

Executive Summary Annual Report 2015

Food & Business Knowledge Platform

Introduction

Food and nutrition security for the increasing global population is a big challenge. Nutritiously feeding every person requires efforts by multiple players, sectors, and processes at different levels. To improve the Dutch contribution to this challenge, the Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) was launched in 2013 by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Platform aims to develop a more coherent knowledge agenda and stimulate long-term and systemic changes for food and nutrition security. It does so by connecting research, policy and practice. The F&BKP pays particular attention to the role of the private sector as that farmers, processors, distributors and retailers are crucial players in food and nutrition security. In its work, the F&BKP endorses the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the goals centered on strengthening transformative processes and partnerships to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture (SDG2), and to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG12).

The ambition beyond 2016

From 2013 to 2015, the F&BKP created a space in which a wide range of partners from the Netherlands and beyond developed a variety of joint knowledge strategies and activities. While working, new approaches were developed and roles of partners, networks and the F&BKP were constantly evolving. Through consultations and collaborations with various stakeholders, the F&BKP Office accentuated the food and nutrition security knowledge agenda of the Netherlands. In addition, the F&BKP facilitated the knowledge management of thematic networks, explored new themes, and supported strategic partnerships and research programmes.

The importance of “knowledge brokering” is increasingly acknowledged by international and national players from different sectors, including the agriculture and food domains. In most cases, individual staff of universities, companies or other organizations are not well positioned and/or do not have the resources and/or institutional capacity to accomplish this role. This is where the F&BKP steps in and provides brokering in the food and nutrition security knowledge processes in (multi-) stakeholder networks in the Netherlands and their partners and connections in LMICs, and also improves the efficiency of the Dutch knowledge system on food and nutrition security in collaboration with Dutch and international stakeholders. Such an independent brokering platform in a flexible institutional setting has since become a new partner in the “Dutch Diamond” setting and is now unique in the wider field of global development.

The ambition is to develop this Platform as an institutional innovation within the knowledge system and prepare for the continuation of the F&BKP after the initial five-year period. In August-September 2016, a midterm review will analyze the achievements of the first three years and provide recommendations on the future positioning, focus and activities of the Platform.

The F&BKP strategy

Since its beginning, the F&BKP Office has been developing its role in knowledge brokering by building expertise and an infrastructure on behalf of food and nutrition security related networks. The strategic goals of the F&BKP are: 1) to improve the relevance, focus, coherence, and the efficient use of Dutch, local and international knowledge and research capacities; 2) to strengthen the food and nutrition security related policies and programmes in the Netherlands as well as abroad; and 3) to facilitate appropriate knowledge and research for Dutch and local entrepreneurs, traders and investors, and to stimulate investments and collaborations of the Dutch private sector with low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). These “knowledge-goals” align with the policy goals of the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs (FA) and Economic Affairs (EA) on eradicating existing hunger and malnutrition, promoting inclusive and sustainable growth in the agricultural sector, and creating ecologically sustainable food systems.

The F&BKP works along the following guiding principles: acting in a demand-driven manner; identifying current knowledge issues with relevance for the future, co-defined by the South; initiating learning and research; connecting policy and practice; working with established networks instead of individual organizations; and actively engaging with the private sector. The F&BKP’s target groups are professionals from different sectors involved in food and nutrition security who jointly represent the so called Dutch Diamond. Those professionals include knowledge institutes, private companies, government agencies, and civil society in the Netherlands, in emerging economies and developing countries.



The F&BKP's areas of work are structured along a three pillar action framework:

1. Dissemination of existing knowledge through the **Knowledge Portal** by a provision of up-to-date knowledge content such as overviews, good practices and cutting edge knowledge.
2. Facilitation of **Strategic Partnerships** by co-creating knowledge for innovation, supporting knowledge sharing within networks, expanding on existing knowledge through scoping studies, and translating knowledge into policy and practice.
3. **Support of Food and Nutrition Research** by contributing to the scope of NWO-WOTRO's Food & Business Research programmes (the Global Challenges Programme and the Applied Research Fund), and by supporting research teams within these programmes to achieve impact on practice and policy.

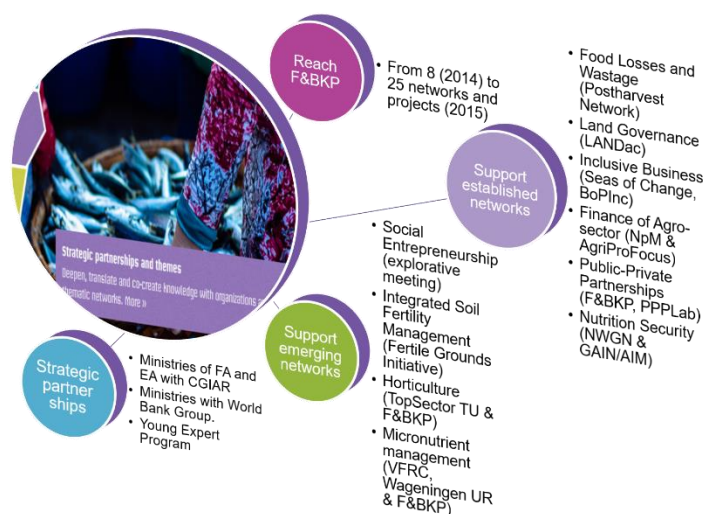
Pillar 1: Knowledge Portal achievements

Since March 2015, the Knowledge Portal has provided overviews of new insights and key actors involved in approximately 18 topics on developments in food and nutrition security. Relevant articles have been shared in the F&BKP's newsletter and on social media, with an added engagement strategy that motivates users and organizations to provide input. With relevant platforms, networks and knowledge institutions, we made connections to linking and the exchange of publications, blogs and information on events. In 2015, the Portal was viewed by 2390 visitors.



