COVID-19 has brought abrupt change to many agribusinesses in emerging markets. Disruptions to supply chains and plummeting sales have prompted entrepreneurs to quickly shift gears and implement cost-cutting strategies, such as employee furloughs and layoffs, in an effort to maintain operations. Partnering for Innovation surveyed 44 of its private sector partners in 19 countries to gain a deeper understanding of the pandemic’s impact on their workforces.

**COVID-19 PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS: WORKFORCE**

Of the 44 businesses surveyed:

- 1,026 of their employees (9% of total workforce) have been laid off/furloughed.
- 36% have had furloughed employees.
- 67% plan to rehire at some point, however, almost no partners plan to hire back at the same staffing levels even if operations recover.

**IMPACT ON WORKFORCE**

16 of the 44 businesses surveyed experienced layoffs and furloughs. They shared the following characteristics:

- **Large number of employees**
  - Although businesses with a large number of employees represented only 23% of all businesses surveyed, half of them laid off/furloughed employees.

- **Low cash flow and cash reserves**
  - Only 2 reported having cash flow and cash reserves sufficient to continue operations beyond six months.

- **Less flexibility to adapt employees’ roles**
  - 44% of businesses with layoffs/furloughs had at least a quarter of their employees shift to remote work, compared to 61% of businesses without staff cuts.

- **External financial support**
  - 88% indicated a need for external financing to sustain operations and recover.
  - 75% reported looking for or are considering looking for, an average of $605,556 in loans and other forms of credit.

- **Top workforce concerns among businesses**
  - Businesses that experienced layoffs and furloughs were concerned about:
    - Health and safety: 83%
    - Job security and financial situation: 75%
    - Ability of staff to travel to work/complete core duties: 56%
    - Ability of staff to work remotely: 44%