



Report Midterm Review Joint Meeting First call Food & Business Global Challenges Programme (GCP)

**13 - 15 December 2016
Mensvic Grand Hotel, Accra-
Ghana**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents the presentations given during the Food & Business Global Challenges Programme Mid-term workshop Ghana from the 13-15 December 2016. It also provides an overview of the key lessons learned of the workshop. The 3-day workshop had the following objectives:

- Joint learning – on results, lessons and concepts
- Assessment of progress /accountability
- Enhance collaborations for impact
 - o Amongst projects
 - o With the F&BKP and its networks.

Programme of the workshop:

- The first day of the meeting was held on the 13th of December 2016 and sought to build on Joint Learning. Preliminary results and challenges were presented by the five invited GCP sponsored research projects. Thematic areas were then identified and discussed.
- On the second day, the 14th of December 2016, individual assessments of research progress and accountability took place. It was run in two simultaneous sub-sessions of an interview conducted by a member of the Food & Business Programme Committee, the Food & Business Research Coordinator and the GCP Secretary. The other sub-session was a consortium engagement with the Food & Business Knowledge Platform to discuss opportunities for research uptake activities. Day 2 ended with a plenary session aimed at discussing feedback on central issues from the interview committee.
- The 3rd and final day was divided into two sub-sessions. The first sub-session focused on thematic exchanges presented by the various research project groups. The other sub-session, which was scheduled for the afternoon of 15th December 2016, was a public meeting on “Inclusive Food Value Chains” with projects of the first call of the GCP.

Background presentations by WOTRO and the Food & Business Knowledge Platform

Please find the presentation with the objectives of the meeting as well as aim and characteristics of the GCP [here](#). An introduction on the Theory of Change and Impact Pathway as applied in GCP can be found [here](#).

The Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) and NWO-WOTRO work together on enhancing the impact of research on global food security implemented under the Food & Business Research (FBR) programme. The F&B Applied Research Fund (ARF) is one of the funding mechanisms under F&BR, the other instrument is the F&B Global Challenges Programme (GCP). An introduction on the F&BKP and how projects can collaborate is available [here](#).

Food & Business Research

The Food & Business Applied Research Fund (ARF) and the Global Challenges Programme (GCP) are subsidy schemes of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFa), implemented by NWO-WOTRO Science for Global development. The Food & Business Knowledge Platform is an initiative of MoFa. For more information on the ARF and GCP projects see the [Food & Business Knowledge Platform](#) website and the [Food & Business Research](#) website.

2. PRESENTATIONS GCP CONSORTIA

Presentations were held by the five invited GCP1 consortia highlighting their preliminary results and challenges. The presentations are summarised below.

Presentation by Djondoh Sikalangwe ([click to view presentation inPDF](#))

Project title: Enhanced nutrition security through traditional fermented foods in Zambia

This project defines the best practices to improve food production-consumption by better addressing the rural and urban demand of Zambia for nutrition. Its purpose is to increase the availability of cereal-based fermented products and improve health and nutrition and income of rural folks.



Project title: Nutritious-System Pond Farming in Vietnam
Presentation by Olivier Joffre ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

It focuses on generating insight into the dynamism of Production and transfer of omega 3 fatty acids processes while balancing algae presence in the ponds for optimal decomposition. The overall aim is to strengthen livelihoods within aquaculture food chains, improving lives of local people of Vietnam through income and to finally meet the growing demand for aqua-cultural products.



Project title: Helping poor farmers grow money

Presentation by Paul Hoffman ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

Aimed at upgrading sustainable smallholder cocoa productivity by enhancing governance, financial services, understanding of globalisation, commercialisation and agricultural intensification which deals directly with cocoa farmers of Sierra Leone. It utilises an approach of analysing direct inputs of post-conflict Sierra Leone for farmers and a social science research on communal driven investments. It also focuses on streamlining the value chain to cut cost and boost farmer income.



Project title: Adapting pork production to local conditions in Brazil. Presentation ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

With an aim of decreasing feed cost of Brazilian pork production, methods of evaluating and developing of alternative breeding strategies are being explored. Improving the use of locally produced feed ingredients and increasing feed efficiency through genetic selection are also mainly explored. The objective is to improve food security, increase demand for animal proteins and ensure environmental sustainability as a result of feed efficiency.

