

STRING PROJECT

“STrategies for Regional INnovative Food Clusters”

**ACTION PLAN
of Lead Partner
Province North Brabant
&
Project Partner 2
Southern Agricultural and Horticultural Organisation (ZLTO)**

The Netherlands

June 2019

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Introduction

Smart, healthy and sustainable food is a top priority on the European agenda and also on top of the agenda in our region. The liveliness and dynamics of many European regions depends on the level of activity and competitiveness of the agrifood sector. Regional policy instruments are often an obstruction instead of an incentive in the prosperity of the agrifood clusters. This inhibits the blooming and has social effects, such as the regional employment and vitality of the region. This is not beneficial. That is why the North-Brabant region and ZLTO (Southern Agricultural and Horticultural Organization) are participating in the STRING project. STRING stands for STRategies for Regional Innovative Food Clusters and falls within the Interreg Europe program.

STRING improves the competitive potential of agrifood clusters through an intensive, interregional exchange program focused on cluster cooperation.

STRING works on improved performance and implementation of regional policy programs and funds to strengthen innovative agrifood clusters. In this way, new innovations in agrifood come to prosper more quickly and agrifood clusters are growing broadly in connection with high-tech, care and design.

This Action Plan is a result of the analysis the region North-Brabant and ZLTO made after phase 1 of the STRING project which best practices can also work in our region. We translated these best practices to the circumstances in our region. In the next phase we will try to implement these actions. We expect this will help to strengthen our agrifood clusters.

Part 1. General information

Project: STrategies for Regional INnovative Food Clusters (STRING)

Partner organisation: Province North Brabant (Lead Partner)

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Region: North Brabant

Self-defined performance indicator:
Developed projects resulting from learning from other regions in STRING (10)

Part II: Policy context

II.1: Policy instrument dedicated

The policy instrument we would influence is OP South Netherlands ERDF 2014-2020. With their triple helix partners the 3 Southern provinces (NL) developed a RIS 3, linking societal and economic opportunities and challenges. OP South Program was based on the RIS 3. The aim is to develop the region to an innovative top region, where innovation is the key to smart and sustainable growth. The OP priorities are Innovation (strengthening the R+D+I infrastructure and capacity; stimulating investment in R+D instruments) and Low carbon economy (stimulating research, innovation and use of new technologies and of ICT). The overall budget is 321,6 million euro. To create a structure strengthening mechanism (stimulating cross sectoral cooperation, attracting (risk) capital and new companies) the following methods are used: living labs; testing grounds; social innovation; the use of design to enable (open) innovation. The innovative opportunities mentioned e.g. Smart Food; Smart Technology; Smart Materials and Smart Logistics. For Smart Food the objectives are 1) The cross sectoral cooperation between Agrofood and High Tech Systems 2.) between Agrofood and Health sector and also 3) stimulating the development of added value (demand driven) concepts. The OP provides the framework. Implementation should be organised through projects. The province and its partners aim to influence the strategy of the OP through the development of tangible projects. For that it has to find and discuss real solid measures for which this international learning approach is a crucial aspect.

To improve the policy instrument we would like to support new projects. Through the learning process in STRING and the development of the action plan we want to develop and test cross sectoral cooperation and to create added value by steering the innovation chain to become more demand oriented. For the cross sectoral cooperation the province needs to develop new modes of cooperation between the different sectors via developing a result-oriented cooperation culture and instruments to stimulate innovation by increased cross-sectoral cooperation. Analysing the relevant regional policy instruments in other STRING regions new solutions can be adopted and introduced into OP South. Establishing co-operation and jointly exploring shared issues with stakeholders in other regions (cross regional expert visits & thematic working groups) will help North Brabant to improve the policy instrument and make it more practice and result oriented. To create added value models in the agrifood chain regional actors in North Brabant will analyse, learn and experience from partner regions experienced in producing advanced (policy) instruments on how to create better policy and implementation frames through involvement of different market players' to stimulate economy and in creating more added value in a demand driven market context. Through the support of these types of projects the region is able to influence the efficient use of ERDF allocated for the purpose of innovation in North Brabant.

II.2: Indicators

II.2.1 What are the indicators?

Our result indicator is defined as “Developed projects resulting from learning from other regions in STRING” with a goal of 10 developed projects.

II.2.2 Can you reach this indicator?

Yes, we are convinced we can reach this indicator. With the project we will develop 3 main actions to stimulate the development of added value concepts, support the development of new projects by start-ups and stimulate cross-sectoral collaboration. In phase 1 we already started and supported several initiatives to make sure the indicator can be reached.

Some of the projects that have already started are funded in the Operational Program South. Others are in funded from Landbouw Innovatie Brabant (LIB), an initiative of ZLTO and Brabant Region.

A list of already developed or started projects to reach our indicator, funded from LIB is attached as appendix 1. A list of indicator related projects in OP South was not available at the moment of submitting this Action Plan. It can be supplied in short term, if necessary.

Besides having started and supported several projects, we also initiated a research on the utilization of the policy instruments aimed at agriculture, in order to determine the effectiveness of the instruments and the need to make adjustments.



Part III: Action plan

III.1 Summarization of basic situation on the beginning of the project

In the Engine for Change document we described our learning needs:

<i>Learning need</i>	<i>Why it is not sufficiently addressed? Is it due to:</i>	<i>Should it be addressed by</i>
Added value systems	The choices for production (what type of product will be produced) is a choice of which we tend to say it must be made by the entrepreneur. This, so it is said, is not a policy decision. But organizing only one focus / creating a system in which it is only possible to compete on prices, we exactly do make such a decision.	supporting directly specific projects? Could help indeed, on a small scale test and support projects.
	About 95% of all the resources are being used to further optimize the current system. So we really have a lack of resources which could stimulate a more added value approach.	supporting specific infrastructures (specify)? This is more difficult. Almost every project / initiative has a need for different resources.
	Accordingly, the competence to work on more added value systems is not developed.	improving the policy design? This would be great, but really need fresh ideas for this.
	The economic (structure) policy of the Netherlands in regards to agrifood is since WWII only focused on stimulating efficient production. More output with less input.	improving the policy governance? As mentioned above, great but how?

