



International project funded by FACCE-JPI and the Belmont forum builds community to meet future food challenges

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Interview with Professor Katrien Termeer and Dr Kasper Kok (Wageningen UR)

“Improving the food system is not only a technical issue, but also a demanding matter of governance. Governance is key for dealing with all current and future challenges”, said Katrien Termeer at the first workshop of the Food System Governance, Food Security and Land Use in Southern Africa (SAFGOV) project. This project is set up to build a community of researchers closely linked to stakeholders across public and private organisations to tackle future food challenges. It is funded in the frame of FACCE-JPI / Belmont Forum.

The role of private companies and other institutions is of growing importance in food security and land use issues. These include major ‘up-stream’ actors in the food system, including those engaged in food processing, marketing, intra-regional trading, and the food aid sectors. All are ultimately influenced by consumers, and therefore largely controlling demand. The SAFGOV project aims to improve the Southern African food system activities and enterprises to enhance food security and land use outcomes in the face of future challenges.

Wageningen University contribution

‘My research contrives of developing cognitive models with stakeholders, to get a better insight into complex systems, like the Food System’, says Kasper Kok, assistant professor at Wageningen University, who is also involved in this two-year community building project. ‘The SAFGOV project makes an interesting case study, not specifically for Africa, as it can be applied to other places in the world as well.’

‘The Wageningen University contribution in this project is very small, as there is no funding available for our work in this project. What we offer therefore is an in-kind contribution to the project, but without any funds, it is never easy to participate in an interesting project. What it does yield, however, is a large amount of new and useful contacts, who can help further this topic and my research’, according to Kok. Termeer adds: ‘We see this as a forerunner project and an investment for future collaborations and projects on this topic in which we hope to play a bigger part as a paid participant’.

SAFGOV Project

In the Food System all stakeholders fulfil a role, and the way in which they operate, is mediated by interactions with each other and with both state structures (e.g. SADC and national policies). In essence, governance arrangements among these actors determine how these interactions play out, but the situation is complex and these arrangements are poorly understood. The SAFGOV project draws on research skills from South Africa, UK, US and the Netherlands from which the community will be able to co-design and jointly undertake research on (i) the effectiveness and adaptiveness of food system governance arrangements for food security; and (ii) food systems’ governance as driver of land use change and implications for associated ecosystem services.

The Belmont Forum/ FACCE-JPI funding

Understanding the dynamic interactions between food security and land use change, a challenge confronting nearly all continents and of paramount interest to policy-making, science and society, requires a global strategic approach and cooperation between national research programmes. To this end, the Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE – JPI) works together with the Belmont Forum (The international group of funding agencies working on knowledge to support human action and adaptation to global environmental change). In 2013, they launched a joint call for short term community building projects, in which the focus is on networking, capacity building, co-design of research questions and co-building of methodologies for integrated research, spatial scale interaction analysis, knowledge appropriation by key users, and more. Three short-term exploratory projects have been funded to build communities that bring on board various disciplines and stakeholder groups around a common object of research.

More on SAFGOV

Food System Governance, Food Security and Land Use in Southern Africa - SAFGOV

<https://www.igfagcr.org/funded-projects/food-system-governance-food-security-and-land-use-southern-africa-safgov>

FACCE-JPI

The Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) brings together 21 countries that are committed to building an integrated European Research Area addressing the interconnected challenges of sustainable agriculture, food security and impacts of climate change. FACCE-JPI provides and steers research to support sustainable agricultural production and economic growth, to contribute to a European bio-based economy, while maintaining and restoring ecosystem services under current and future climate change.



Joint Programming contact person: Dr Christine Bunthof

Wageningen University and Research Centre | Wageningen International

Droevendaalsesteeg 4 | 6708 PB Wageningen | The Netherlands

T +31 317 480996 | E christine.bunthof@wur.nl

www.jointprogramming.nl