Project title:

Inclusive partnerships and innovation platforms for sustainable landscapes and greater food sovereignty among tree crop farmers in Ghana and South Africa

Presentation by Martha Ataa Asantewaa ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

With the active utilisation of learning platforms which foster knowledge sharing and information acquisition, this research project seeks to achieve more inclusivity and equity of value chain collaborations. This project is focused on tree crop farmers in Ghana (cocoa and oil palm) and South Africa (macadamia and avocado).



3. Key conclusions and lessons learned of the first day

After the presentations by the GCP projects, a range of themes across projects was identified on which discussions took place in break-out groups. Please find below the key conclusions and lessons per group.

On learning platforms

Learning platforms provide an opportunity for joint learning with a range of stakeholders. Crucial steps in development and utilisation of learning platforms:

- In order to enhance sustainability: building a stakeholder community, ensure local embedding of the platform and develop approaches to cover the costs of the platform post-project
- Mobilisation of existing knowledge
- Identify change makers such as institutional change makers, extension programs to enhance the important aspect of the sustainability of change and innovation. When attempting to collaborate with the private sector in platforms, a clear view is needed on what are incentives for them.

On engagement with the government and the private sector

Engagement with government and private sector is part of the objectives of GCP, but not an easy task. Some conclusions:

- Identify common goals within the supply chain
- Focus on services provided by the private sector that organize and empower farmers (such as the creation of formal/legally bound groups)
- Stimulation of government-private cooperation to enhance inclusiveness of business
- Training of farmers on the following;
 - ✓ Engagement with different types of actors
 - ✓ Leadership (on everything they are going to do in terms of business)
 - ✓ Entrepreneurship/Enterprise management
 - ✓ Advocacy (market or giving the power to negotiate on policy from the government)
 - ✓ Social capital (networking of relationships among people who live in their communities and enabling the effective functioning of that community)

**On farmers' decision making**

Various GCP projects focus on inclusion and empowerment of small scale farmers within value chains. Farmers' ability to make decisions and the factors that can influence their decision making are considered crucial components towards achieving this aim. Some key issues:

- Technology uptake approaches: need for focus on adaptive capacities
- Optimisation of uptake by focusing on diversities within farmer groups (possibly through self-

identification)

- Develop risk assessment strategies: measuring and understanding risk (e.g. in terms of finance)
- Take ethical considerations into account: how do we share what we learn from farmers? How should we introduce new technologies?
- Understanding of the role of gender in decision-making processes is crucial
- Designing and pursuing communication strategies in relation to targeted aims
- Knowledge needs for developing approaches to enhancing farmer's decision making:
 - ✓ Characterisation of farms
 - ✓ Perceptions, attitudes and behavior/choices in relation to perceived risks

Expectations of project/process

Transdisciplinary projects (i.e. projects executed by a consortium representing different types of background and knowledge, in the case of GCP academics collaborating with other partners) are faced with a range of expectations with regard to project execution. In drawing up targets for projects, it is imperative to view the project in the light of the following:

- Range of expectations amongst various partners and stakeholders: need to making these explicit and taking into account this variety
- When setbacks are encountered there may be need for focus on other/new business models (e.g. by assessing existing models and creating better ones)
- Adoption of knowledge: need for strategies from inception onwards
- Continuously search for additional funding (which will sustain the project economically)
- Strategisation on co-funding is required: might be better to invest in less crucial components of the project due to level of uncertainty

Research Uptake

GCP projects are expected to develop Research Uptake approaches in order to deliver relevant output that can lead to outcome (see presentation on the Theory of Change and Research Uptake above for definitions). For execution of research uptake the following aspects were considered relevant:

- Provision of adequate funding and emergency budgets
- Mobilising additional expertise and partners
- An ethical approach

On consortium relationships

Relationships between individuals on a project are key; the strength of the consortium may ensure more solid and smooth progress and project facilitation and lead to better and faster results and uptake.