<i>Learning need</i>	<i>Why it is not sufficiently addressed? Is it due to:</i>	<i>Should it be addressed by</i>
Stimulating cross over with High Tech sector	<p>Choices of policy management? For several decades the policy of agriculture has been looked at as being a special economic sector. We even have a special ministry for agriculture. Just the last years this is changing. But with the 'status aparte' the tendency was huge to only look within the agricultural sector for innovation and solutions. This was definitely an effect of policy.</p>	<p>supporting directly specific projects? This could help, small scale testing. Thing is that high tech solutions are not cheap. And the little money available for R&D in the agrifood sector is mainly being used on the non productive part of the agrifood chain.</p>
	<p>Lack of resources. The high tech sector has more than enough resources. That is not a problem.</p>	<p>supporting specific infrastructures (specify)? What we try to do is stimulate and create networks between the agrifood and high tech sector. Between businesses but for example also between students.</p>
	<p>Lack of competences. Between the High Tech sector and the Agrifood sector there is very little understanding of each other's need and potential. Different approaches and use of different words, sometimes makes it almost Babylonian.</p>	<p>improving the policy design? This is really difficult, we hope to get inspired.</p>
		<p>improving the policy governance?</p>

Based on these lessons learned we (LP, PP2 and stakeholders) came up with common themes on which we will focus in the Action Plan:

1. Role and position of the farmer

As mentioned above, the position of the farmer is not always clear. It seems that a farmer is positioned as a perfect storyteller. In this the focus is more on his or her entrepreneurship than on its craftsmanship. The farmer and the farm as an SME. This also fits the notion that the focus is more on the (end) product (and with this on the end-user) than the producers.

2. Collaboration in chains

In all the good practices we experienced, collaboration throughout the chain is the key factor. We have seen it with the Iberico ham in Castilla y León, but also at KonsumFisk in Central Denmark Region and with the Parma branded products in the Emilia Romagna Region. In the chain quality is organised and when possible agreements are made about price and risk management. Regional government supports the collaboration. Binding element is the distinctive product which is being produced. Developing a valuable solution residual flows seems not an important topic.

3. Storytelling

A story which is believable and makes sense in relation to the product could be valuable. A link between the region its being produced in and the history of the product seems to work for a lot of good practices we experienced, for instance with the Iberico ham (Castilia y León) and the Parma branding (Emilia Romagna Region). Developing products which meet consumer's needs (demand driven) could really benefit from storytelling. And social media could really be helpful for storytelling.

4. Knowledge exchange (international)

A good exchange of knowledge is difficult in a few days. We would like to further expand the knowledge exchange. Together with ERR we'll developing an exchange program with farmers and their chain partners.

5. Role of (regional) government

The role of the government in North and Southern European regions seems to be different. E.g. in CDR government invests in networks and fund managers. In CyL the government invests in Institutions. For Brabant the lessons learned from CDR are the most valuable; a more tailor made approach.

6. Technology

In all the good practices technology is an important part of the practices. Often being an driver or enabler. And in each good practices technology is used differently. The good practices in CDR really show that technology is really necessary for the execution of a good food policy. But really as an enabler and not as goal in itself.

III.2 Reaching the objectives

To reach the objectives, we want to address the following issues:

1. Role and position of the farmer:

- More focus on entrepreneurship than craftsmanship.
- More focus on the (end)product and the users of the (end)product.
- New skills needed in a changing world.
- Education more applied to the needed skills.

2. Collaboration in chains:

- Creating living labs by government, agrifood chain, in combination with education.
- Financial support
- The government creates ecosystems in which new developments in chains can take place.

3. Storytelling:

- Awareness of the impact of storytelling of positioning the product.
- Education

4. Knowledge exchange (international):

- Agrifood executive global program.
- Knowledge exchange between farmers (with ERR).
- Stimulating innovative start-ups (Noviaa method with Alsace Region).

5. Role of (regional) government:

- Stimulating the process with budget and support to develop new business and innovations.
- Collaboration in the triple helix: government, business and knowledge.
- Creating “space in policy” for new developments.

6. Technology:

- Stimulating the cross over “agrifood and high tech” for more innovations. This can be facilitated by Foodtechbrainport and Brainport (creating Agritechbrainport).
- Continuing the policy on agrifood innovation.
- Organising structural student and startup challenges to stimulate crossovers between high-tech and agrifood, based on actual entrepreneurial questions.

Because we work in co-creation it is difficult to have 100% influence on our stakeholders and the business environment. In the Netherlands the culture is of working together trying to reach consensus (known as “poldering”). But everyone plays his own role. Sometimes you play a bigger role (legislation or financial support), sometimes smaller (connecting partners). The relationships with our stakeholders are firm and based on a common interest.

During the first phase of the STRING project we also had some research done on the functioning of the policy instrument, specifically on the themes of Agrofood and Agriculture. The lessons learned from this research will be taken into consideration in the actions in this Action Plan.

III.3 Action

Action 1: *I-2-I Implementing knowledge exchange pig producers ERR and Brabant*

1. Background

During the STRING project we had site visits with stakeholders. At Emilia Romagna Region and Castilla y León we had pig farmers as participating stakeholders. During the visits pig farmers got inspired and got a lot of ideas for their own farm. And it also worked the other way around. That was the motivation to start with the idea of a knowledge exchange, especially with ERR. The conclusion was that the farmers from Brabant and ERR can learn the most from each other. If that works in the way that is expected, in the future it can be extended to other areas.

Pig farmers from several countries in the EU can learn from each other. In the visit to ERR we saw good examples of how for example forage can influence the taste of meat and how Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) are more than marketing instruments: they form a complete and true story, fitting with the history and strengths of the region. This way they form added value for the farmers. In the Netherlands pig farmers are in the middle of a transition to a more sustainable pig husbandry, but also with a challenge to make a higher profit. The innovation level is high. In Italy pig farmers are producing with a high added value, but following a detailed product specification. The policy in The Netherlands is mainly focussed on environmental and spatial issues. With this action we want to create new added value projects in both Brabant and ERR, where the knowledge of the farmers is combined with the strengths of their product and their region to conceive new concepts and products with high added value.

With this approach we aim to make a shift in the policy to a more added value based approach. For this we will use the experiences of this action to discuss the possibility to create specific instruments in the new OP for added value products. This action will give us the input for the right action lines and criteria for such instruments.

Many projects are focussed on the advisors around the pig farmers or the government. In this project the focus is on the pig farmers themselves. They can learn from each other. And the most optimal way is to meet and see how others are working and doing it in practise. The EU PiG project collects the best practises by organising a Grand Prix each year in 13 member countries. This project was already known to us from earlier experience, outside of the STRING project. At the visit to ERR in October 2018 the EU PiG project came to mention and it inspired us to capitalize on existing knowledge. The contest is an online platform for the best practices, with the goal to scale up the best practises in the EU in the member countries of the project. During the visit we learned from each other that pig farmers in both countries had a different position in the product chain and that there were differences in the way the product chain worked as a whole. These aspects are subject of the planned visits. These visits are planned to take place in March 2020.

This project idea aims to face eye to eye the benefits, the weaknesses and the feasibility of these good examples in their own circumstances. Pig farmers can see which aspects can also work out on their own farm. This kind of knowledge exchange is very intense, but very effective. It starts a direct dialogue between pig farmers in the participating countries. Participants of the EU PiG project can be examples to take a look at, or visitors.



To see if this is a feasible approach for this kind of knowledge exchange, the project starts with a pilot between the Netherlands and Italy with one group of Dutch pig farmers and partners in the meat chain and one group of Italian pig farmers and partners in the meat chain. The project contains of mutual visits in which knowledge and experience will be exchanged in order to implement good practices from both countries in their own business cases. The result is a program that helps farmers to develop their farm in a sustainable way. In an economical, ecological and financial way.

