



REPORT
F&BKP Exploratory Meeting
Private Sector
November 27, 2014



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Including:

- Participants list
- Notes of the thematic working groups

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Introduction

On Thursday November 27, 2014, the “**Food & Business Knowledge Platform**” (F&BKP) organized a meeting at Kasteel Groeneveld in Baarn aimed at exploring opportunities to cooperate with the private sector. Cooperation would have to benefit the generation and sharing of knowledge that is relevant to companies and stimulating food security in developing countries and emerging economies. This is another step in collectively drafting a common roadmap with knowledge institutes, companies, NGOs and government institutions.

Several companies and organizations that have extensive experience in working with the private sector internationally in agriculture or food were invited to contribute to the development of the F&BKP Knowledge Agenda. In this regard, two questions were central to the meeting:

1. **What are strategic knowledge questions that companies have in doing business and investing in agri-food in developing countries and emerging economies?**
2. **How can the F&BKP be of added value for companies to address these questions?**

After a brief welcome and introduction to the programme, chair for the day Co Verdaas (Director, Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen UR) gave the floor to Frans Verberne (Director, F&BKP Office). Mr Verberne presented the F&BKP as a network for networks, founded to organize knowledge in a different way in order to more effectively address questions in combating hunger, stimulating inclusiveness and realizing ecologically sustainable food systems. He went on to explain the objective of the meeting, which was to collect constructive input from the answers to the two above questions.



Three pitches

To provide the first insights from the private sector perspective on the relevance of knowledge for companies and as a kick-starter for the discussion, three pitches were provided by company representatives and by one consortium that includes many companies as members.

Herbert Smorenburg - AIM

The first pitch was given by Herbert Smorenburg (Senior Manager, Netherlands Office Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition), who is coordinating the Amsterdam Initiative against Malnutrition (AIM) and spent many years abroad working for Unilever earlier in his career. Mr Smorenburg highlighted a few topics that came to mind when asked about the relevancy of knowledge for (working with) the private sector:

1. Companies often only look at their own sector and pay no attention to the wider (value chain) context in which they operate and the associated dynamics.
2. Companies often do not know how to successfully stimulate behaviour change at consumer level. How can they be linked to educational activities as well as activities that stimulate behaviour change?
3. How can we scale up successful interventions? There is too little attention paid to scaling up and when there is it often depends too much on the presence of government subsidy mechanisms.
4. There are cultural differences in use of language between different actors (e.g. companies, knowledge institutes, NGOs and government), for example, in terms of language around M&E and how to apply this effectively.
5. Managing PPPs, this is often very challenging for companies.

Sander van Schaik - Fresh Food Technology

Sander van Schaik was the second participant to contribute by delivering a pitch. Mr Van Schaik (International Project Manager) represented the company Fresh Food Technology as well as being “a representative from Dutch SMEs”, he said. From his experience in India, Mr Van Schaik told the audience that the customer base’s knowledge is often lacking to successfully adopt the technology that his company sells abroad.

Another issue raised during this pitch was that governments often offer subsidies, but fail to structure the eligibility conditions in such a way that the subsidy mechanism is able to contribute to achieving specific (private sector) development goals. Often, the variety of companies that can apply is too high in the eyes of Mr Van Schaik.

Access to certain contexts and customers can be difficult without external support. In India, for example, 30 to 50% of food is lost because of failing storage and distribution methods. The Netherlands has the technology to be able to contribute to possible solutions, however, to just get the right people around the table to address this problem, funds are required.

Frank Systemans - FrieslandCampina

The final pitch was provided by Frank Systemans (Corporate Account Manager) of FrieslandCampina. He highlighted the issue of the increasing average age of farmers worldwide. What approaches can address this issue and how can sustainable investments in farmers in developing countries be made?

A relevant topic for companies in food products such as FrieslandCampina, is knowledge of food regulations in emerging economies. In countries like China and Indonesia, these regulations are often changed by public officials that lack knowledge. The Netherlands could provide them with improved access to knowledge to enable them to improve regulations for both companies and consumers.

As had also been indicated in Mr Van Schaik’s pitch, the Netherlands has a lot to offer in terms of logistical solutions for food security. Mr Systemans provided an example from Manila, where containers carrying perishable food products are stuck in customs too often and for too long.



