

Knowledge and Innovation

'Innovation throughout the agro chain'



Knowledge and Innovation

'Innovation throughout the agro chain'

Fact sheet from the portfolio of the department of Trade and Industry version January 2007

Status

The ministry aims at strengthening the self organising abilities of companies and sectors and their collaboration with knowledge institutes. The ministry offers assistance on formulating the knowledge and innovation agendas. Between the departments more and more coalitions are formed in order to achieve the policy goals for innovation.

Facts and figures

- Phase 1 of the Food and Nutrition programme is granted 33 million euro for the Wageningen Centre for Food Science.
- In June 2006, the Ministry's Consumer Platform discussed the topic 'food spill'.

Period

Ongoing. Extra impulse 2004-2007.

Parties involved

Trade & Industry, Department of Knowledge, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the agribusiness sector, the Innovation Platform, intermediary organisations such as the Agro Chain Knowledge Foundation (AKK), TransForum Agro&Groen and Wageningen UR.

More information

Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality
Department of Trade and Industry
Helmy van Erp
telephone +31 (0)70 378 48 93
e-mail w.e.van.erp@minlnv.nl



agriculture, nature
and food quality

Knowledge and Innovation focuses on the successful innovation of products, processes, services and new forms of organisation throughout the whole of the agro chain. Above all, this is a task for the business sector. Trade & Industry stimulates and facilitates initiatives with the aid of excellent contacts in the private sector, the knowledge infrastructure and the government.

Context

Knowledge and innovation serve to strengthen the (international) competitiveness of agribusinesses. The government provides ample funding to encourage businesses to acquire knowledge and to concentrate on innovation. Much of this government funding is issued via the budget of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ). Particular attention is devoted to the theme of Flowers & Food (horticulture and the food industry). From a political point of view this is the perfect time to develop new knowledge and innovation policy. Trade & Industry spots significant new developments, places them on the agenda and also finances programmes that introduce sustainable chain innovation throughout the agro sector.

Effects

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) directors of three departments (including Trade and Industry) now confer on innovation with a view to improve organisational aspects. The parties involved are more aware of the latest developments and topics are aligned and placed on the agenda. Trade & Industry promotes and supports the implementation of innovative concepts throughout the agro chain - as can be seen in the Agrologistics Platform, Biobased Economy, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Chains Co-Innovation projects.

Particular aspects

Stakeholders in the business sector have filled ambitious knowledge and innovation agendas. The Dutch government supports the Centre for Food Science in Wageningen with 33 million euro. The horticultural sector elaborates two business plans. A consortium for the reduction of food spill is founded.

Challenges

It is essential that the SME sector should be involved in the development of knowledge and innovation. Yet limited manpower and inadequate organisation can lead to a lack of investment. There is also the risk that companies will consider the submission of proposals too time-consuming given the administrative aspects involved. Groups working on innovation that falls outside the areas covered by the key objectives may miss the boat. Trade & Industry is there to ensure that the available funding is distributed as effectively as possible.

Compatibility with Ministry policy

The Ministry is committed to formulating and implementing more coherent and effective policy on knowledge and innovation for the agro chain as a whole, from suppliers of raw materials to the food industry (The choice for agriculture, 2005). Trade & Industry has a similar objective: the department identifies and stimulates innovative developments and places them on the agenda.

Benefits

A leading position in the international field of knowledge and innovation is clearly to the advantage of both trade and industry. The business sector itself is working on innovation in line with the principles of the *Andere Overheid* (Modernising Government) agenda.