2. Action

The action will focus on a first pilot with a mutual visit of pig farmers. This action consists of preparation of the exchange, selecting pig farmers to participate in the exchange, preparing and executing a visit to ERR and a cross visit, group evaluations of the visits and lessons learned and an evaluation of the method itself. The specific goal is to implement methods and good practices learned from the partners.

3. Timeframe

Semester 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing and preparing the exchange between the Netherlands and Italy. - Selecting pig farmers and partners from the meat chain (intake / drawing up the learning needs / purpose).
Semester 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selecting pig farmers and partners from the meat chain (intake / drawing up the learning needs / purpose). - Preparing pig farmers for the visit from ERR to Brabant. - The visit from ERR to Brabant. - Evaluating the effect with the group.
Semester 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing pig farmers for the visit to ERR from Brabant. - Evaluating the effect with the group. - Evaluation: when it is a success fine tuning the approach. - Discussing the results of the exchange with OP program management and policy makers of the province of Brabant in order to further focus the policy instruments for projects aimed at high added value.

The action will start at the beginning of phase 2 of the STRING project and will be finished by the end of 2020.

4. Costs

Step		Costs				Budget					
Year 1		Hours	Fee	Out of pocket costs	Total excl VAT	ZLTO	LIB	Region	Chain partners	Pig producers	Italy
1	Recruiting and intake	40	€ 125	€ 250	€ 5.250	€ 1.000	€ 1.575	€ 1.000	€ 1.675		
2	Working session	16	€ 125	€ 500	€ 2.500	€ 500	€ 750	€ 500	€ 750		
	External expertise			€ 500	€ 500	€ 200		€ 200	€ 100		
3	First exchange visit in IT	NL	60	€ 125	€ 9.300	€ 2.500	€ 2.790	€ 2.500	€ 1.510	€ 7.500	
	Transfers, excursion cost	IT	PM		PM						PM
4	Working session		16	€ 125	€ 500	€ 2.500	€ 500	€ 750	€ 500	€ 750	
	External expertise			€ 500	€ 500	€ 200		€ 200	€ 100		
5	Preparation cross visit		16	€ 125	€ 500	€ 2.500	€ 500	€ 750	€ 500	€ 750	
6	Organisation/implementation cross vij	NL	120	€ 125	€ 2.000	€ 3.800	€ 5.100	€ 3.800	€ 4.300		
	Travel and expense	IT	PM		PM						PM
7	Working session		16	€ 125	€ 500	€ 2.500	€ 500	€ 750	€ 500	€ 750	
	External expertise			€ 500	€ 500				€ 500		
8	Closure and recommendation		16	€ 125	€ 2.000	€ 300	€ 600	€ 300	€ 800		
Total year 1					€ 52.550	€ 10.000	€ 13.065	€ 10.000	€ 11.985	€ 7.500	PM
all contributions come from own resources of the partners											

5. Responsibilities

This action is organised by ZLTO and the Brabant region. Projectmanager from ZLTO is D. Aarts. From Brabant region this position is vacant. Dinamica in ERR will also assign a projectmanager. Stakeholders involved are besides ZLTO and Brabant chain partners like forage producers, marketing & sales parties and pig farmers.

6. Risk factors

- We might not be able to find enough farmers to take part in the knowledge exchange project.

7. Summary

Peer to peer knowledge exchange between pig farmers from ERR and Brabant.

Objective → Subobjective → Assets → Effects → Results → Timeframe, cost, responsibility



Action 2: *Supporting startups agrofood and innovation*

1. Background

We want to research the methodology of supporting innovations of start-ups and new businesses in the Agrifood sector. Although not on our visit list at the start of the project, in the String project the region Alsace showed us that they have a method to do that. We want to learn about that method and research if it is possible to use it in Brabant. We see that it is difficult in practice to have all knowledge needed to make innovations work. In this way we want to improve this lack of knowledge.

Many companies in the food industry are Very Small Businesses and SMEs, often specialised in regional products. To stay in the market they must: innovate to deliver new and differentiated products; create sales methods and original marketing models; reduce manufacturing costs or add value to the entire production; face unbalanced competition due to the size of some market players. Innovation, however, is complex and multifaceted: it is not simply the acquisition of methods or know-to-be, it is everything. For managers, this means having a vision of their future positioning and ways to implement – in other words, deploying an absolute development and innovation strategy and an adapted process. This action is, just like action 1, aimed at shifting the regional policy to a more added value based approach, in order to build sustainable businesscases.

During the knowledge sessions it became clear to us that the Noviaa methodology used by the Alsace region, for stimulating innovative start-ups, could be of interest to us. Noviaa is an operational support methodology to structure the innovation process in companies: strategy, creativity, organisation and management. The Noviaa method lends itself particularly well to a collective action. A contribution of tools and methodology is essential to start. It constitutes a unique opportunity for managers, to cut themselves from every day's activities and take time to think about the place of innovation in their companies. Inter-companies exchange is a powerful lever to reconsider the operating processes and think about changing habits. During the phase of internal deployment, it is still precious to offer the managers and their collaborators an opportunity to share good practices.

As a direct result of our participation to the String project we have learned firsthand from the Alsace region participants of this approach. Interesting enough, this region did not belong to our phase 1 priority stakeholders, this demonstrates the value of direct interaction.

Since the approach seems successful, we would like to deepen our knowledge about it by direct interaction with this region. We would propose a next step, in which we exchange information, experiences and results in combination with an in-depth investigation of their method.

The effect of this action is not a guarantee yet, but we believe that implementing an additional and proven method can help us improve the quality of business models. This is especially interesting because in the near future we want to evaluate our supporting instruments in the Agrifood, so we can implement the successful ones in our regional policy.

We are aware of the fact that this action is not as detailed as desired yet. We are convinced though, that the approach of implementing the Noviaa methodology with both intermediary organisations and entrepreneurs will lead to better project plans and therefore to better applications in the available instruments. At this moment it is not possible for us to be more specific and to the point than the current description. We do believe however, that further specification can be given once the implementation of the Noviaa method in the Brabant region has started.

2. Action

The action is directed to selecting entrepreneurs and stakeholders that are interested in a new methodology to come to new business perspectives, providing them with the Noviaa methodology and by doing that, transferring the knowledge of the Noviaa methodology to experts in Brabant.

The action is aimed at training the entrepreneurs and advisors from intermediary organisations (such as AgrifoodCapital, ZLTO, BOM, FoodTechPark Brainport, REWIN) in using the Noviaa method to improve innovation processes and business models. One of the learnings in the research of the current policy instrument is that the quality of the business model is important in the success of an application for support. Thus we aim to enhance the quality of business models and the usage of the policy instrument. With the involvement of the intermediary organisations the lasting effect of this action will be guaranteed.

