

THE NETHERLANDS: SERVING SELF-INTEREST OVER AFRICAN FARMERS

In 2010, the Netherlands development [aid policy](#) officially shifted its focus from social development to economics and trade, with growing support given to private sector-led initiatives. As the world's second largest exporter of agricultural products, the Netherlands emphasizes both food security and water as priority development areas to form bridges with the corporate "Dutch expertise." This supports a model of industrial and market-driven development and stimulates agribusiness investments that threaten farmers' long-term access to land and natural resources.

Between 2011 and 2015, the Dutch development bank FMO invested [€700 million](#) in agribusiness projects, including large-scale operations that conflicted with land rights of local communities.



→ **Dutch international aid supports the expansion of agribusinesses.** For 15 years, the Dutch Private Sector Investment (PSI) program and its forerunner, the PSOM (Programma Samenwerking Opkomende Markten), have allocated grants to incentivize businesses' investments in developing countries. [Over 60 percent](#) of the PSI/PSOM funds have gone to the agribusiness sector. The Dutch development bank FMO, which receives 51 percent of its funding from the government, also invests in agribusiness companies operating in developing countries. FMO's portfolio of investments in agribusiness comprises several problematic projects including Addax Bioenergy's 20,000-hectare sugar cane plantation in Sierra Leone. Addax [failed](#) to properly compensate displaced villagers and comply with its promise to contribute to local development by providing jobs and social services. In 2015, FMO provided \$15 million to support the activities of the London-based firm New Forests Company in [Tanzania](#) and [Uganda](#) despite [reports](#) that the company's carbon offset tree plantation project led to the eviction of over 22,000 Ugandan villagers from their land.

→ **Financing public-private partnerships and multilateral funds to support large-scale, industrialized agriculture.** The Netherlands supports the [Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund](#) (\$25 million), the [Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor](#) (\$10 million), and the G8's [New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition](#) (mainly financing global "enabling actions"). These initiatives aim to increase private investments in Africa's agriculture through partnerships with, and financing of, agroindustry and agrochemical companies.

→ **The Netherlands promotes African smallholders' adoption of patented seeds.** The Dutch have donated \$11.5 million to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa's [seed program](#) to expand the production and distribution of so-called "improved" varieties of seed. In 2014, Uganda adapted its plant variety bill following a Dutch-funded value chain development program, which highlighted the need to protect exporters' breeder rights to [introduce Dutch seed potatoes in the country](#). The Dutch also finance the World Bank's [Enabling the Business of Agriculture](#) (EBA) initiative, an agribusiness index project that notably promotes reforms to privatize developing countries' seed systems. The push to introduce plant variety and intellectual property rights laws may criminalize the traditional saving, use, and exchange of seed varieties that farmers rely on for the supply and breeding of adapted local varieties while making farmers dependent on commercial seeds.

For more information, read the Oakland Institute's report: [The Unholy Alliance, Five Western Donors Shape a Pro-Corporate Agenda for African Agriculture](#).