

## Highlights 2016 Food & Business Knowledge Platform

Ensuring Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) for the increasing global population poses an enormous challenge to governments, NGOs, researchers, and the private sector. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP or the Platform) in 2013 to improve the Dutch contribution in this challenge. The Platform has contributed to long-term and systematic changes for FNS by facilitating the exchange of available knowledge, the co-creation of knowledge and as such by enhancing the use of knowledge. This has been done by connecting research, policy and practice. The third year was marked by several important achievements: interaction and dynamics within the Platform intensified; the requests for support to knowledge trajectories increased; more traffic was visible on the website; and approximately 60 research consortia are now up and running. This flyer highlights the F&BKP results in 2016 according to the three main activities of the Platform: **Partnering with others**, **Research**, **Knowledge Portal**. The boxes showcase examples of these activities.

### Partnering with others

The F&BKP partners with other organizations and networks to reach their common goals.

In 2016, the F&BKP has supported 29 projects, 21 events/trainings and 24 publications. The F&BKP Office was also involved in five thematic networks and initiated or facilitated the development of five emerging networks.

Additionally, the F&BKP acts as the secretariat of the Dutch strategic partnerships with CGIAR and with the World Bank Group. The F&BKP facilitates the partnership of the Netherlands with CGIAR. This has improved the collaboration in the research programmes by focusing more on the priorities of the Dutch FNS policy. Additionally, the F&BKP acts as the secretariat of the 'Food for all' partnership with the World Bank Group. The F&BKP is also a partner in the Young Expert Programmes (YEP) where in 2016, the YEP Agrofood enabled 28 young professionals to gain international work experience in the agrofood sector.

### Research

The F&BKP Office works in close collaboration with NWO-WOTRO on the Applied Research Fund (ARF) and the Global Challenges Programme (GCP). The ARF has 36 and the GCP has 22 operational projects. F&BKP and NWO-WOTRO work together to improve the research uptake of these projects in policy and practice.

Co-creation and research uptake were the core of the first the kick-off meeting and the third GCP Call in the Netherlands, and at the international workshop of the second ARF Call in Benin, and lastly at the country workshops in Benin and Ghana. A workshop on "Outcome Mapping" was organized for the GCP-1 and GCP-2 research teams. A meeting on Inclusive Business Models was organized for the GCP-2 projects and others. The F&BKP website has a useful manual on research uptake tools to help consortia develop research uptake strategies.

### Emerging Networks: Youth

The assumption is that the agrofood sector could offer employment to Africa's growing youth population, but they rarely feel attracted to agriculture. In 2016, the F&BKP Office recognized that youth were becoming a key priority on the international and national development agenda. Since knowledge on "youth and agrofood" is still fragmented, the F&BKP, AgriProFocus and INCLUDE have combined their expertise and networks to explore the current knowledge gaps within this theme. Researchers, policymakers and civil society organizations critically assessed the underlying policy assumptions and have since shared their best practices in working with youth in agricultural transformation. The results were discussed in [several papers and meetings](#). In 2017, AgriProFocus will be taking the lead in organizing a Community of Practice and the Platform will continue to support and address future knowledge questions.

### Social Entrepreneurship for FNS

There is no clear overview of the support for social entrepreneurship in the food security sector as very few studies on social entrepreneurship focus primarily on food security. Therefore, Society Works conducted a mapping project supported by the Platform to provide insights into challenges and opportunities for social entrepreneurs in food value chains. It especially looks at the supporting ecosystems of social entrepreneurs in seven partner countries using a bottom up approach that gives an overview of 256 social enterprises. This resulted in an online tool [and a report](#) that synthesizes these findings. Also, the participating food security professionals have started a Community of Practice to continue to learn from each other and build on the findings. For example, the findings on the importance of self-organization, coaching, and cohesion between public, private stakeholders and social entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas.