Not only are new products launched but also the following topics are developed:

- Strategic training: for new products or merchandising
- Formalisation and structuring process : development, innovation, quality, production scheduling
- Marketing: positioning of brands and products, work on speech and image: Graphic briefs, packaging and web
- Merchandising: coaching for store implementation work on shelving, in store advertisement
- HR: development of managerial skills, culture of continuous improvement

3. Timeframe

Semester 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing and preparing for exchange of information, experiences and results of the Noviaa methodology between Brabant and Noviaa experts. - Selecting stakeholders who are interested to learn about the Noviaa methodology. We aim at at least 5 advisors from intermediary organisations and at least 8 entrepreneurs.
Semester 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inviting the Noviaa experts in Brabant for their help transferring the methodology through in-depth presentations and workshops with the selected stakeholders. - Organising a training session for entrepreneurs and advisors. - Evaluating the effect of the training sessions and transfer results with the group.
Semester 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating the quality of projects deriving from the training sessions. - Structural implementation.

The action will start at the beginning of phase 2 of the STRING project. Main activities will be finished at the end of June 2020, after which structural implementation commences.

4. Costs

Preparation: 40 hours/€ 125:	€ 5.000,-
Costs expertise Team Noviaa: 40 hours/ €150:	€ 6.000,-
Recruiting and intake: 20 hours/€125:	€ 2.500,-
Transfer/ travel/ accommodation costs Experts Noviaa:	€ 2.500,-
Working sessions stake holders: 16 hours/€ 125:	€ 2.000,-
External expertise:	€ 500,-
Organisation costs:	€ 6.000,-
Total costs:	€ 24.500,-

For the funding of this activities we are aiming at the operational budgets of the province of North-Brabant.

5. Responsibilities

This action is organised by the Brabant region. Project manager is Janny van der Heijden.

6. Risk factors

- We might not be able to find enough entrepreneurs and stakeholders that are interested in a new methodology.
- The methodology can't be transferred to our situation, and doesn't support innovations of start-ups and new businesses in the Agrifood sector.
- There are not enough resources available.

7. Summary

We want to research the Noviaa methodology, which the region Alsace is using, of supporting innovations of start-ups and new businesses in the Agrifood sector. We want to learn about that method and research if it is possible to use it in Brabant. We see that it is difficult in practice to have all knowledge needed to make innovations work. In this way we want to improve this lack of knowledge.

Objective → Subobjective → Assets → Effects → Results → Timeframe, cost, responsibility



Action 3: **Adjusting agrifood program Brabant and policy instruments**

1. **Background**

Due to provincial elections and establishment of new regional government (negotiations are expected to be finalised in mid-June) a lot of changes need to be adjusted to the agrifood program, on short term as well as long term. One of the lessons we learned during the SE in Central Denmark is the establishment of a food strategy with a steering committee existing of societal partners, business representatives and a representation of the consumers. The inspiration for this action came from a good practice in Central Denmark, where students were involved in a challenge to help solve actual questions from agricultural entrepreneurs on cross-overs between agrifood and high tech. It was inspired by the 'tailor made solutions approach' in the Engage Food East & Engage Food West programs, combined with the triple helix involvement in the Growth Forum. This led us to believe that involving students in actual market challenges could help in both achieving the challenge goals and getting a broader input in the agrifood policy. Besides that, it aims to strengthen the policy of stimulating cross-overs between sectors.

This led to a pilot in Brabant cooperation with Technical University Eindhoven, Wageningen University, Fontys and HAS Den Bosch in the final three months of 2018. In December the students presented 5 demand driven projects forming cross-overs between agrifood and high tech. This leads to the structural implementation of the challenge Innovation Makers Agrofood. Besides case-based product innovation, we also expect cases to lead to policy innovation.

Although the budget for the current Operational Program South is almost used up, we still aim to get some of the projects resulting from this approach into the current OP South. For the long term we expect that some of the learnings from the challenge Innovation Makers Agrifood might lead to adjustments in the agrifood program Brabant en OP South.

We expect this action to contribute to:

- New chain collaborations
- Development of instruments which not only focus on economic development
- Development of instruments in which technology can be an driver for change within the agrifood chain.

2. **Action**

The action focusses on organising and structural implementing the challenge Innovation Makers Agrifood in order to provide a mechanism for case based and demand driven product and policy innovation. The action consists of collecting challenges with farmers, agricultural entrepreneurs and other stakeholders involved in the agricultural environment, assigning challenges to groups of students or startups, organising masterclasses and a hackathon, organising a Disruption Festival and structurally implementing the method.

3. Timeframe

Semester 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collecting challenges with agricultural entrepreneurs. - Assigning the challenges to groups of students. - Organising masterclasses. - Organising hackatons. - Organising the Disruption Festival, where the challenge solutions will be presented.
Semester 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural implementation of the method. - Organising work sessions with policy makers. - Evaluation session with entrepreneurs.
Semester 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection of potential projects for ROP-funding. - Submitting potential projects as a result of the challenges held for the final call of the Operational Program Southern Netherlands 2014-2020.

The action will start at the beginning of phase 2 of the STRING project. Main activities will be finished at the end of December 2019, after which structural implementation commences. The objective is to extend the structural implementation internationally. For the structural implementation funding will be sought in the new Operational Program. We expect however, that the activities of this first round of activities will already lead to new projects and collaborations that can be submitted to the current Operational Program. At the end of 2020 a final call is expected to allocate all final budget in the Operational Program. Most likely projects will be aimed at priority 1B1: Strengthening and widening the open innovation system of the Southern Netherlands in crossovers between the international top clusters and between national and international top clusters with a greater participation of SMEs. We expect a possible eligible project to be about valuating of residual flows and/or datafication.

The planning of the activities consists of the following:

- Week 39: Kick off meeting: meet-up of the challengers and the students, presentation of the challenges & linking of students to the challenges. Goal: 12 entrepreneurs or institutes which provide 15 challenges. These will be linked to at least 50 students.
- Week 41: Masterclass 1: Inspiration on the theme 'Food Future' & start of the innovation process. Goal: all 15 challenges will be inspired by at least 3 experts on the masterclass theme.
- Week 43: Masterclass 2: Inspiration on the theme 'High Tech Farming' & follow-up on the innovation process. Goal: all 15 challenges will be inspired by at least 3 experts on the masterclass theme.
- Week 45: Masterclass 3: Inspiration on the theme 'Food value', pitches of the best options on solving the addressed challenges & formulating goals for the hackaton. Goal: all 15 challenges will be inspired by at least 3 experts on the masterclass theme.
- Week 46: Hackaton: Amplifying the ideas to proof of concept.

Week 48: Catch up: Pitching to the challengers on innovativity and impact. Goal: selection of the most valuable ideas to upgrade them to concrete project proposals. We aim to develop at least 3 concrete proposals of which 2 will be submitted to the new policy instruments.

