

New - ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS): Explore value chain analysis and upgrading in the broader context of agrifood systems transformation!



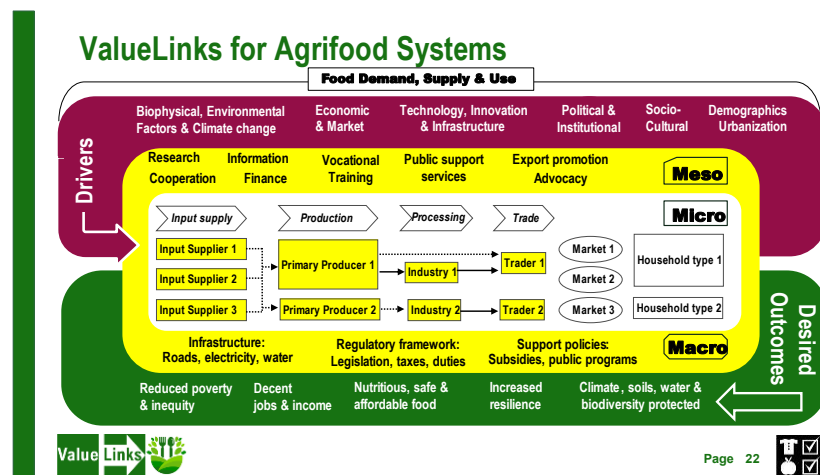
The transformation of agrifood systems is becoming increasingly important as an approach to international development cooperation aiming at supplying food in sufficient quantity and quality within planetary boundaries, with the least possible use of resources and in compliance with a human rights-based approach. In this sense, the term “transformation” goes far beyond “development” in the traditional sense, insofar as it is a fundamental, structural change in which the global agreements on climate protection, water and biodiversity set the strategic direction. It is this context in which we are now placing the action-oriented methodology VL4AFS that provides the framework for a systemic approach to transforming agrifood systems with a value chain perspective.

The new training concept “ValueLinks for Agrifood Systems (VL4AFS)” differs substantially from the classic ValueLinks 2.0 methodology and is almost equivalent to a new version of ValueLinks.

Focus on agrifood systems: The methodology is geared towards agrifood systems, of which value chains are just one part. Food systems are defined by regional boundaries, the largest entity being an entire country. However, subnational regions or large cities and their surroundings are more useful units of analysis and action. While agro-based value chains form an essential part of the food system, crosscutting social and ecological issues are of similarly great importance.

Nutrition perspective: A key difference to the classic value chain approach is the extension of the chain to include consumer groups/households. The types of food consumed, their nutritional value and degree of processing determine the “food baskets” of different groups. Food baskets link the different consumer groups to the respective food value chains. Economic development is specifically linked to the reduction of hunger and malnutrition and the improvement of public health.

Multichain perspective: Food value chains are interconnected, because they often share the same operators in the production, processing, and trade stages of the chain. This means that important types of food enterprises deserve particular attention such as industrial food processing companies, supermarkets or



fast-food outlets. Another aspect is the competition between different chains for the same natural resources, labor and capital.

Spatial perspectives: Both production and consumption take place at specific locations that are characterized by their ecological foundation, ecosystem and biodiversity, the conditions of infrastructure and the types of settlement. The spatial perspective and landscape approach cuts across value chains and thus needs its own analytical tools.

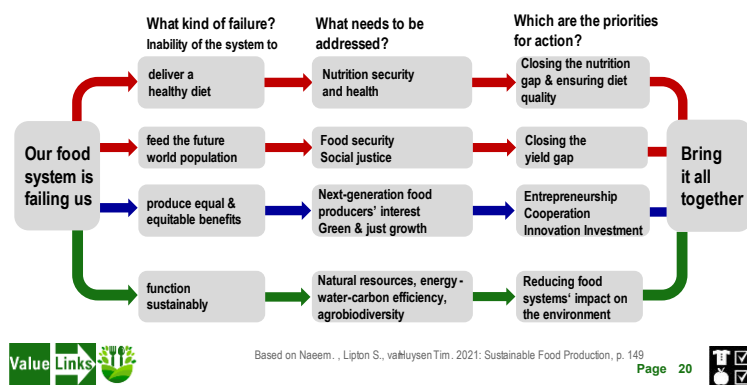
Transformation as an ongoing process: The process of agrifood systems transformation is in full swing, driven by global warming, technological and economic change, by policies, population growth and urbanization. The change in the food system is determined by external factors like mentioned above leading to organizational and technical changes in the agrifood system and its specific food chains.

Strategic considerations: Strategic considerations refer to the AFS in the first place. The starting point are the key drivers of AFS transformation in general and their implications for value chains and landscapes in particular. Both are subjects of AFS analyses.

Change agents: Innovators engaging in transformative initiatives are the champions in transformation processes. These can be individual enterprises, initiatives at specific locations or collective activities within value chains as well as government agencies, especially public research institutes.

Transformative action: Initiatives and actions are “transformative” if they contribute to sustainability. Actors who drive such activities forward are the decisive change agents. Development agencies and policymakers should support existing transformative initiatives. They can also help to create new ones provided they can build on explicit interests and are often part of transformative initiatives.

Divergent narratives on agrifood systems ...



VL4AFS training seminars

VL4AFS training seminars are aiming at experienced public and private sector professionals who are involved in designing innovative transformation approaches for agrifood systems.

With a duration of 4.5 days, they allow a comprehensive introduction to the transformation agenda and the exemplary application to own case studies from the context of the seminar participants.