Boost transformative approaches for sustainable food systems and healthy diets

The Netherlands Food Partnership

This is NFP

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'Boost transformative approaches for sustainable food systems and healthy diets'. That is the mission of the Netherlands Food Partnership. NFP facilitates parties who recognize the need to speed up Dutch Diamond approaches to achieve SDG2, and are eager to act together. A partnership that supports coalitions that want to create impact by 1) gathering the right people around transformative ideas, 2) collecting, connecting and combining the knowledge of all involved stakeholders, 3) creating experimental space to prototype new approaches and solutions, 4) organizing reflection and learning about which solutions work/don’t work, and 5) giving visibility to these solutions. Jointly with the engaged parties in the Netherlands and in partnering countries, the NFP is committed to launch at least 10 new, exciting value propositions on improved food systems in the coming 3 years.

NFP, the challenge and why the Dutch?

A profound transformation of the global food system is needed if we are to provide healthy nutrition for the 821 million people who are hungry today, while the number of adults with obesity rose to 672 million. Over 2 billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food, including 8 percent of them in Northern America and Europe. One third of the food produced worldwide is lost, in Africa especially immediately after harvest. We urgently need to redesign and reshape how we grow, process, share and consume our food. If done right, our food systems can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centred rural development and protecting the environment. Right now, our soils, freshwater, oceans, forests and biodiversity are being rapidly degraded. Climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources we depend on, increasing risks associated with disasters, such as droughts and floods. Many rural women and men can no longer make ends meet on their land, forcing them to migrate to cities in search of opportunities. Poor food security is also causing millions of children to be stunted (too short for their age), due to severe malnutrition. The 2019 EAT Lancet report concludes that ‘without action, the world risks failing to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, and today’s children will inherit a planet that has been severely degraded and where much of the population will increasingly suffer from malnutrition and preventable disease’. Food will have to be produced and distributed sustainably and efficiently. Diets will have to improve in quality. That is an opportunity for food producers and chain parties, but with the social, ecological and climatic limits of food production in sight, it is also a huge challenge. Despite all efforts and successes in improving our food systems, we are not on track to achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030 through sustainable agriculture. We need to step-up by collaborative action.

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1 FAO (2019): The state of Food Security and Nutrition in the world.
2 Eat-Lancet commission (2019): Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems
The Netherlands is generally acknowledged as an important country in the field of agro-food and nutrition. This position is based on joint contributions of many parties to the innovative power of the Netherlands, often originating from a wide range of societal challenges and the necessity to address competing claims on scarce resources in a small and populated country. This Dutch Growth Diamond model, in which private sector companies, governments, civil society, the financial sector and knowledge institutions connect and combine their knowledge, expertise and resources, has proven successful in transforming the Dutch agri-food sector in the past. The Dutch contribution to international efforts for accelerating the end to hunger and malnutrition is closely linked to international efforts for supporting healthier, sustainable, safe and inclusive food systems. Dutch contributions to major knowledge networks (like the CGIAR programs), participation in international fora, and cooperation with for example Rome-based agencies enable to contribute to the creation of appropriate innovation spaces for developing new knowledge and key insights. Capitalizing on our expertise and competences, and connecting current initiatives and instruments, will enable the Netherlands to contribute considerably to achieving healthy, fair, climate neutral and circular food systems. This does require an increased joint effort, and the Netherlands Food Partnership is committed to be a leading instrument that supports the necessary acceleration of our contribution to SDG2.

3 SDG2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
Vision and ambition

Those who want to participate in the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP) are inspired to contribute to boost a transition towards healthy, fair, climate-neutral and sustainable food systems. They are committed to join forces with people and organisations from the business sector, civil society, knowledge institutes, the financial sector and/or the government. They share the same ideal and are convinced that we can have more impact together. Transformation can only succeed by inspiring one another to adopt a wider perspective, challenging one another, and by thinking and acting out of the box. By combining knowledge, expertise and experience from the Netherlands and partnering countries, we conceive solutions together, that really impact on achieving SDG2.

NFP will create the space for inspirers, innovators, change-makers, experts and entrepreneurs to come together and share, learn, reflect upon, design and plan new programmatic approaches. NFP will support and facilitate the implementation of these approaches. It will create movement with very tangible action and visible impact. It is this vision of the NFP that attracts parties to really commit and participate.

Mission

Boost transformative approaches for sustainable food systems and healthy diets.

What would success look like?

Success of the NFP within 3 years is formulated as: Jointly with the engaged parties in the Netherlands and in partnering countries, the NFP is committed to launch at least 10 new, exciting value propositions on improved food systems in the coming 3 years.

Identity and what will be on offer?

The NFP is an ‘ideas accelerator’: enabling innovative approaches needed to improve food systems for better livelihoods and sufficient and healthy diets. It will support variable coalitions of engaged partners by:

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4 NFP will focus on regions and countries as described in the ‘Kamerbrief Op weg naar een wereld zonder honger in 2030: de Nederlandse inzet’. This note states that “...Following the policy note ‘Investeren in perspectief’ (...), the majority of efforts will shift towards the focus regions Sahel, Horn of Africa and MENA. However, the Netherlands will also be active in other countries where a significant improvement of food systems is feasible, and where a contribution to achieving SDG2 can be expected.”
1. bringing the right people together around their transformative ideas (coalitions of the needed – not just the willing!) and facilitating progress towards impact;

2. collecting, connecting and combining the tacit and explicit knowledge of all stakeholders needed to understand and address the challenge, and promoting an agenda on the knowledge gaps;

3. creating experimental space to prototype new approaches and solutions;

4. organizing reflection and learning about which solutions work/don’t work; why, how and when;

5. scaling impact by demonstrating these solutions and learning, and by lobbying for the resolution of bottlenecks (such as policy or regulatory change).