- Conflicting interests may appear within the consortium or between consortium and stakeholders. Need to surface and jointly develop approaches. This may be an asset; sharpening the research focus and entry points to different ranges of stakeholders. May be a deficit, to be solved at consortium level.
- In building a consortium, the following should be key requirements:
 1. Trust
 2. Empathy
 3. Complementing networks
 4. Detailed discussions on project objectives and approach within the consortium at the inception and throughout project execution
 5. Building up a clear understanding of interdisciplinary objectives between the team members
 6. Clear demarcation of rules/division of tasks
 7. Feasibility analysis in approach to reach research objectives
 8. Follow internationally set standards
 9. Anticipation of unfavourable outcomes
 10. Project ownership should be shared by all
 11. Allocation of project funds to output to create commitment.

4. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS - ACCOUNTABILITY

The second day of the GCP workshop included two parallel sessions. One was an interview with a member of the Food & Business Programme Committee, the Food & Business Research Coordinator and the GCP secretary. The other was a consortium engagement with the Food & Business Knowledge Platform to discuss opportunities for research uptake activities. The day ended with a plenary session aimed at discussing feedback on central issues from the interview committee.

Marja Spierenburg (member of the Food & Business Programme Committee) expressed appreciation to participants for their efforts in the various project and the in-depth information provided in the interviews. It helped obtain the links and challenges in all projects. Participants were thanked for their openness, creativity and invited to freely contact the GCP secretariat for any help needed.

Vanessa Nigten, Knowledge Broker in the F&BKP, also thanked all participants and acknowledged the ideas shared. She stated that she was happy to hear that all projects consider research uptake (RU) important. Despite the fact that contexts may not always be conducive to RU during the research process, all projects do already actively engage with stakeholders. In the coming period projects will further develop concrete specified Research Uptake plans including target groups and intensify their relation with the F&BKP where of added value

5. INTERNAL EXCHANGE ON INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS

The third day of the meeting included an internal morning session and a public afternoon on **Inclusive value chains**. GCP consortia presented on the conceptualisation of inclusiveness in their projects. The presentations are summarised below:

Project title: Nutritious-System Pond Farming in Vietnam

Presentation by Olivier Joffre ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

The project considers an inclusive approach in the product design rather than a focus on the entire value chain. An inclusive innovation approach is appropriate in this project due to the diversity of producers. The type of production (intensive or extensive) defines the problems or opportunities encountered by producers. A reflexive interactive design approach is used to address the diversity of producers to assess specific constraints and opportunities such as low bargaining power and inadequate capital. Farmers and companies are brought together in an innovation platform to share views, interact and to develop a sense of ownership.



Project title: Helping poor farmers grow money

Presentation by Paul Hoffman ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

The project focuses on a block farming and certification programme for poor cocoa farmers in Sierra Leone to improve their income. Augmenting inclusiveness means within the project that farmers are going to be directly connected to exporters, which will exclude middlemen, and lead to long-term business relationships with their exporters. Besides, farmers will be able to receive UTZ certification which will introduce financial services and incentives such as agricultural training. This may serve as a source of employment, especially for unemployed youth in the agricultural sector.

Discussion on the project presentations:

- Research brings across a model based on certain values due to various decisions made at project-level. An inclusive business model may strive for minimal risk against the best possible profit.
- Value chains aiming for integration of small scale and large scale farmers should strive to ensure

- inclusion of small scale farmers.
- On chain efficiency:
 - o the costs of cutting out a range of actors should be assessed (e.g.: who wins? The international traders or the national economy?)
 - o cutting out middlemen of the chain may increase unemployment
 - o middlemen also fulfil a social role in the context (e.g. social security)
 - o the value chain is broader than the buyer-seller role; it includes social relations, that should be further analysed and taken into consideration by the project.
- Organisation of certification: need to assess costs and accessibility.
- The assumption that unemployed youth is interested in agriculture -> the opposite movement can be observed in various project sites. Moreover, youth usually does not have access to land, thus it may not only be lack of interest.
- Need for focus on the role of the state in the comparison, as well as on the variety amongst farmers.