Pillar 2: Achievements in building and enforcing Strategic Partnerships

One of the core tasks of the Knowledge Brokers of the F&BKP Office is to support Dutch stakeholder networks in their knowledge management. The F&BKP connects those businesses, civil society, research and policy organizations and (emerging) networks and facilitates dialogue and interaction between them on relevant knowledge questions. Also, this support deepens, translates and co-creates knowledge and aims to improve food and nutrition outcomes by funding and supporting studies, conferences and expert meetings.



These F&BKP's "networks and projects"

tripled from eight in 2014 to 25 in 2015. The F&BKP facilitated six established thematic platforms and networks, and four new or emerging thematic networks. Learning events, expert meetings and capacity building, and training events were organized in collaboration with international networks of food and nutrition security experts and practitioners, which has since generated new insights that contribute to strengthening the practice within food and agriculture programmes of "Diamond" stakeholders, as well as to improved policy making.

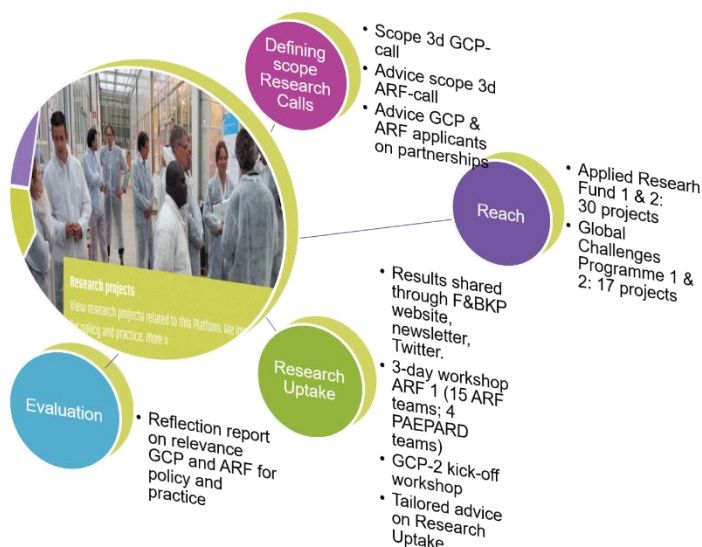
The F&BKP is involved in two strategic partnerships of the Ministries of FA and of EA with respectively the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) and the World Bank Group. Four priority knowledge domains were defined in which Dutch stakeholders developed intensive collaboration with the CGIAR Research Programmes. Furthermore, a learning tour on food safety was organized for the World Bank Group. A third strategic and public-private knowledge partnership is the Young Expert Programme (YEP), which enables young professionals to gain international experience.

Additional initiatives relate to the exploration of future themes for the F&BKP such as the internationalization of Green Education. Three short studies were conducted that addressed the Right to Food, Integrated Approaches, and Food Security and Stability.

Pilar 3: Achievements Food and Nutrition Research

In 2015, 30 research projects received grants from the Applied Research Fund (ARF-1 and ARF-2) and 17 within the Global Challenges Programme (GCP-1 and GCP-2).

The 30 ARF research consortia include 25 business partners, 24 NGOs, six public organizations and 51 research organizations, including universities. The first 17 GCP projects (5 are awarded in 2016) include 20 companies, 24 NGOs, nine public organizations and 47 research institutes. In total, about 80 Dutch, ten international and 143 local partners work on inter- and transdisciplinary research.

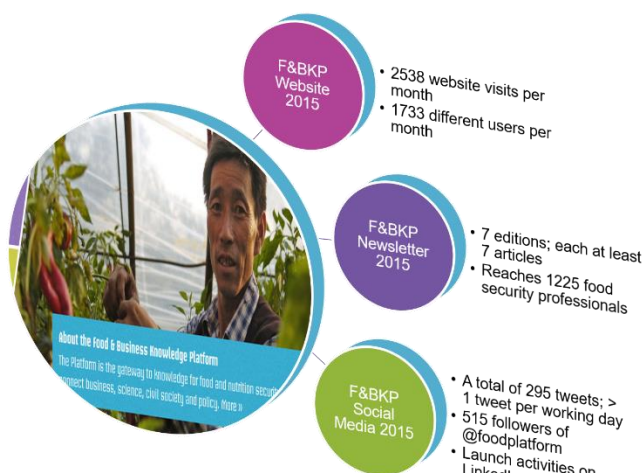


The F&BKP advised the Steering Committee on the scope of the third call for proposals of the GCP (Transformation of food systems with a focus on sustainability and urbanization) and on the scope and conditions for the third ARF call. Together with NWO-WOTRO, the F&BKP Office has invested in improving the research uptake of the research projects by, for example, providing advice or setting up linkages with relevant networks.

In October 2015, a three-day workshop for the 15 projects of the first ARF call was organized in Uganda on collaborative research, research uptake and engagement with SMEs. Several projects of PAEPARD participated in the workshop. In December 2015, a one-day kick-off workshop for projects of the second GCP call was organized. Training and discussions on stakeholder engagement were appreciated by the research teams and helped to improve their impact pathways.

Overall communication

The year 2015 showed a strong increase in the number of news items, events and newsletters published and used via social media, namely Twitter and Facebook. The Knowledge Portal and the Research Pages have been added to present the progress and results of all ARF and GCP research projects. F&BKP Partner pages will be introduced in 2016.



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