Week 50: Disruption Festival: Workshops, lectures & investor meetings.

4. Costs

Preparation, selection and organisation: 288 hours/€ 100:	€ 28.800,-
Partner input: 288 hours/ €100:	€ 28.800,-
Masterclasses: 4 x € 5.000:	€ 20.000,-
Hackathon:	€ 10.000,-
External expertise:	€ 40.000,-
Out-of-pocket costs event (venue/speakers/etc.):	€ 62.400,-
Communication: 100 hours/€ 100	€ 10.000,-
Total costs:	€ 200.000,-

The costs will be funded completely from the Innovation Program Agrifood of the province of North-Brabant.

5. Responsibilities

This action is organised by the Brabant region. Project manager is Janny van der Heijden. Partners involved are FME (technical entrepreneurs organisation), LTO Netherlands and ZLTO.

6. Risk factors

- Not enough entrepreneurial challenges can be found
- Not enough students can be found

7. Summary

With this action we want to implement a structural method to make the cross-over between demand driven entrepreneurial needs and disruptive ways to meet this needs. This will lead to product innovation as well as to policy innovation.

Objective → Subobjective → Assets → Effects → Results → Timeframe, cost, responsibility



Appendices

- Appendix 1: List of already started projects in LIB (in Dutch)
- Appendix 2: Short conclusions of Site Visit and Staff Exchanges
- Appendix 3: Report of Stakeholder meeting (in Dutch)

Appendix 1: List of already started projects in LIB (in Dutch)

Goeie Worst: toegevoegde waarde voor varkensvlees met lage CO2 footprint

Ontwikkeling marktconcept Kalf bij de Koe

Melktap in en met de supermarkt: melkveehouder die melk in een melktap gaat verkopen in enkele supermarkten

Omfietsvarkensvlees: waarin varkenshouder en lokale supermarkt samen investeren in duurzame varkenshouderij en eigen verwerking en verkoop (via de supermarkt)

Mobiele slachterij voor varkens

Boer Bas: biologisch moestuinieren met varkens (kringloopsluiting)

Metten is weten: klimaat in de stal bij varkens

Dairylink pilot Boer Guus: marktconcept 'Mijn Melk'

De Smaak van Hier: soort franchise concept voor lokale melk

Appendix 2: Short conclusions of Site Visit and Staff Exchanges

Based on our learning needs and with input from our stakeholders we went on three Knowledge Exchange visits. With our stakeholders we concluded at a recent stakeholder meeting on some shared experiences / lessons learned based on these visits.

Site Visit Castilla y León (February 2018)

- Although almost a year ago, all the stakeholders remembered the authentic taste of the Iberico ham and the visit at the Beher plant. The visit at the Beher location and the presentation of the ham was an complete experience.
- It seemed to us that the local food products and the local culture where completely interlinked to each other.
- The Iberico ham is not a mass produced product, so it is produced for a niche or an added value market. How the extra gainings of this added value is distributed throughout the complete chain is not clear. Also we learned that an integrated chain is very common in Spain. For us it wasn't clear what the position of the farmer was in this Iberico Ham chain.

Staff Exchange Central Denmark Region (March 2018)

- In the good practices we visited there seem to be one or two person(s) who where a real driving force behind the good practice. To us this seemed an important success factor.
- Over-all there was a strong feeling of trust between public and private partnerships. Due to this administrative and bureaucratic procedures where not dominate.
- The good practice of Konsumfisk was a real inspiration: a new collaboration between local harbours who used to be competing now collaborating and using new technologies to find new markets.
- In CDR they developed 'tailor made' solutions: The eastern and western part of the region have a different approach to stimulate the food sector. This is based on difference in use of land and difference in population density. Next to that CDR also developed different methods of financing innovations. Based on the premises that a startup needs a different type of financing then an multinational who is developing a small part of their business.
- CDR has an economic growth forum which consists of the triple helix partners. They have an important role in deciding on the growth strategy of the region (inc. the policy of the food sector). Due to this the implementation of the policy is very applicable and not very susceptible to political capriciousness.

Staff Exchange to Emilia Romagna Region (October 2018)

- The culture of a food tradition, the traditional production of food, the storytelling around the products; it's all overwhelming and impressive. Now and then it elevated almost to an art. Farmers and food producers as artists.
- Food safety and food quality seem to be a basic condition for the production of added value products. Not an USP.
- The focus of the chain is really on the product (e.g. parma ham / parma cheese) and not on the producer (e.g. farmer). In the chain there is a focus on the quality of the product and direct sales (on the farm, or online from the farm).
- The story and history of the product (and the region it's being produced in) are an important part of the story telling part to come up with an added value product.
- A downside of working in extremely conditioned production processes (PDO/PGI) might be the limited space for innovation.

Appendix 3: Report of Stakeholder meeting (in Dutch)

Strategies for regional innovative food clusters (STRING): verslag stakeholderbijeenkomst

Deelnemers: Danielle Aarts (verhinderd), Bas Antonissen (verhinderd), Pieter de Boer, Twan Dirks, Wilbert Egelmeers, Henk Gerbers, Janny van der Heijden, Hendrik Hoeksema, Marjon Krol, Maarten Rooijackers, Annelies Schoenmakers, Ruud van Vessem, Jacob de Vlieg, Geert Wilms

Gespreksleider: Han Swinkels, HS Consultancy

Datum: 23 feb'19

In het kader van het Interreg project zijn in 2018 drie buitenlandse bezoeken gebracht aan partners in Spanje, Denemarken en Italië. Bij elk bezoek zijn naast leden van het projectteam (Provincie Noord-Brabant en ZLTO) enkele stakeholders van beide partijen gevraagd deel te nemen aan het bedrijfsbezoek. Voor deze bijeenkomst zijn alle deelnemers aan de drie buitenlandse bezoeken uitgenodigd. Het betreft stakeholders uit de veehouderijsector, voedselketen en high tech.

Doel

Het doel van de bijeenkomst is het gezamenlijk vaststellen van bevindingen en leerpunten van de drie bedrijfsbezoeken. De leerpunten worden meegenomen in het op te stellen actieplan voor de volgende fase van STRING en mogelijk in andere activiteiten van Provincie Noord-Brabant en ZLTO.