6. Lessons learned on Inclusive Value Chains

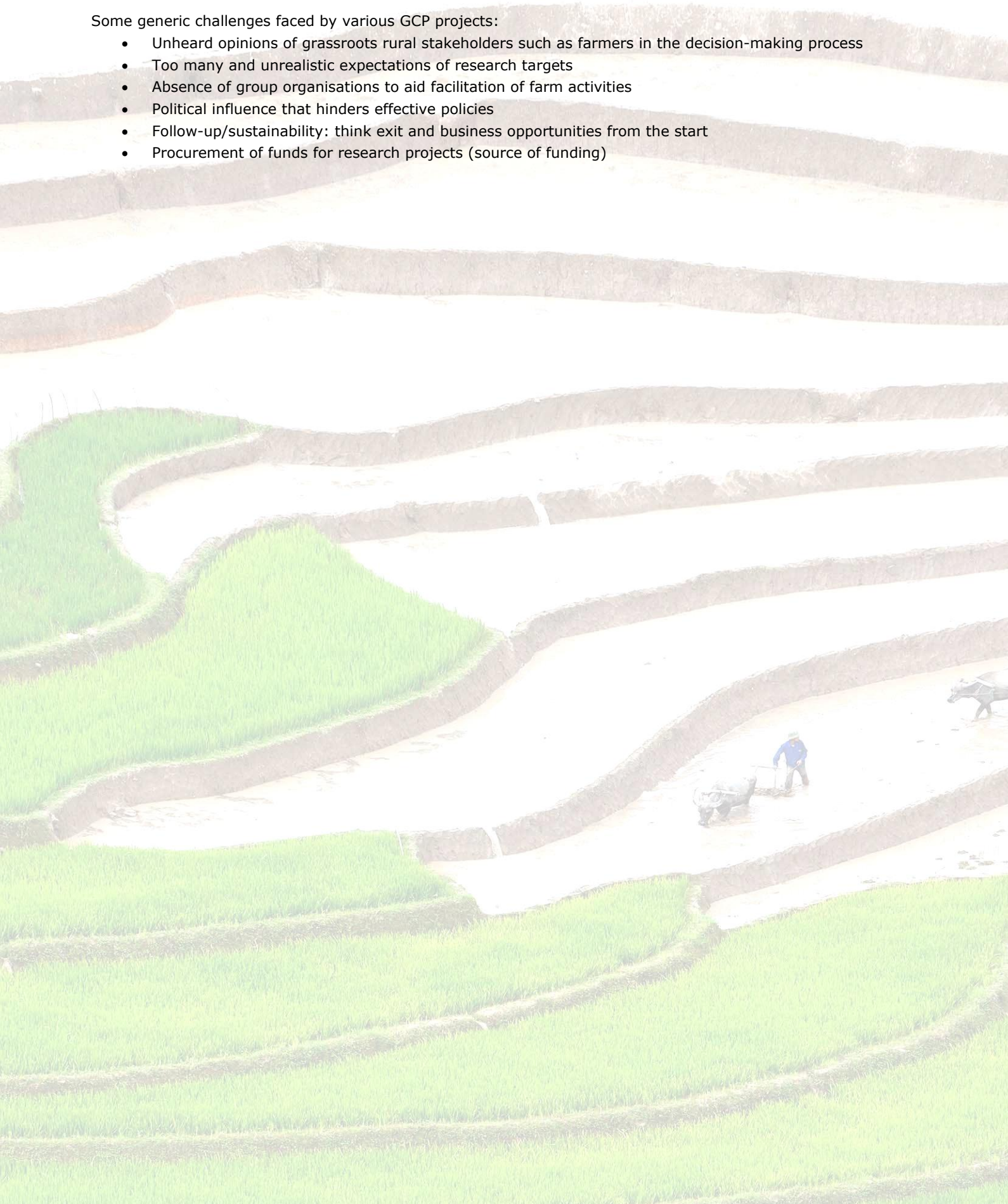
After the project presentations an inventarisation of themes of interest led to identification of a number of working groups, that engaged in targeted discussions. Please find below key conclusions.