### Public seminar Benin on nutrition-agriculture linkages

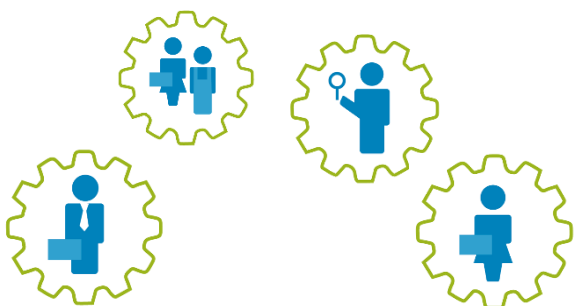
The F&BKP complemented a two-day ARF event in Benin with a public seminar to give practitioners and public organizations the opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge with the ARF participants. During this workshop, 40 practitioners from Benin joined the ARF participants to discuss the linkage between agriculture and nutrition. Several participants noted that the linkages between nutrition and agriculture were new to them and appreciated the value chain approach taken during the event. ARF team members emphasized that through meeting other ARF projects, they saw more possibilities for mutual cooperation. The event in Benin was organized in collaboration with the University of Abomey-Calavi in Cotonou and AgriProFocus Benin.

## Knowledge Portal

The Knowledge Portal was visited three times more than in 2015, with a total of 8,659 visits. The Portal covered 18 topics, including 311 new knowledge items.

In 2016, the Portal has been brought to the attention of food and nutrition security professionals through a specific engagement flyer. Furthermore, the content of the Portal was significantly improved through the development of:

- Six new topics in line with the main F&BKP themes;
- A more user-friendly search functionality within the topics, including a filter for type, country/region, and year and;
- The possibility for visitors to subscribe to an email alert for topics.



## Future of the Platform

A review was conducted in 2016 which pointed to the F&BKP's strengths, including its knowledge brokering between different stakeholders and its work on research uptake. The F&BKP will build on the work of 2016 and the conclusions of the review. The Platform will spend more time on its brokering role and research uptake activities and less time on the Knowledge Portal. In addition, the F&BKP will communicate on the decision making processes and funding criteria to ensure more transparency. Taking the lessons of 2016 on board and cherishing the highlights of 2016, the F&BKP will continue to work with partners to ensure that Food and Nutrition Security knowledge feeds both policy and practice in 2017!

**Better knowledge**  
contributes to  
sustainable food systems



### Drivers for change

There's a large potential for reducing postharvest food losses and improving food value chains in LMICs. The study "Drivers for Change" looks into what drives more value chain efficiency and good practices of creating sound business cases to prevent food losses. Key examples of drivers are an enabling environment supported by governments and the actual availability of new or modified technology. The results published in the study were shared with the Dutch Embassy food security experts during a workshop and a [brochure](#). The Postharvest Network, an organization linking businesses, governments and civil society to Dutch expertise on postharvest loss reduction will use the "Drivers for Change" in the setup and execution of new projects. This will boost the chances of success for each project.

### Managing micronutrients

Micronutrient enriched fertilizers can improve crop yields, but further evidence is needed on whether the body can absorb these micronutrients from enriched crops. Together with the International Fertilizer Development Center and Wageningen UR, the F&BKP organized a seminar on managing micronutrients in the food chain. Over 50 experts from the private sector, government, civil society, and research institutes from different backgrounds debated assumptions about micronutrients' potential. One of the conclusions was that there is a business case for increased yields but not for increased nutrition. [The report](#) presents the key insights and formulates a forward looking agenda with recommendations for actions along the value chain. These are summarized in a policy brief for Dutch Ministries and are being continued by the partners.

### Postharvest losses in Ghana

Dutch technology, when made fit-to-purpose, could help reduce postharvest losses. During the Food Connection Challenge, Ghanaian companies that suffered these losses were matched up with Dutch students and companies. Students developed four business cases together with the Dutch and Ghanaian companies to conjointly reduce their losses. The case of Edanso Ltd., a peanut processing company, won the challenge and was linked to funders by BoP Inc. and Crosswise Works to further develop their case in Ghana. One important conclusion was that the solutions from Dutch companies often did not match the scale of the Ghanaian companies. Overall, the Ghanaian companies indicated that the knowledge on possible solutions were new and helpful for them. [A learning document](#) shares the main lessons learned during the challenge.

### OOOC on Inclusive Business

There is significant attention for inclusive business processes in development cooperation. However, practical courses on how to include low-income communities are scarce. In 2016, BoP Innovation Center (BoP Inc.), Nyenrode Business University and MDF Training & Consultancy in collaboration with Seas of Change implemented the [Ongoing Open Online Course \(OOOC\) for Inclusive Business](#) with support of the F&BKP. Between June and December 2016, 402 participants followed the OOOC and it is the most successful course in the IBA Academy in regards to participation rates. A quarter of the participants completed the course (the target was 10%). It was also used as an introduction to other OOOCs at the IBA Academy and as preparation for offline courses of MDF and CDI.