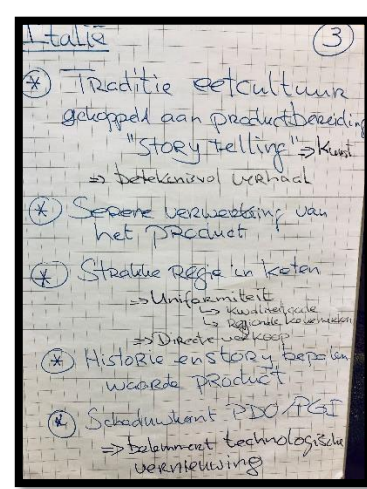
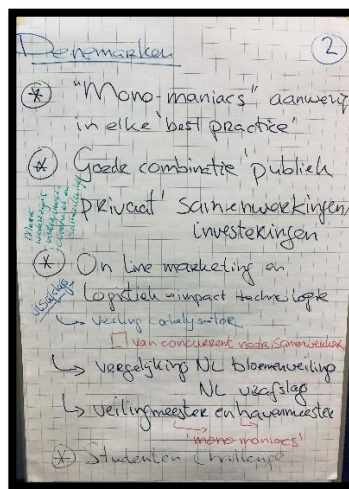
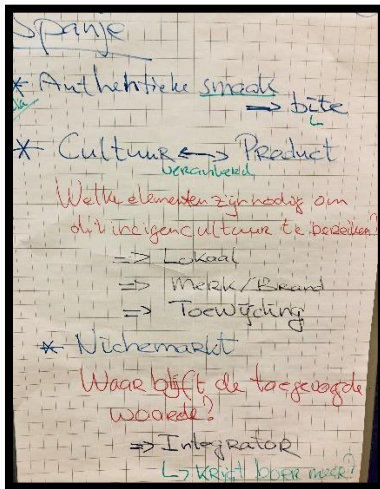
Learning needs

Bij aanvang van STRING zijn de volgende 'learning needs' vastgesteld voor Brabant agrofood:

- 1) Toegevoegde waarde;
- 2) Crossover agrofood en technologie;
- 3) Crossover agrofood en gezondheid.

Terugblik op drie buitenlandse bezoeken

In een presentatie van Pieter de Boer (zie bijlage) wordt teruggeblikt op de bezoeken aan partners in Castilië en Léon (Spanje), Viborg (Denemarken) en Emilia-Romagna (Italië). Volgens een vooraf vastgestelde methode zijn in elke regio enkele 'best practices' bezocht. Tijdens elk bezoek waren ook deelnemers van een deel van de andere partners van STRING aanwezig. Hieronder zijn de bevindingen weergegeven van de bij het betreffende bedrijfsbezoek aanwezige stakeholders.



Castilië en Léon (Noord-West Spanje)

- Opvallend is dat de authentieke smaak van de Iberico ham (product) iedereen is bijgebleven. De smaak kwam naar boven bij elke 'bite' en werd versterkt door de beleving rondom het product;
- Het als het ware verankerd zijn van de lokale cultuur in het product was opvallend. Het roept de vraag op welke elementen nodig zijn om dit naar Brabant agrofood te vertalen. Spontaan worden de elementen 'lokaal', 'Merk/Brand' en 'Toewijding' genoemd;
- De Iberico ham richt zich duidelijk op een nichemarkt, waarbij het onduidelijk hoe de verdeling van de toegevoegde waarde in de keten plaatsvindt. In (deze regio van) Spanje zijn integrators sterk, waarbij het onduidelijk is op welke wijze verrekening met de boer plaatsvindt;

Viborg (Centraal Denemarken)

- In elk van de bezochte 'best practices' waren één of twee drijvende krachten (mono maniacs) aanwezig. De stakeholders beschouwen dit gegeven als een belangrijke succesfactor;
- Opvallend is de sterke 'publiek-private' basis onder de samenwerkingsverbanden en financiering; Deze lijkt te berusten op een onderling vertrouwen tussen publieke en private organisaties, waardoor de administratieve procedures niet gaan overheersen;
- Het meest opvallende voorbeeld is de transformatie van een (bijna) failliete visafslag tot een moderne en winstgevende visveiling. Drijvende krachten zijn de veilingmeester en havenmeester. Voormalige concurrenten werken nu samen en bedienen via online marketing en een uitgekiende logistiek op maat afnemers zoals restauranten, etc. De veiling is de katalysator, wat wij ook kennen bij bijv. de bloemenveiling in Aalsmeer;
- De student challenge is een idee dat al is opgepakt in het actieplan van STRING. Jannie van der Heijden geeft een korte toelichting op de "Student challenge agrofood – hightech".

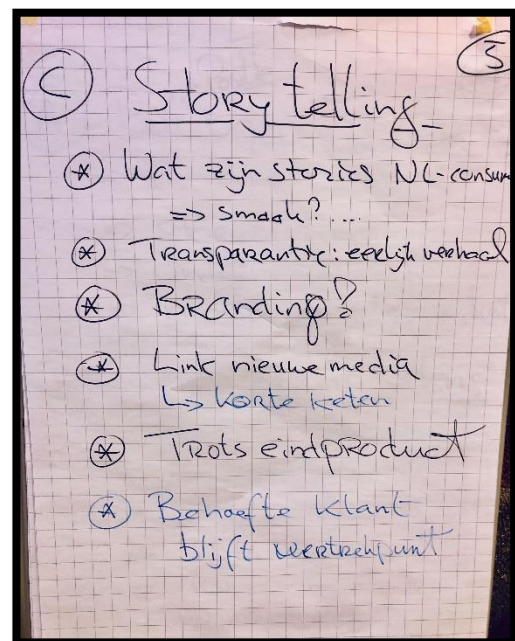
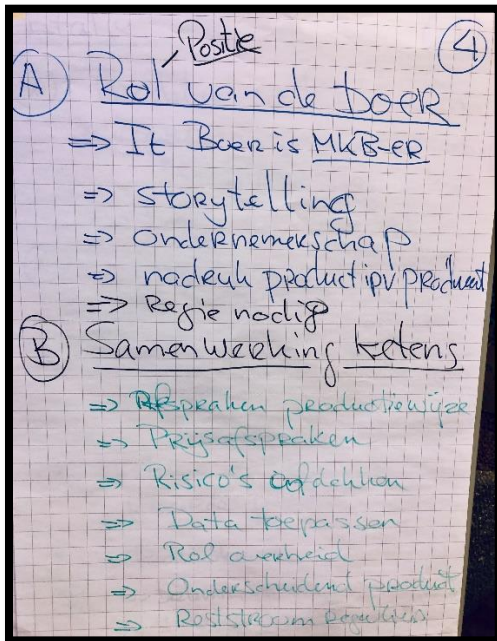
Emilia-Romagna (Noord- Italië)

- Opvallend is de traditionele eetcultuur en de daaraan gekoppelde wijze van productbereiding en verhaal (storytelling) van de Parmaham (product). Een betekenisvol verhaal dat als het ware tot een 'kunst' is verheven. Het bezoek was als beleving compleet met lichtspot en klassieke muziek;
- De 'serene' bereiding en verwerking van het product was illustratief voor de standaard kwaliteit van het product. Voedselveiligheid en voedselkwaliteit is gepositioneerd als 'dissatisfier' en niet als onderdeel van de toegevoegde waarde van het product;
- De regie in de voortbrengingsketen van het product wordt ervaren als 'strak', waarbij de gezamenlijke focus ligt op het product en niet het productieproces (boerderij). Veel aandacht voor uniformiteit (kwaliteitscodes, regionale keurmerk) en directe verkoop (boerderijwinkel en online naar binnen- en buitenland);
- De 'historie' en 'story' zijn bepalend voor de waarde van het product. Dit maakt het lastig om te kopiëren. Geclaimd wordt dat de regio en klimaat (droogproces hammen) hieraan bijdragen. De stakeholders betwijfelen of dit werkelijk zo is?
- Een schaduwkant aan de kwaliteitscodes (PDO, PGI) is dat technologische vernieuwing in het productieproces hierdoor belemmerd wordt. Overigens is er wel degelijk ruimte voor innovaties.

