



Access to Seeds Foundation

Strategy and Operational Plan

Access to Seeds Foundation

2014-2016

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16 April 2014

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1. Background

The Access to Seeds Index (ATSI) is a biennial ranking, measuring the performance of the world's leading seed companies with respect to their efforts enhancing the degree by which smallholder farmers in developing countries benefit from their knowledge, technologies, varieties and seeds. The ATSI draws its inspiration from the Access to Medicine Index (ATMI) that since 2008 biennially measures and compares the activities of pharmaceutical companies to improve access to medication in the developing world.

The Dutch government requested the Access to Medicine Foundation (ATMF) in 2011 to co-ordinate the investigation into the feasibility of the ATSI. For this purpose the Access to Seeds Foundation (ATSF) was founded. The ATSF is fully independent from the ATMF but through links in the governance and by sharing the same office in Haarlem, each Index can learn from each others' experience. The feasibility study on the ATSI took place in 2012. Stakeholders in and around the seed industry were consulted. Based on the results, the ATSF decided to proceed with developing a proof-of-concept in 2013. The Dutch Government funded both the feasibility study and the development process.

The development of the proof-of-concept of the ATSI was based on the input provided by a extensive multi-stakeholder consultation process that consisted of individual consultations, two Round Table Conferences and several field trips in countries in Sub-Sahara Africa. This resulted in a Methodology Report that defined (1) the starting points of the ATSI (2) the scope of the ATSI and (3) the methodology of the ATSI. The methodology looks at several fields of company activities, the so-called 'technical areas' and for each technical area a set of indicators has been developed.

One of the major outcomes of the stakeholder consultation is that the company scope of the Access to Seeds Index should not only look at the leading industry in terms of revenues, which would result in a list of mainly seed companies with a staple crop portfolio. Also vegetable seed companies should be included in the Access to Seeds Index, since vegetables play an important role in the business model of smallholder farmers, as well as human nutrition needs. Furthermore, stakeholders underlined that in actual reaching smallholder farmers regional and national players play an important role. The methodology Report therefore introduces two global lists: (1) field crops seed companies (2) vegetable seed companies. In addition a (3) Regional Index will be developed. Initially a regional Index for Eastern Afrika will be developed, which provides a format to roll out to other regions. The Indexes will be developed and published at the same time, since some companies might figure in all three lists and the data collection for each list can take place in one exercise.

The Methodology Report was reviewed by the Expert Review Committee (ERC) at 10 March 2014, composed of experts with a background in relevant stakeholder fields: the seed industry, farmers organizations, NGO's, (multilateral) governments and research institutes. The ERC concluded that the proof-of-concept in the Methodology Report was ready for finalization and implementation.

In parallel with the drafting of the Methodology Report, several funders were approached to fund the development and launch of the first Access to Seeds Index in 2015. The Dutch Government agreed to proceed co-funding for a two-year period. Currently the ATSF is in contact with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to become the second co-funder. The search for the third funder is ongoing.

2. Vision

One of the most pressing challenges the world faces today is to feed the growing world population. Currently one billion people are suffering from chronic hunger. Two billion people are malnourished. Food insecurity is most severe in Sub-Saharan Africa, whereas the greatest number of people suffering from hunger and malnourishment live in South- and Southeast Asia. In the coming decades the world population will grow with another two billion mouths to feed. Most population growth will occur in exactly those areas in the world where food insecurity is high. On top of these developments, it is expected that further economic prosperity in developing regions will trigger richer diets, and hence increased pressure on agriculture capacity.

The smartest way to tackle food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia is by empowering farm families to grow more and better crops. This is easier said than done. It demands an integral approach to farmer development that includes among others access to finance, markets, knowledge and a supporting enabling environment. Access to quality seeds of improved varieties is an essential component of this integral approach. After all, it is progress in crop cultivation that in large part enabled agriculture in the industrialized world to triple its yields.

The integral approach to farmer development implies that there is a role to play for many actors, like governments, NGO's, funders and farmers' organizations. Also companies can contribute to this challenge. Translating market demands from smallholder farmers and their customers into research, translating the results of seed research into products that are tailored to the needs of smallholder farmers and delivering them to farmers on a large scale, demands for market based approaches.

This demands for developing new business models, as most seed companies are active in high value, low volume markets, whereas the agricultural landscape in the developing world is dominated by small-scale agriculture. It also demands for research and development, because most of the existing portfolio of leading seed companies is developed for moderate climate zones. As a consequence most portfolios do not include seed that are tailored to the needs of smallholder farmers or the preferences of their communities and cultures. It also demands for partnerships because farmer development comprises more than access to seeds but also to other inputs, finance, markets and capacity building. And last but not least it demands for dialogue between all parties concerned. To define realistic expectations on what companies can do and where other players, like governments should take their part to create an enabling environment. And to address issues like on informal seed systems, crop diversity, environmental impact, genetic modification and intellectual property.

