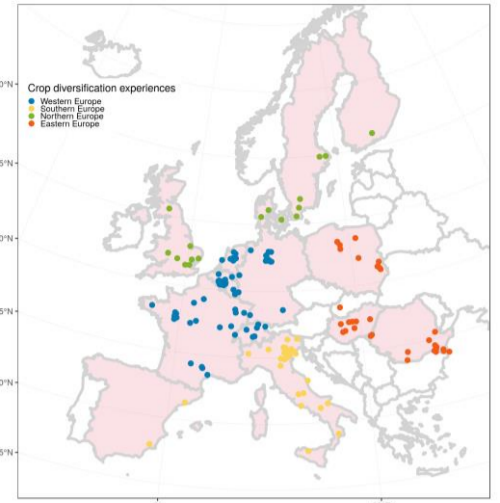


Fig. 1. Countries that participated to the survey and distribution of CDEs according to the four main geographical areas of Europe.

General characteristics

The starting point for most diversification initiatives was an existing crop rotation, but in some systems multicropping or intercropping had already been implemented (fig. 2).

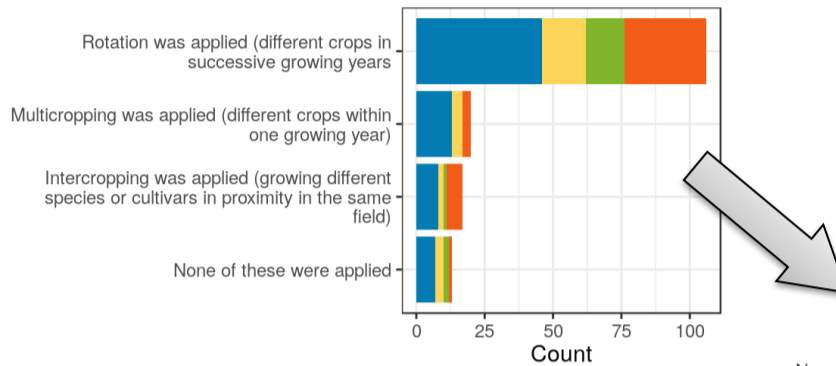


Fig. 2. Production practice before the diversification initiative according to the four main regions.

Diversification initiatives most often included new crops in the rotation cycle, but the number of systems with multicropping and intercropping also doubled between previous and new practices (fig. 3). In several cases, different forms of diversification - rotation, multicropping and intercropping - have been combined within the system.

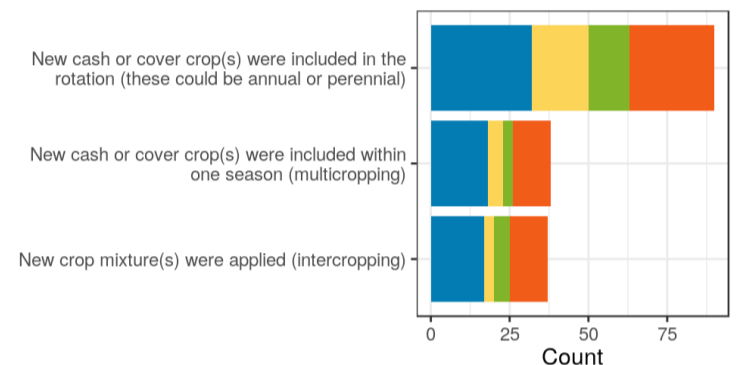


Fig. 3. Diversification initiative(s) implemented in the main four regions.

Evaluation

The three most frequently mentioned target outcomes are improved environmental sustainability, improved agricultural production stability and increased income. In the majority of cases, all three objectives were deemed to have been achieved (fig.4).