- Interventions are part of a wider context/system and may have implications (positive or negative) elsewhere.
- On dealing with risks to inclusiveness of value chains encountered in project execution:
 - o Identify boundary partners of the project
 - o Make the risk issue part the research – e.g. in an extra hypothesis and possibly include more variables
 - o This may require flexible funding opportunities: such as feedback loop funding that allows for newly added components to the project
- On the social context:
 - o value chain relationships should be studied both on horizontal as well as vertical relationships, by not analysing both interventions may be limited in their potential for success
- On inclusiveness:
 - o You cannot include everyone: through inclusion, others are excluded. Identification of needs, capacities and bottlenecks is crucial before the design of the intervention.
 - o Excluded groups/issues need to be addressed collectively
 - o Farmer organisations may need to negotiate access to finance and conditions
 - o Development of curricula may be needed to change mindsets
 - o Focus on 'changemakers': a person with a vision, network and passion to change the lives of farmers for the better. This person could be e.g. an extension agent, a researcher or a buyer of cacao. It is not limited to a specific group or function but could be anyone who serves as a broker of knowledge. These people can be identified and specifically targeted by the project team, as they are boundary partners who are in the position to evoke changes in the system. The change may hereby be at different levels.
 - o Initiatives need to be locally embedded
 - o Focus on common concerns and win/wins
- On collaboration with private sector for inclusive value chains:
 - o Ensure early engagement of private sector and improve feedback loops to engage them
 - o Communicate the research objectives to private sector, such that incentives for participation are clear
 - o Take differentiation of private sector into account: range from farmers selling fertilisers to big farmers to companies -> are we engaging all of them?

Challenges

Some generic challenges faced by various GCP projects:

- Unheard opinions of grassroots rural stakeholders such as farmers in the decision-making process
- Too many and unrealistic expectations of research targets
- Absence of group organisations to aid facilitation of farm activities
- Political influence that hinders effective policies
- Follow-up/sustainability: think exit and business opportunities from the start
- Procurement of funds for research projects (source of funding)



7. PUBLIC SEMINAR - INCLUSIVE FOOD VALUECHAINS

The afternoon of 15 December saw a public meeting in the afternoon on Inclusive Food Value Chains with GCP1 projects and various Ghanaian stakeholders working in that field. The keynote speakers of the public meeting presented on Inclusive Value Chains and how these are addressed in their work. During the presentations, participants were required to listen and note questions or issues for further classification. The various Keynotes are summarized below.

Presentation by Sheila Assibey- Yeboah, Country Representative at IFDC Ghana and Deputy Program Leader of GhanaVeg, ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

Presentation title: GhanaVeg: Commercial Vegetable Sector Development in Ghana

Institute: GhanaVeg

GhanaVeg is a Business Platform that brings together key service providers, producers, processors, traders and wholesale/retailers in the vegetable sector in Ghana. The business platform utilises the structure of value chain analysis as a concept guide for setting priorities. To further fine tune a value chain into inclusivity, communications with both the public and private sector should be exploited. To further engage sectors into involvement, outreach to stakeholders and capacity strengthening through business-led initiatives are pursued. Stakeholders in this regard of inclusivity reach wide from grant fund partners to mere smallholder rural farmers. For the inclusiveness of Ghanaian vegetable farmers strengthening their agronomy capacity is essential. With such initiatives, the goal to sustainable and internationally competitive vegetable sector that contributes to the inclusive economic growth and has the capacity to continuously innovate in terms of products and services is being achieved.

Presentation by Dr. Mirjam A.F. Ros-Tonen, Associate Professor at the Dept. of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies and Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research ([click to view presentation in PDF](#))

Presentation title: Inclusive value chain collaboration in the tree crop sector in Ghana and South Africa

Institute: University of Amsterdam

With the aim of attaining greater food sovereignty and sustainable landscapes, operationalising inclusive value chains is crucial within the GCP1 project that Dr. Ros-Tonen leads. Inclusiveness is mainly a process (plus outcomes) of Voluntary associations between different actors in a chain, including producers and buyers and often, but not necessarily, other societal actors such as non-governmental and governmental organisations (in the case of public- private partnerships). Inclusive value chain focuses on the poor as producers by promoting sustainability while empowering and enhancing the wellbeing of farmers and all involved. Learning platforms connect up various segments of the value chain. To foster an all-inclusive value chain, complexity, flexibility and uncertainty must be embraced. Ros-Tonen underlined that inclusiveness not only is a process, it should also be addressed context specific, it should be negotiated, choices should be made about it and it should be learned by doing.