After the three pitches, the audience had the opportunity to respond. Bob van der Bijl (NABC) argued that there is already enough hands-on knowledge in the countries where Dutch companies operate through the companies themselves and their networks. The response of the ‘pitchers’ was that this is true, but disseminating the right (strategic) knowledge in the right context is often problematic. Companies lack the mechanisms to do this. In addition, although companies have knowledge to offer, there is often a mismatch between the technological and organizational knowledge that is needed and the knowledge which the Netherlands has to offer. Companies see a lack of trained people as the main cause with vocational training lacking in many countries. As a result, companies more often train people themselves in collaboration with NGOs such as Agriterro and SNV.

Thematic working groups and discussion

The pitches kick-started group work consisting of five groups working on one of five different topics. Participants were asked to provide their answers to the two main questions above in relation to the five different topics below. These topics were selected by the organizing team of the Office of the F&BKP after consultation of individuals working for and with the private sector in agriculture and food security. These topics are examples of those in which cooperation between companies and the F&BKP would be possible.

1. Increase in productivity of horticultural products
2. Increase in demand for protein
3. Reduction of supply chain food losses in relation to food security
4. Enabling business environment: conditions for success and (financial) risk management
5. Trends in global and regional trade in agri-food markets

A plenary discussion followed the group work, starting with feedback from each of the five groups. Group representatives presented the main findings from the five discussions. More detailed highlights from all five groups are provided in Annex 2 of this report.



As already highlighted during the discussion after the pitches, there is sometimes a mismatch between knowledge needs in developing countries and knowledge Dutch companies offer. The F&BKP could play a role in articulating knowledge needs and share knowledge of successful concepts and examples within topics such as re-innovation and back-scaling.

'The F&BKP should share knowledge of successful concepts and examples within topics such as re-innovation.'

Another issue raised in the earlier discussion in response to the pitches related to the lack of, according to the attending Dutch companies, vocational training in the agri-food sector in developing countries. What are best practices to train smallholders in the current context and how can successful pilots be scaled in order to reach large numbers? Related to these questions, who are the actors/service providers in the Netherlands that are able to conduct and/or support vocational training? Furthermore, today's dynamics are different than those of ten years ago. Do the concepts and practices used in the past to foster farmer learning and exchange still apply, or do current needs differ too much? F&BKP should be able to make an inventory of vocational training needs in specific value chains in developing countries and map organizations in the Netherlands that would be able to contribute to vocational training activities. In doing so, the F&BKP should also showcase good practices of training and scaling.

'The F&BKP should collect best practices to train smallholders in the current context and to scale successful pilots.'

There was consensus in the discussion, including from the F&BKP's perspective, that one of the main roles of the F&BKP should be to provide feedback of (good) practice and bottlenecks in the private sector at the policy level. However, the role of the F&BKP goes beyond providing feedback at the policy level as there is a general role to play in terms of knowledge sharing. According to the meeting's participants, the F&BKP should be an active

facilitator in addressing emerging agri-food and food security issues in developing countries and emerging economies. Additionally, as private sector participants have the intention to make a contribution, to 'provide' knowledge, the role of the F&BKP should be, according to them, to make sure there is an opportunity for sharing, e.g., of practical knowledge.

'The F&BKP should provide feedback of (good) practice and bottlenecks in the private sector at the policy level.'

What the F&BKP should not do, according to the participants, is take on responsibilities that other institutions and organizations such as RVO and NABC are already engaged in. A clear presentation and positioning is important – the F&BKP should have a clear focus and express this to the outside world. It should also clearly express how the private sector is able to participate. The F&BKP should look for the niches of tasks that add value but that are currently not conducted by other organizations. An example of such a niche that was mentioned during the discussion is a role in being an active broker in attracting companies that are not yet involved in agri-food sectors of developing countries but potentially could be. This would support the role of Dutch embassies.

Mr Verberne responded to several of these raised issues during the closing plenary discussion. He indicated that he appreciated the input from the participants and that the F&BKP Office team will now look at what the F&BKP can focus on, remaining in contact with the private sector. There had been new ideas mentioned on the role for the F&BKP to play in the near future, but he added that it was also positive to hear about roles that companies would appreciate which included specific knowledge questions that the F&BKP is already working on. These are, for example, concerning questions mentioned with regard to the areas of PPPs, the finance of agro-sector activities and inclusive business.

Another positive point was that several of the attending representatives from the private sector explained that they do see the relevance of food security in relation to their business activities. They felt that the F&BKP should, as an advocate of food security, make sure that the issue is a constant in its activities and, in this regard, should look for a balance between doing business and stimulating food security in its activities. This should for example be integrated in providing insight into strategic trends in the development of specific sectors, trade flows, scarcity of commodities, etc.

'The F&BKP should focus on generation and sharing of knowledge that is on the one hand public, but on the other hand also relevant enough for companies to trigger them to participate in the Platform.'

