Africa RISING in the Ethiopian Highlands

Valuation of the benefits to smallholder farmers from the Africa RISING program in Ethiopia 2011-2020

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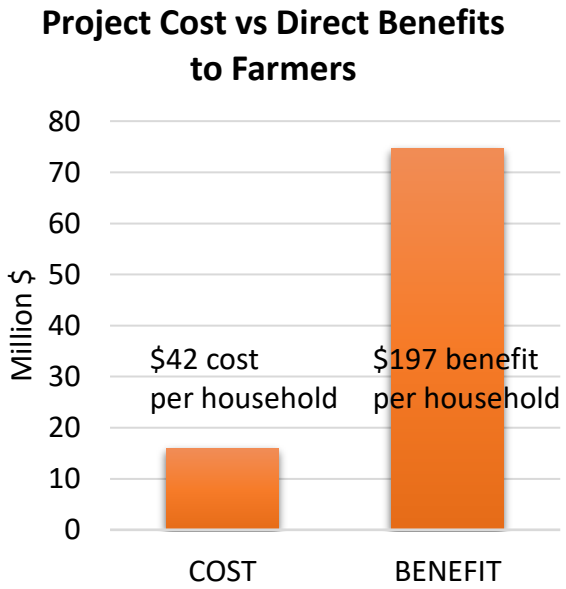
The Africa RISING project aimed to provide pathways out of hunger and poverty for smallholder farming families through sustainable intensification.

We report on the value of benefits directly received by those farmers in the four highland regions of Ethiopia served by the project.

We conclude that the *modus operandi* of conducting participatory research to tailor interventions, followed by the scaling-out via dissemination partners appears very promising.



The total value of direct benefits to farmers was $74.6M.
The total project cost was $15.9M ($42 per household).
The return on investment was 469%.

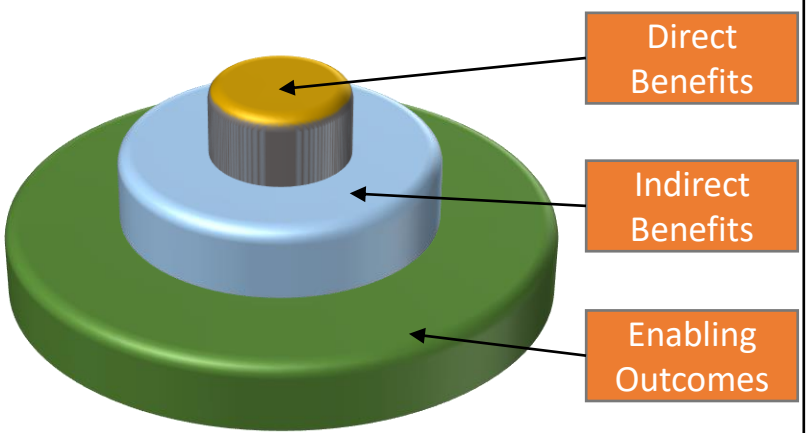
This valuation is conservative

Only **direct income-related benefits** to farmers were valued, such as increased crop yields, increased milk production, or reduced wastage of feed.

Indirect benefits were not valued. Examples of indirect benefits are improved food security or the ability to invest money in agriculture or education. These are very important to household development.

Enabling outcomes were not valued, and are vital to the legacy of the project. Enabling outcomes include improved community organisation, institutional capacity, and ecosystem function.

Ongoing benefits beyond 2020 were not valued.



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Methodology

The calculations were based on actual rates of technology uptake each year from 2013 to 2020. The benefits of each technology were collected using a variety of methods: on-farm experiments, focus groups, surveys, and observations by participant farmers. Benefits were recorded as a percentage change compared to the baseline. The percentage change was applied to the baseline income from the product impacted by the technology. This was multiplied by the number of farmers using each technology. A table illustrating the calculations is provided below.

Technology	Direct benefit to	Baseline income $	Avg. % increase	No. farms using	Benefit value $
Oat-Vetch mixture	Improved milk production	342	50	138	23,684
Desho Grass	Improved milk production	342	40	205	28,065
Tree Lucerne	Improved milk production	342	50	459	78,520
Sheep Fattening	Sheep sale price	966	15	55	7,902
Bread Wheat	Yield increase	807	40	1170	377,611
Faba Bean	Yield increase	115	30	180	6,226

The importance of scaling

The initiation phase of the project was 2011-12; the initial research phase was 2013-20; and the scaling-research phase was 2017-2020.

During the initiation phase, partnerships were build and plans laid. During the initial research phase, long listed technologies were trialled and attuned to the needs of local communities. During the scaling research phase the most promising technologies were shared with dissemination partners, who scaled out to hundreds of thousands of farmers in 36 woredas (covering 190,000 ha). Research continued to identify solutions to pressing needs, and capacity building activities supported scaling partners. Spontaneous scaling and spill-over to neighbouring regions have been informally reported.