The actual implementation of approaches and solutions will be done by various and varying coalitions of engaged partners. NFP will stimulate, facilitate and support, but the resulting actions and programs will have their own mandate. NFP acts as the breeding ground, reflection and learning space and scaling accelerator for such programs.
Strategy and approach

Main drivers of the NFP are connect, innovate and scale. Connecting is essential to mobilize relevant Dutch expertise and connect it to knowledge, experience and competences in the countries where the NFP is active. Innovating will stimulate partners to develop new, cutting edge interventions that will make a difference. NFP will offer space to experiment and learn. Scaling is needed to ensure that interventions have impact both by spreading best practices, and anchor them in the current systems and policies.

NFP intends to connect Dutch stakeholders with those of partnering countries. In the future, dedicated (sub)partnerships in these countries may arise and will be branded as such.

New narrative

There is an urgent need for a new narrative that goes beyond sector boundaries of development aid or private sector by truly reflecting the improvement of food systems. The report ‘Dutch Solutions for Global Challenges’ is considered a starting point for the content of NFP. Inspired by this report, more specific focus will be explored jointly with the partners. The report describes the need to rethink global food systems. The figure shows a visualization of food systems.

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'Dutch Solutions for Global Challenges' summarizes the Dutch competences to contribute to the sustainable food systems and discerns three levels (1) getting the basics right and incremental change, (2) from the lab to the field and scaling, (3) food system transformation. The NFP should and can be active at all three levels, explicitly and exclusively using a food system approach and at all levels always focusing on sustainable systems.

The other critical component of the new narrative is local ownership and local solutions (not bringing in the Dutch to solve it with their knowledge and expertise but integrating the Dutch by connecting and co-creating the new knowledge and expertise). NFP will help create and strengthen this approach. This requires knowledge and expertise on food systems, transitions and market transformation of the NFP office, plus strong ownership and networks in the countries that partner with NFP.

**Concise agenda**

Several actions by various coalitions can directly benefit from NFP. These can act as quick-starters to demonstrate the potential and power of the NFP. In addition, preliminary suggestions from the diners pensants that were held in anticipation to the launch of NFP, were items like ‘living wages for inclusive value chains’, ‘shifting from animal to plant proteins’, ‘coping with climate change through gene-editing’ and ‘sustainable intensification in horticulture’. These items raised enthusiasm from various participants and could emerge in consortia taking up the challenge.

**Partnership**

The partnership is open for all parties that want to aim for impact by acting together. It is not a legal nor a formal entity, but a virtual pool of engaged parties with a shared vision, shared objectives and a willingness to act. The parties are expected to contribute to realizing the ambition of the NFP by mutual engagement and developing activities in various and varying coalitions.

**Office**

The office holds the secretariat of the NFP, stimulates and facilitates actions, and manages actions in support of the partnership. Key activities are ‘gathering the right people’ and ‘collecting, connecting and combining knowledge’ in support of the driver Connecting, ‘creating

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7 For example, the mutual agenda with the international dimensions of the topsectors Agri & Food, and Horticulture & Starting Materials, and with institutions like the ‘Werkplaats’ should be explored.
experimental space’ and ‘organizing reflection and learning’ in support of the driver Innovating, and ‘giving visibility to solutions’ to support the driver Scaling (see also the sections Identity and Strategy).

The director will be an inspiring leader who, together with its team, interacts with (potential) partners of NFP, specifically strengthening connections with the private sector, steer collaboration, manage the integrated team in the office, lead the transformation to a legal entity, guide communication and branding, prepare NFP work plans and secure the financial position of NFP.

In first instance, the current AgriProfocus and the Knowledge Programme Food Security will be blended to form the office. Initially, this collaboration will be based on a collaboration agreement, agreed by the Boards of APF and the Consortium Partners of the KP. This collaboration is expected to blend into a single legal entity like a foundation (‘stichting’). This is envisaged to be realized in the course of 2020.

**Governance**

The process leading to an established NFP and a legal entity will be guided by a Steering Committee of five members. They will have expertise on multi-stakeholder partnerships, food systems, inter-organizational learning and collective impact. The Steering Committee will assist in kick starting NFP, advise on turning strategy plans into organisational changes, recruit an NFP director, approve work plans and will guide the transition to a legal entity. The Steering Committee will be operational during the transition phase to this legal entity.
Budget

The running NFP budget to operate the office will initially be covered by current APF and KP budgets mainly, but additional funding will be sought. On the basis of the first operational plan of NFP, the total budget should be restructured. After positive evaluation of NFP in 2022, the Dutch government should clearly indicate commitment to funding till 2030 – the year SDGs should be achieved. This commitment, and financial participation of various parties, will boost the credibility of NFP considerably.