Annex 1 – Participants list

Name	Position	Organization	Working group theme
Hedwig Bruggeman	Managing Director	Agri-ProFocus	5
Hans-Willem van der Waal	Managing Director	AgroFair	1
Leon Mol	Agronomist - Excellent Supplier Management	Albert Heijn	3
Niek van Dijk	Inclusive Agribusiness Expert	BoP Innovation Center	1
Suzanne van Rooijen	Sustainable Consultancy	Fair Food	5
Theo Vulink	Branche Manager	Fedecom	5
Anton Timpers	Agribusiness, Food & Water Senior Investment Officer	FMO	4
Sander Van Schaik	International Project Manager	Fresh Food Technology	3
Frank Systemans	Corporate Account Manager	FrieslandCampina	4
Herbert Smorenborg	Senior Manager	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition	1
Toon Keijsers	Lecturer International Food & Agribusiness - Coordinator International Projects	HAS University of Applied Sciences / F&BKP Steering Committee	5
Andreas Hofland	Product & Sales Manager - Consortium in Controlled Growing	ISO Groep	4
Natasha Solano	Global Business Development Manager Perishables Logistics	Kuehne & Nagel	5
Menno Morenc	Project Manager	Larive International	3
Bob van der Bijl	Managing Director	NABC	1
Lars Kramer	Programme Manager	NABC	2
Karst Weening	Policy Advisor	Nederlandse Aardappel Organisatie (NAO)	1
Marjan Beerthuis	Patents & Grants Manager	Nutreco Nederland B.V.	2
Max Neus	Board Member	NVKL	3
Dirk 't Hooft	Project Leader	Postharvest Network	3
Fieke Maas Geesteranus	Project Officer	PPPLab / Partnership Resource Centre	3
Thijs van Praag	CEO	PUM Netherlands senior experts	1
Olivia Ansenk	Consultant	Q-Point BV	3
Pierre van Hedel	Managing Director	Rabobank Foundation	3
Ella Lammers	Senior Advisor Public Global Goods	RVO	4
Mark Agterdenbosch	General Manager	SANEC	5
Eelco Baan	Senior Strategy Officer Agriculture	SNV World	1
Maurits Burgering	Business Development Manager Food and Nutrition	TNO	2
Willie van den Broek	Programme Manager Research	Topsector Agri-Food Internationaal	2 (facilitator)
Rubert Konijn	Coordinator International	Topteam Tuinbouw en Uitgangsmaterialen	1
Robbert-Jan In 't Veld	Business Development	Viscon Group	1
Bart den Hertog	Business Development	Viscon Group	5
Co Verdaas	Director	Wageningen UR CDI	-
Ruerd Ruben	Programme Manager Food Security	Wageningen UR LEI	4
Jan van der Lee	Senior Advisor Sustainable Livestock Systems	Wageningen UR Livestock Research	4

Office team Food & Business Knowledge Platform			
Nicole Metz	Knowledge Broker	F&BKP	1 (facilitator)
Vanessa Nigten	Knowledge Broker	F&BKP	3 (facilitator)
Frans Verberne	Director	F&BKP	-
Klaas de Vries	Knowledge Broker	F&BKP	4 (facilitator)
Peter Ravensbergen	Business Developer / Knowledge Broker	Wageningen UR FBR	5 (facilitator)

Annex 2 – Highlights of the thematic working groups & additional issues raised during the plenary discussion

1. Increase in productivity of horticultural products

Facilitator: Nicole Metz, Knowledge Broker, F&BKP



There are different ways in which knowledge systems can be strengthened. Look also at what can be solved straight away. Look not only at complicated knowledge trajectories, but connect people to each other for example.

Knowledge needs of participants

- How can the generation of knowledge with regard to horticulture growth (technical), certification and regulations in emerging economies be stimulated? This relates both to practical and academic levels.
- How can successful interventions be scaled-up?
- What are 'best practices' in training small farmers? So much has been done, but what are the lessons learned?

Potential activities within the F&BKP

- Mapping Q&A internet forums and alumni networks in the area of food & agriculture as well as Dutch organizations that are able to provide technical training in horticulture in differing contexts.
- Generate knowledge of countries that are attractive for investments for the benefit of making the right strategic choices. Knowledge should not be too theoretical. Think, for example, of the mapping of supply chains.
- How to efficiently use knowledge from Dutch organizations like PUM, PTC+, HAS Den Bosch, CAH Dronnten and Agrofair, that have applicable experience and knowledge?
- Knowledge institutes from the Netherlands tend to have their own agendas. To what extent can demand from emerging economies and developing countries become leading in developing a knowledge agenda and conducting activities?
- The Netherlands can contribute more in terms of knowledge, but we have to adjust to lower knowledge levels in developing countries. Dedicate to vocational training, best practices, scaling up successful interventions, etc.