Question and Answer session

After the presentations, a number of questions were raised as described in the table below.

Table 1: Q&A session on Inclusive value chain

QUESTION	ANSWER
What are the various components of a learning platform in the inclusiveness of a value chain?	On the large scale, it's divided into two sections of the public and private sector. The former is further broken down entrepreneurs, middlemen, consumers and much more. The latter encompasses Gov't bodies like policy implementers, ministries, Safety standards bodies etc.
How do the learning platforms operate?	Mainly through policy symposiums, target group discussions, workshops, conferences etc.
How are issues of patent rights and copyrights over research projects and private players handled?	Agreements prior to the research program are set and endorsed to ensure trust.
What factors are the key focus of investors, research fund bodies and the private sector?	The authenticity of your activities such as audited accounts, registered entity and a subjective measure of innovation.

DISCUSSIONS

A four-member panel, consisting of representatives from the Government, Non- Governmental organization/ Civil Society, Research and Private Sector took a turn to project on key issues surrounding the keynote speeches on the inclusivity of value chains.

Civil Society Perspective

Djondoh Sikalangwe of Heifer Zambia expressed his views on the need for capacity building. This mainly is to equip stakeholders, especially, disadvantaged rural farmers on productive ventures. Provision of aid also presented the vast array of productive options for agricultural success. Furthermore, he stressed on the need for "Building of Social Capital" to foster coherence in agenda pursuits of policy influencers. He concluded with the fact that women participation was key in this process.

Dutch government perspective

Josephine Ecklu, a representative from the Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands reminded all audience of the ending of the funding Aid from the Dutch government in 2020. With this, she reiterated the need for adaptation from "Aid to Trade". Using Ghana as an example, the ratification of the EPA agreement has further positioned Ghana to an advantageous 100% European market access to product sales and with the Dutch government providing capacity building avenues for Ghana, it is up to Ghana to equally ensure agricultural growth. Programs like GhanaVeg can be helpful, in order to improve inclusivity, criteria for participating companies such as for outgrower schemes can help reaching smallholders.

Research sector perspective

Alexander Tetteh Kwasi Nuer, the research sector representative, outlined the need for an inclusive value chain backed with sustainability. Social entrepreneurship can link the Aid and Trade and is worth looking into in this regard. Funded research projects should think business minded and develop exit-strategies from the beginning on. Next to funding avenues, enticing other stakeholders and relevant players to the research course is a benefit centered approach that should be utilized. However, all these should not be done at the expense of ensuring food security.

Private Sector Perspective

Mark Tutu Sarpong, from Mag-M Ltd, a private sector body, threw light on the unrealistic and tough criteria of funding agencies for aid acquisition. Farmers need this the most, however, the average African rural farmer cannot meet this strict criterion. Attention over the years has been given to a few select cash crops, however, it is about time we supported the diversification of this system to include other cash crops that surely have value. Information flows and networking are needed to hold heads up.

Key conclusions

Three thematic issues were raised for a discussion session: i. definitions of inclusiveness in value chains; ii. approaches to entice private sector partnership; and iii. limitations to inclusiveness. Some key conclusions:

What does Inclusive Value Chain mean?

- Including every relevant partaker, yet you cannot include everyone;
- Identifying needs and capacity of change makers that may need to be addressed;
- Farmers need to be organized; Mind-set changing through academic curricula and polytechnic institutions;
- Focus on a 50-50 win benefit and common concerns;
- Make sure that innovations and initiatives are locally embedded.

How best can the private sector be lured onboard?

- Package research for the private sector without jargons to show benefits from the beginning of the research on;
- Adapt to existing regulation of private sector;
- Improving feedback from and to the private sector;
- Government policy and commitment towards research with private sector is needed;
- Ensure clarity of understanding over partnership agreements, make sure that private actors are not seen as only the investor that will be profited of.

How can the issue of limitations of inclusivity be addressed?

- Think of sustainable (business) follow up of the project from the beginning on;
- Ensuring partnership with the right and relevant stakeholders;
- Have a realistic and clear time line and think of when to have policy makers on board;
- Ensure compatibility of individual stakeholder interest;
- Securing funding for subsequent steps.