

Transforming Sectors

How to improve direction and practice in the transformation of agro-food sectors

*Yeray Saavedra Gonzalez
and Walter S. de Boef (editors)*



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A group of advisors working at Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI) in agrifood sector transformation undertook a knowledge project on sector transformation. This book, which we have called “Transforming Sectors”, is the outcome of that knowledge project. It brings together different perspectives on sector transformation frameworks, strategies and practices in several sector programmes (horticulture, livestock and dairy, fisheries and seed).

We engaged in a process of co-creation in the following four analytical sectoral perspectives: (i) governing sector transformation; (ii) managing for sustainable impact; (iii) inclusion; and (iv) environment and climate change.

For each of these we gained insights and documented reflections. This resulted in insights into sectoral transformation perspectives; the process also allowed for an iterative joint reflection, bringing together deeper insights in sector transformation. This was not done in a singular way, but by informing and reinforcing between the four perspectives.

We started by developing an historic overview, thus gaining understanding of how current directions and practice in sector transformation are a result of a process of several stages. Afterwards, we developed for each of the four perspectives a framework to analyze sector transformation practice.

As the selection of these four perspectives was based on what WCDI considered to be understudied drivers with a profound impact on sectors and food systems, we made sure that as a whole the cases we studied encompassed a wide variety of sector objectives, functions, and stakeholders in three continents.

This provided a foundation for the analysis done across the four perspectives. The concluding step of the knowledge project and this publication brought the reflection and the insights and reflections on using the four perspectives together.

Based on this synthesis, we formulated a set of principles for advancing and providing direction to processes of sector transformation. In an effort to bring those principles together, and being inspired by the doughnut model for sustainable development, we combined social justice and planetary health in an emergent food system framework in which agro-food sectors are regenerative and distributive. A consequence is that ‘food security and nutrition’ is no longer positioned as central outcome but as one of the multiple outcomes of the transformation of food systems and its agro-food sectors.

The publication concludes with the elaboration of a set of next steps in which the WCDI team working in various programmes on sector transformation will engage, particularly in further promoting the use of the new insights and reflections gained in this knowledge project, together with our colleagues and partners, particularly in the Global South.