2. Increase in demand for protein

Facilitator: Willie van den Broek, Programme Manager Research, Topsector Agri-Food Internationaal

Knowledge needs of participants

- From implementation to application: what are issues that you will run into in five years' time?
- How to translate Dutch knowledge into African knowledge?
- How to start value chain development without forcing it into a certain context. How to stay close to generic development?



Potential activities within the F&BKP

- Mapping of relevant networks. Including: who has the right know-how in specific contexts to start sourcing and producing proteins?
- Mapping local contacts to be able to start consortia for protein sourcing.
- Provide insight in the demand for knowledge in developing countries (often more low-tech than Dutch knowledge supply).
- The F&BKP should stimulate intra-chain cooperation. A website is not enough. An active facilitator that consults companies directly is required.

3. Reduction of supply chain food losses in relation to food security

Facilitator: Vanessa Nigten, Knowledge Broker, F&BKP



Knowledge needs of participants

- Insight in value chain dynamics on country level.
- Success stories of partnerships for food losses.
- Inventory of the interest of working on 're-innovation'.

Potential activities within the F&BKP

- Set up activities to increase knowledge level of actors in markets in LMICS where Dutch companies are active. The Netherlands has a lot to offer in terms of knowledge. Starting with assessing the knowledge status quo in local markets would be beneficial. Also taking in consideration how to better connect demand driven activities from rich countries to local knowledge needs in value chains. Also taking in consideration how to maintain integrity within the value chain.
- Collect existing knowledge on good practice and link this to solutions in practice in different contexts, making the outcomes available to specific companies.
- Mapping the (Dutch) actors that are active in the area of food wastage and their specific activities.
- Demand driven and value chain/context specific research, e.g., on 're-innovation', sustainable chain development or the knowledge level in developing countries.

4. Enabling business environment: conditions for success and (financial) risk management

Facilitator: Klaas de Vries, Knowledge Broker, F&BKP



Knowledge needs of participants

- How do you achieve success and build trust?
- How to make Dutch knowledge applicable internationally?
- How to build local sourcing and bottom-up chain development (multidisciplinary)?
- When and how to start a PPP?
- How to engage with knowledge matching? Also from a Dutch perspective.
- What are successful methods for financing development oriented activities?
- How to change the status of smallholder farmers as 'bad debtor'? Are there any successful models?

Potential activities within the F&BKP

- What makes companies dare not to experiment? Can F&BKP cover risks?
- Explore what the key sectors for the Netherlands will be to invest in. Currently, livestock/dairy is 'hot', but a few years ago nobody invested in the sector.
- Help companies with questions on how to make their activities have an impact on food security, inclusiveness and other socio-economic topics as well. Companies often want to do something, but do not know how to achieve this effectively.
- Collect best practices and track records

5. Trends in global and regional trade in agri-food markets

Facilitator: Peter Ravensbergen, Business Developer/Knowledge Broker, Wageningen UR FBR

Knowledge needs of participants

- How to deal with the shift towards importance of software as opposed to hardware. Currently, Dutch companies are more accustomed to marketing hardware. However, software, like export-knowledge is becoming more important. How do we sell knowledge? In this regard: in what sectors should the focus be on export, import or 'semigration' (moving production elsewhere)?
- How will trade flows develop and what role will the Netherlands and its companies play in those developments?
- How will the scarcity of commodities develop?

Potential activities within the F&BKP

- A platform 'Ondernemen In Ontwikkelingslanden (OIO)' of VNO-NCW already exists. Do not start to replicate their work. Use existing networks. It is currently difficult to indicate what the tasks are. Start by defining those.
- The platform should collect and disseminate good practices and lessons learned.
- Map strategic trends for key commodities in food security, together with international networks of companies and knowledge institutes.

- Awareness creation in the private sector
- Include Dutch companies from the entire value chain, not just producers.



Additional issues raised during the plenary discussion

- How can the integrity of the supply chain be preserved, in terms of quality, ethics, environmental impact, trust, etc.?
- Would it be possible to expand the Applied Research Fund of NWO-WOTRO to apply to more countries than currently? Disadvantage: less focused.
- The development relevance of the private sector's involvement in Food & Business in LMICs has not been discussed in detail during this meeting. Yet, it is important that it is part of the knowledge agenda going forward.

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