Naast bovenstaande punten zijn aan het eind van elk bedrijfsbezoek nog bevindingen en leerpunten benoemd (zie bijgevoegd document). Opgemerkt wordt dat de de zinsnede 'Lijkt niet erg te passen binnen Brabant,...' (bezoek Spanje) als constatering niet past in deze fase van STRING. Ook zijn andere punten benoemd die meer te maken hebben met het functioneren van de kennisinfrastructuur, instituties en financieringsvormen. Tot slot is opgemerkt dat bij vertaling naar Brabant agrofood het hebben van experimenteerruimte wenselijk is.

Gezamenlijke reflectie

Voorafgaand aan de gezamenlijke reflectie zijn alle deelnemers gevraagd om punten in te brengen (zie bijlage). Het merendeel van de ingebrachte punten is geclusterd naar thema, waarna de bevindingen, leerpunten en mogelijke acties gezamenlijk zijn bediscussieerd.



A. Rol/positie van de boer

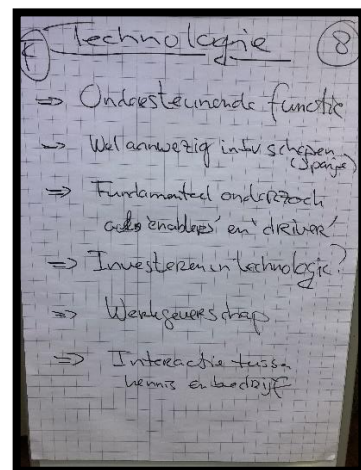
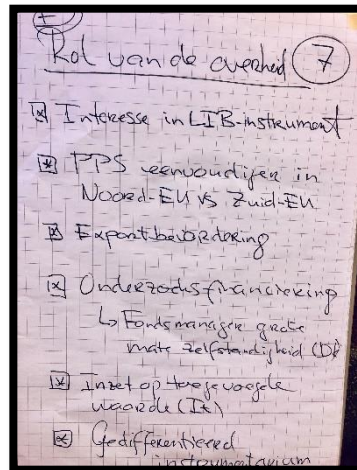
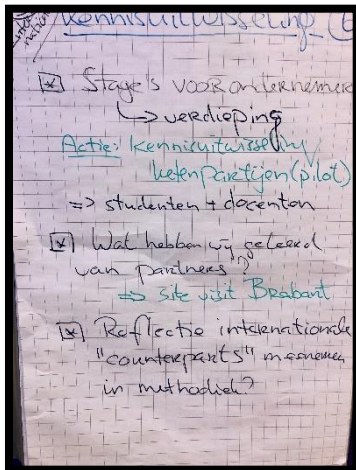
Een rode draad van de bezoeken aan de ‘best practices’ is de vraagtekens omtrent de rol/positie van de boer. Er zijn wel veehouderijbedrijven bezocht in o.a. Spanje en Italië, waarbij opviel dat de boer optrad als ‘story-teller’ van de integratie/keten. Bij de bezochte boeren was het ‘ondernemerschap’ boven ‘vakmanschap’ en positioneerde hij zich als MKB-er (Italië). Dit past bij het beeld dat het product bovengeschikt is aan het productieproces.

B. Samenwerking ketens

Een terugkerend punt bij de ‘best practices’ in de drie landen is de expliciete samenwerking in de keten. Kwaliteitsaspecten van product en productiewijze zijn strak geregeld en binnen (of buiten) de grenzen van mededinging worden ook afspraken gemaakt over prijs en risicobeheersing. Het gebruik van data (informatie) is gemeengoed tussen de verschillende schakels van de keten. De ondersteunende activiteiten van de overheid zijn gericht op samenwerken in ketenverband. Een bindend element in de keten is het *onderscheidend* product, waarbij klaarblijkelijk weinig aandacht wordt besteed aan het verwaarden van de nevenstromen (o.a. vierkantverwaarding).

C. Storytelling

Een gepassioneerd en inhoudelijk kloppend verhaal is ook herkenbaar als rode draad bij de best practices. De stakeholders verschillen van mening over de impact van storytelling op de toegevoegde waarde van het product. Eensluidendheid is er over de behoefte van de klant als vertrekpunt én het belang van het gebruik van social media met name voor korte keten concepten. De vraag wordt ook opgeworpen hoe gevoelig de Nederlandse consument is voor storytelling. Wellicht minder dan in bijv. Spanje en Italië, maar ook in Nederland waarderen bepaalde consumentengroepen een eerlijk en gepassioneerd verhaal van met name de boer.



D. Kennissuitwisseling (internationaal)

De stakeholders hebben geconstateerd dat de 2-daagse bezoeken te kort zijn voor verdieping. Een van de stakeholders geeft als suggestie een uitwisselingsprogramma met stages van agrarische ondernemers voor een langere periode. Marjon Krol licht toe dat een dergelijke actie als pilot al wordt uitgewerkt met partner Emilio-Romagna vooruitlopend op het actieplan STRING. Vanuit de groep komen suggesties om naar boeren ook ketenpartijen en het onderwijs (studenten én docenten) mee te nemen. Ook wordt de vraag gesteld wat wij hebben geleerd van het bezoek van de partners aan de best practices in Brabant agrofood. Aangehaald wordt het bezoek aan het Boerenbondsmuseum in Gemert, dat voor de Roemeense partners heel herkenbaar bleek te zijn. Terugkijkend had ook uit de drie buitenlandse bezoeken meer gehaald kunnen worden door bevindingen en leerpunten te delen bijv. tussen alle ketenpartijen van alle regio's in plaats van alleen de stakeholders van de eigen regio. Een suggestie ter verbetering van de methode.

E. Rol van de overheid

Tijdens het bezoek aan de best practices in Brabant agrofood was er veel interesse in Landbouw Innovatie Brabant (LIB) vanuit de partners. Ook wordt opgemerkt dat 'publiek – privaat' eenvoudiger van opzet is in de regio's van het noorden dan het zuiden van Europa. Terwijl het noorden inzet op het investeren in netwerken zie je in het zuiden nog relatief veel investeringen in instituties. Ook wordt in het zuiden vanuit de overheid geïnvesteerd in exportbevordering en het bewerkstellingen van toegevoegde waarde in strak geregisseerde ketens. In het noorden van Europa is opvallend de zelfstandigheid van de fondsmanager (vertrouwen) bij onderzoeksfinanciering en de verscheidenheid (maatwerk) in het beleidsinstrumentarium voor het ondersteunen van best practices.