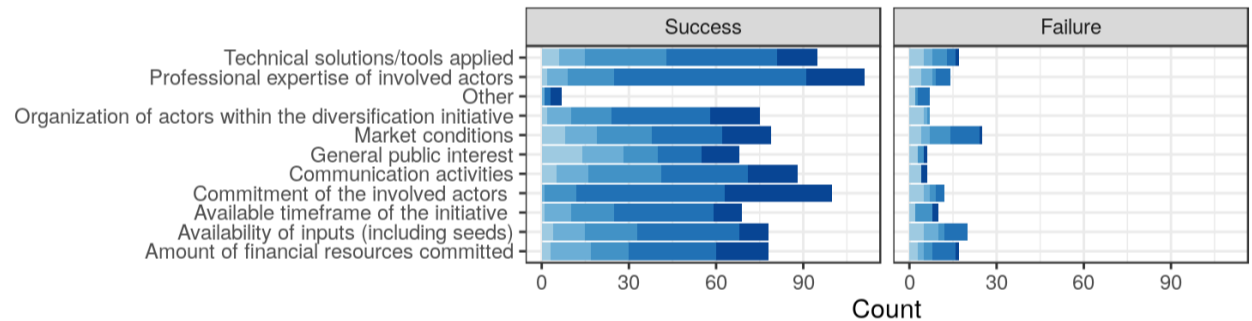


Fig. 5. Factors that have contributed respectively to the success or the failure the diversification initiatives.

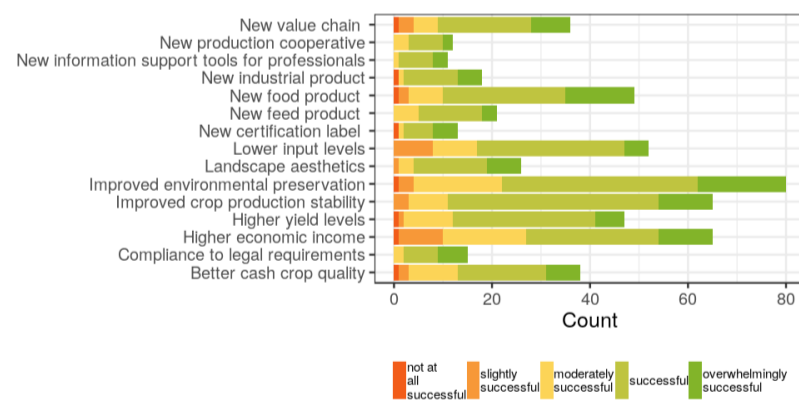


Fig. 4. Degree of achievement of targeted outcomes

While the most important failure factors were economic (e.g. market conditions and amount of financial resources), the most important success factors were related to human resources (e.g. professional expertise and commitment of actors) (fig. 5)

Dynamics

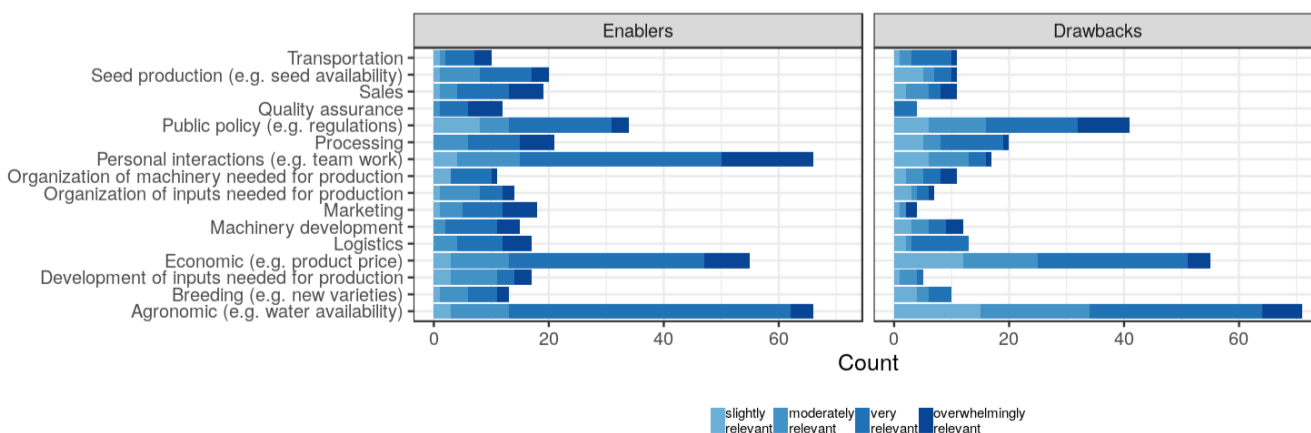


Fig. 6. Drawbacks and enablers encountered during the lifetime of the diversification initiatives

Special attention should be paid to economic and agronomic aspects as they were identified as key Enablers and/or Drawbacks by the CDEs. Furthermore, personal interactions can facilitate the diversification initiative while public policies can also be key Enablers and/or Drawbacks (fig. 6).



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727482 (DiverIMPACTS)