

FAQ:

What is the Food Connection Challenge and why is it organized?

The Food Connection Challenge is organized with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture. It is organized to solve post-harvest losses on company level through the development of innovative ideas. The challenge is open for Nigerian or Beninese SMEs that are active in the agri/food sector. The participants benefit from workshops, training sessions, innovation jams and remote coaching to improve their ideas and turn them into a business plan that is ready to be implemented. The winner of the challenge will receive matching funding from the Postharvest Network to realize their plans, up to a maximum of €20,000.

What do you mean with innovative ideas for post-harvest losses?

With the Food Connection Challenge we aim to develop innovative ideas into steady solutions to post-harvest losses that can be implemented with a sound business case. With innovative ideas we mean ideas that are relatively new to the local context and that have the potential to be developed into solutions that can be replicated by other companies. Those ideas don't need to be fully developed – that's what the Food Connection Challenge is for!

You say the idea needs to be innovative. Does that mean my idea for a solution have to high-tech or even tech-based?

No, your idea for a solution can be high-tech but does not have to be. It has to be innovative to the local context. That means that your solution can involve a low-tech product (like a plastic silo for example), or a high-tech product (like a solar-powered cooler). But it may also consist of a more common product but with an innovative business model (such as a rental system for plastic crates). Finally, it can also be aimed at improving communication in order to reduce post-harvest-losses (like an app that connects stakeholders).

Although my company suffers from clear post-harvest losses, I have not identified a clear solution yet. Can I join?

Yes, an idea of the potential solution is enough. During the Food Connection Challenge, you will be helped to develop the idea into a solution that can be implemented with a sound business case.

My idea for a solution is still very immature. Can I join?

Yes. The Food Connection Challenge will help you mature your solution, ideally up to the point that it is investment-ready.

My company does not produce food itself, but is active as a distributor / shipper / packager / market vendor / intermediary / ICT company / any other company providing services in the value chain. Can I join the challenge?

Yes, you are, as long as the solutions you are providing are aimed at reducing post-harvest losses in a food value chain.

We want to set up a business, but we are not operating yet. Can I join?

No, only companies can join that have been operating for a minimum of two years and have a turnover of at least €5,000 (about 2,200,000 NGN or 3,200,000 XOF) annually.

I run an agribusiness and I want to join the challenge together with another company or organization. Can we apply as a duo?

Yes, you can apply in partnership. Working like this might improve the quality of the solution. However only one person can physically join the events, on behalf of the partnership.

I don't work for a private business but an NGO. Can I join?

No, we focus on Small or Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) only. However, SMEs that are affiliated to NGOs are eligible to join.

Our company suffers from post-harvest losses, but we grow non-food crops (tobacco / cotton / rubber, etc.). Can I join?

No, the Food Connection Challenge is only open for companies active in the agri-food sector that focus on food for the local market.

We don't suffer from post-harvest losses ourselves, but have a business that aims to solve the post-harvest losses of others. Can I join?

Yes, you can. The Food Connection Challenge is open for both companies that actually suffer from post-harvest losses, as to companies that provide solutions to post-harvest losses.

I took part in other innovation challenges but I am still looking to implement my solutions. Can I join?

Yes, you can. However, we select only companies that have the ambition to implement the solution as soon as possible.

How comes the Food Connection Challenge is focused on both Nigeria and Benin? Do I have to go to both countries?

No, the Food Connection Challenge is operational simultaneously in Nigeria and Benin, but two different editions are organized in those countries. The Nigerian participants will join the Nigerian edition and the Beninese participants the challenge in Benin.

The events of the Food Connection Challenge Nigeria take place in Ibadan or Lagos, but my business is located far away from those places. Can I join the challenge?

Yes, that is possible. However, a limited contribution to travel costs - based upon short distance travel by car - is available to participants. If your travel costs are higher, or in case you need an overnight stay to reach the events, these costs would be on the participants.

The prize money has a maximum value of €20,000. Does the winner receive this money in cash?

No, the prize money will be paid in the form of a Postharvest Network voucher. This voucher can be spent for implementing the solution. As a result, this system guarantees that the money will solely be spent on (implementing) the solution. If implementing the solution does not require the full amount, the value of the voucher will be adjusted to what is actually needed for the solution.