

# Promoting Farmer Entrepreneurship



Summary  
Agri-ProFocus  
Strategic Plan 2009-2012



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***'In a contract I try to get as much as possible and to remain as unchanged as possible. In any partnership I throw in my lot today without knowing where I will be tomorrow.'*** Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy

## Introduction

During 2008 the Agri-ProFocus partnership has developed its strategy for the period 2009-2012. In the document before you the partnership presents a summary of this new strategy. In the coming years Agri-ProFocus will build on the lessons of the first phase, and take on the challenge of starting from producer organisation (PO) demand and country ownership, while pro-actively developing a joint agenda among the membership. The quote above stimulates the Agri-ProFocus network to do this in a transparent, flexible and committed way.

## The identity of Agri-ProFocus

Agri-ProFocus, founded in March 2005, is a partnership of Dutch donor agencies, credit institutions, fair trade organisations, training and knowledge institutions, and companies. The aim of Agri-ProFocus is provide more and better support to producer organisations in developing farmer entrepreneurship. The partnership has grown to 26 members from the original 19 and collaborates closely with the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV).

The Agri-ProFocus partnership stands for new ventures, new dynamics and for organising development cooperation beyond the boundaries of individual organisations. Leading value of the network is that support is based on the demand articulated by farmer led POs. In that sense Agri-ProFocus is not another new development organisation, but a practical implementation tool of and for its members.

## Track record

At the end of 2005 DGIS approved the Agri-ProFocus strategic plan 2005-2008 for 1 million Euros. Since then member organisations have pooled human and financial resources for the implementation of PO support programmes and for various learning events and follow-up activities.

In total 18 trajectories have been facilitated and over 20 expert meetings organised on a variety of issues and themes regarding POs and agricultural development. What stands out in Agri-ProFocus' track record is a different way of working, namely sustainable joint support programmes instead of isolated individual actions.

### Examples Agri-ProFocus Activities 2005 – 2008

Activity	Results
India, IIMF women dairy producers (Agriterra, Oikocredit, Rabobank)	Coordinated support trajectory resulting in investments and grants
Uganda, weaving the oil seed web around UOSPA (SNV, WUR, Agriterra)	Improved chain governance, action research and PO capacity building
Ethiopia, APELA Learning Alliance (ICCO, SNV, KIT, Cordaid, Agriterra)	Action - learning for 16 farmer organisations and their service providers
Mali & Burkina Faso, Organic cotton (ICCO, SNV, KIT, AKO)	Joint trade business planning, PO capacity building, and training of 4000 farmers
Expert meeting on POs and rural finance (Rabobank Foundation, Terrafina, Oikocredit)	Exchange between 60 professionals discussing solutions on farmer access to financial services
World Development Report Review (Wageningen UR, ICCO, Oxfam Novib)	Dialogue between 44 professionals contributing to DGIS/LNV policy discussions

## Relevance and innovative perspective

In 2007 a global awareness emerged that agriculture has too often been overlooked as a catalyst for economic development and poverty reduction. The worldwide food crisis marks a global sense of urgency to take short- and long-term sustainable measures. In the Netherlands DGIS and LNV presented a joint policy paper on "Agriculture, Rural Entrepreneurship and Food Security". For the implementation of the proposed intervention areas an additional sum of at least 50 million Euro has been earmarked.

It is also increasingly recognised that producer organisations are essential for market-led agricultural development and producer competitiveness. In supporting POs the Agri-ProFocus network needs to take into account their diversity and hence the different roles they play, and to be sensitive to contextual differences like production environment and asset position that determine how farmers (are able to) organise themselves.

Recently there has been a strong call –from the Accra Agenda for Action as well as the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation - for more collaboration and less segregation among development cooperation actors. Agri-ProFocus is responding to this by providing a network for joint action and learning.

## Strategy and programme 2009 - 2012

It is within the above mentioned international and Dutch contexts that the Agri-ProFocus partnership positions its activities. The box below summarizes Agri-ProFocus' main strategic choices (and changes) for the next four years as compared to the previous period.