F. Technologie

Bij alle best practices heeft technologie een ondersteunende functie is het productieproces en marketing van het product. Een goed voorbeeld is de online marketing van vis in Denemarken. Ook in Spanje werd gebruik gemaakt van technologie bijv. op het schapenbedrijf. Ook is herkenbaar dat fundamenteel en toegepast onderzoek wordt ingezet als ‘driver’ en ‘enabler’ van de best practices. Het is onduidelijk met welk doel technologie wordt ingezet. De best practices in Spanje en Italië kenmerkten zich door veel handenarbeid, waarbij er de mogelijkheid is om via automatisering besparingen te realiseren. Loss van de kleinschaligheid van het concept lijkt ook goed werkgeverschap van invloed te zijn op de keuze van handarbeid. Tot slot valt op dat kennisinstellingen veel interactie hebben met bedrijven mede doordat de functie universiteit, hogeschool en instituut samen deel uitmaken van de regionale kennisinstellingen.

Vervolg

In de volgende fase van STRING worden de leerpunten uit de voorgaande sessies, buitenlandse bezoeken aan de partners en het bedrijfsbezoek in Brabant agrofood vertaald naar een actieplan. Hierop vooruitlopend is al een begin gemaakt met de acties ‘Student challenge agrofood’ en ‘uitwisselingsprogramma Brabant – Emilio-Romagna’. Ook wordt nagedacht over een actie gerelateerd aan ‘start-ups’ (Janny van der Heijden). De aanwezige stakeholders wordt gevraagd de zes bediscussieerde thema’s te rangschikken op basis van prioriteit in het actieplan. In onderstaande tabel is een overzicht gegeven van de uitkomsten van de rangschikking:

Tabel: Prioriteren thema’s voortkomend uit de reflectie van bestpractices bij buitenlandse partners

Thema (prioriteit)	1 ^e prioriteit	2 ^e prioriteit	3 ^e prioriteit
A. Rol/positie boer	3	-	4
B. Ketensamenwerking	4	2	-
C. Storytelling	-	4	2
D. Kennisuitwisseling (internationaal)	4	3	1
E. Rol overheid	-	3	6
F. Technologie	2	1	-

Bij de prioritering valt op dat het thema ‘ketensamenwerking’ hoog scoort, waarbij vaak een relatie wordt gelegd met de thema’s ‘rol/positie van de boer’ en ‘storytelling’. Eenzelfde hoge score zien we ook bij het thema ‘kennisuitwisseling’. Hoewel het thema ‘rol van de overheid’ door geen van de stakeholders vaak genoemd wordt staat het wel als tweede of derde genoemd bij de prioritaire thema’s ‘ketensamenwerking’ en ‘kennisuitwisseling’. Het thema ‘technologie’ wordt wel genoemd, zij het niet direct in relatie met één van de andere thema’s.

(Boxtel, 22 februari 2019)

Bijlage: Overzicht alle ingebrachte punten van deelnemers voor gezamenlijke reflectie

A. Rol/positie van de boer	
- Boer als storyteller: slager/ melkveehouder/ varkenshouder?	- Rol van de boer erg onderbelicht. Toeval? Niet relevant in de keten? De boer niet relevant voor het merk?
- Positie van de boer	- Rol van de boer
- Vrijheid in ondernemerschap	
B. Ketensamenwerking	
- Rol primaire sector in de keten t.a.v. 1) marge toegevoegde waarde en 2) storytelling/traditie	- Successen lijken te komen van activiteiten die terugredeneren vanuit de markt/de klant/de behoefte [niet vanuit de producent/ de boer]
- Hoe belangrijk is een constante productkwaliteit?	- Gestructureerde ras/voer/prijs: keten parmaham
- Zoeken naar meerwaarde voor consumenten. Niet: veiligheid/efficiëntie. Wel: kwaliteit/duurzaamheid	- Samenwerking in ketens stimuleren (i.p.v. concurrentie). Voorbeeld visveiling toepassen op varkensbedrijven → ketens vormen
- Integratie (korte) keten businessmodellen en effectieve marketing (storytelling) gericht op beleving is haalbaar en mogelijk innovatiemodel	- Welk bedrijfs- (of keten)model past bij de innovatie die we nodig hebben? Hoe richten we dit in?
- De rol van samenwerking (zie Denemarken)	- We kregen geen inzicht in verdien Capaciteiten per schakel?
- Waarde verdeling in de keten	-
C. Storytelling	
- Welke (hi)stories hebben wij?	- Storytelling gebruiken om meerwaarde te creëren voor keten en boer
- Zoektocht naar waardevolle, traditionale gerechten → nieuw jasje!	- Nagaan wat de Nederlandse consument aanspreekt en aanzet tot ander koopgedrag / andere vraag naar producten
- Wat is de story die wij in Brabant willen vertellen?	- Storytelling gebruiken: boer is onderdeel van het verhaal
D. Kennisuitwisseling (internationaal)	
- Hoe kom je van enthousiaste (1 ^e) indrukken opgedaan tijdens (globaal) marktbezoek naar werkelijke insights en learnings o.b.v. meer compleet beeld?	- Hoe kan ik mijn opgedane learnings efficiënt verspreiden in mijn eigen Brabantse netwerk?
- Hoe innoveren we een voedseltraditie? → landschap/regio verwaarden → kennis toepassen/ kennis delen	- Innovatie heeft vaak een proces kant, vaak meer dan een product kant.
- Hoe komen we tot internationale kennisuitwisseling om de positie van BV Nederland te versterken zonder deze te verzwakken? Ofwel, hoe maken we onszelf sterker zonder de concurrent sterker te maken?	- Hoe kom je van incidentele uitwisseling tussen Europese regio's naar structurele verbinding van deze regio's op de thema's die er toe doen/
- Wat hebben we geleerd van de andere partners?	- Niet kopiëren, maar selectief toepassen
- Denemarken: meer gericht op tech innovatiemodellen vs Italië/ Spanje: meer traditioneel ondersteund door storytelling en beleving	- Ondernemer met consument onderzoek uitvoeren hoe een concept werkt
- Hoe betrek je beroepsonderwijs?	- Kennisuitwisseling tussen en op bedrijven (stage)
E. Rol van de overheid	
- Rol overheid bij innovaties? Wat werkte?	- Samenwerking publiek - privaat
- Willen we hier ook een meer op vertrouwen gebaseerd systeem? Zo ja, is dat haalbaar?	- Gedifferentieerde ondersteuning (middelen); ook voor experimenten
F. Technologie	
- Stimuleren digitalisering en online marketing binnen ketens in agrofood	- Beleving en inzet arbeidskrachten / uurtarieven i.r.t. inzetten high tech
- High Tech? Of, juist Low Tech?	
Overige	
- Wat is de charme van modern?	