<b>Agri-ProFocus Strategy: Choices and Changes</b>		
<b>2005 – 2008</b>		<b>2009 – 2012</b>
Strengthening POs	→	Promoting farmer entrepreneurship through enhancement of PO capacity
Project based trajectories	→	Country driven programmatic approach
Knowledge and information exchange	→	Learning and innovation at member- and PO-level
Gradual increasing network approach	→	Intensification of member commitment
Predominantly NGO, research network	→	Stronger private sector involvement

The overall goal of Agri-ProFocus is "promotion of farmer entrepreneurship" through enhancing the capacity of POs. The next phase will allow the partnership to build solid, transparent and action-oriented programmes at country level towards this goal. To do so in a coherent and effective way the Agri-ProFocus network will link to and support unfolding dynamics at country level with regards to agricultural policy dialogues, national and local priority setting, and allocation of resources.

For the period 2009 – 2012 the Agri-ProFocus partnership has fine-tuned its thematic focus to include: value chain development, access to financial services and products and sustainable food production. Respect for gender balance is a key criterion for all three themes. Learning and innovation will be linked to joint country programmes and trajectories, and hence to producer organisations' demand. The learning agenda will include practical topics that will enhance the knowledge of producer organisations and Agri-ProFocus network professionals alike.

## Institutional collaboration

Agri-ProFocus' joint entrepreneurial programmes are essentially about matching demand from POs with supply from within the network. Success of collaboration depends on the explicit commitment of the member organisations to the partnership goals: to organise demand-oriented support services and infrastructure to POs beyond the limits of their individual organisations. This will mean a break with fragmented support. DGIS, LNV and the Royal Netherlands' embassies can play an important role in the Agri-ProFocus country programme approach. Close collaboration with the embassies will also assure the coordination and alignment with the delegations of the European Commission.

Regarding Southern partners, links with regional and national PO federations will be intensified through the membership. This will not happen in isolation, but with the objective to link PO support at different intervention levels and thus facilitate the inclusion of farmers' experiences and realities in the national and international debates on sustainable food production and global trade.

<b>Agri-ProFocus 2009–2012 in a nutshell</b>	
<p><b>Vision</b> Powerful POs are crucial actors in agricultural economic development, strengthening of democracy and as such key to poverty reduction and liveable rural areas. Cooperation among Agri-ProFocus members is an effective instrument to support POs in fulfilling their role.</p> <p><b>Thematic focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Value chain development</li> <li>➤ Access to financial services</li> <li>➤ Sustainable food production</li> </ul> <p><b>Geographical focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ PO demand through members world wide</li> <li>➤ Country pilots in Africa</li> </ul> <p><b>Role Agri-ProFocus support office</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Independent broker and facilitation capacity</li> <li>➤ Clear overview of lessons learned</li> <li>➤ Effective linkages within the network and private sector</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mission</b> Effective cooperation between Agri-ProFocus members and partners which provides coherent and demand-driven support to enhance the capacity of producer organisations in developing farmer entrepreneurship within the context of poverty reduction</p> <p><b>Goal/purpose</b> Development of entrepreneurship among farmers through the enhancement of PO capacity</p> <p><b>Result areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increased joint agricultural entrepreneurship programmes</li> <li>➤ Improved support to POs by members</li> </ul> <p><b>Expected outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 3 - 5 country programmes</li> <li>➤ 15 (thematic / sub-sectoral) trajectories</li> <li>➤ Lessons and innovations: through events, publications, joint learning and platform for debate</li> </ul>

## Performance and internal organisation

The Agri-ProFocus partnership defines success at two levels:

- Under its direct 'span of control': activities and output, i.e. quality and quantity of joint programmes and learning & innovation
- Outside its direct 'span of control': effectiveness and impact, i.e. enhanced PO capacity for farmer entrepreneurship.

For the first level Agri-ProFocus has already established monitoring protocols and a database with information on general PO support by its members. In 2009 the Agri-ProFocus network will add tools for accountability and learning.

The network is facilitated by a support office consisting of 6 staff: director, 3 process facilitators, a management/project assistant, and one trainee. For the running costs of the Agri-ProFocus support office an average annual budget of 680.000 Euro is foreseen, to be financed by both member contributions and DGIS.

## Member Organisations Agri-ProFocus

	Aequor		KIT
	Agriterra		Maastricht School of Management
	Agro Eco		Oikocredit
	AgroFair		Oxfam Novib
	Agromisa		ProFound
	CIDIN		PTC+
	Cordaid		PUM
	ETC Foundation		Rabobank Foundation
	Fair Trade Original		Rijk Zwaan
	Heifer Nederland		SNV
	Hivos		Solidaridad
	ICCO		Van Hall Larenstein
	ILEIA		Wageningen University