By articulating a balanced stakeholder view on what society expects from the seed industry, a biennial Access to Seeds Index can function as a compass for companies entering the emerging market of the smallholder farmer. It can encourage companies and steer company behavior to increase efforts that reflect society's expectations. It can also provide the data to facilitate a dialogue to understand each other's agenda and set common priorities for the future.

3. Mission

The Access to Seeds Foundation has been established to encourage the seed industry to bridge the gap with the smallholder farmer, with the ultimate goal to improve global food security. In particular, it aims to reach that goal by creating and publishing an independent Access to Seeds Index.

The Index measures the performance of individual seed companies with respect to efforts to enhance the degree by which smallholder farmers benefit from their knowledge, technologies,

varieties and seed. The Index seeks to establish and improve benchmark performance over time. Through the insights and transparency it creates, the Index facilitates a dialogue on the role the seed industry can play in tackling global food security.

The methodology of the Index is based on a balanced stakeholder agenda, developed through dialogue. Transparent criteria, accurate, impartial and reliable measurement and unbiased and independent publication of results are crucial to the credibility of the Index as well as the Foundation itself.

4. Values

- **Transparent:** The Access to Seeds Foundation aims to create transparency on the behavior and business models of seed companies with respect to their efforts that are relevant for the Access to Seeds Index. The Foundation is also transparent on all its actions through its reports, newsletters and website.
- **Impartial:** For the credibility of the Index the Access to Seeds Foundation is impartial with respect to individual companies and specific stakeholder groups. This is reflected in all actions and in the governance of the Foundation.
- **Appreciative:** The Access to Seeds Foundation and its Index are about encouragement, rewarding leadership and recognizing good practices.
- **Respectful:** The Access to Seeds Foundation is respectful to all stakeholders involved and respects their opinions.
- **Quality:** The communication, activities and reports of the Access to Seeds Foundation meet the highest quality standards, as well as the process and results of measurement and comparison of company data.

5. Objectives

General objectives

1. To define a balanced multi-stakeholder view and realistic expectations through dialogue on the role of the seed industry in improving agriculture for global food security challenges
2. To create transparency on activities and efforts of individual seed companies
3. To identify leadership and good practices in the seed industry

Our vision of success in the long run

1. To be a catalyst for the seed industry to increase the degree by which smallholder farmers benefit from their knowledge, technologies, varieties and seeds
2. To facilitate a better understanding of the industry and its stakeholders on each role and contribution in improving agriculture in food-insecure areas
3. To facilitate agreement among relevant stakeholders on shared targets to achieve sustainable intensification of agriculture to meet global food security challenges

6. Current situation

Strengths

- Highly respected authorities from various stakeholder background in the Expert Review Committee
- Support by the Dutch government and (potentially) the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Building on the experience of the Access to Medicine Foundation

- Independence from industry and other stakeholders
- Proof-of-concept of the Index approved by Expert Review Committee
- Experienced and well-respected research partner
- Relations build up with relevant actors in the Industry and various stakeholder groups
- Strong candidates for the supervisory board and Advisory Committee

Weaknesses

- Only funding for the development and funding of one Index
- Third funder to be found for current period
- Young organization with vacancies to fill (once funding is secured)

Opportunity

- The need of more transparency on the role of the seed industry
- Broad support for market-based approaches in developing and delivering quality seeds of improved varieties to smallholder farmers
- Leading companies in the seed industry are willing to cooperate with the Access to Seeds Index

Threats

- Controversies between the industry and some stakeholder groups
- Some companies in the seed industry are reluctant to participate
- Shortages of qualified independent staff with an industry or plant science background
- Long lead time for securing funding is a threat for the continuity of the organization



7. Goals

No	Goal	Deadline
1	Secure funding by the Dutch Government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for next phase	Q2 2014
2	Find a third funder for next phase	Q4 2014
3	Transforming the current project organization into a two-tiered foundation with staff vacancies filled	Q3 2014
4	Expand current communication platforms and stakeholder relation programs	Q4 2014
5	Finalizing the methodology of the Global Access to Seeds Index	Q4 2014
6	Developing the methodology of the Regional Access to Seeds Index	Q1 2015
7	Publishing the first Access to Seeds Index Report, with the results of the Regional and Global Index	Q3 2015
8	Secure funding for next phase	Q4 2015
9	Format for the Regional Index to roll out in other regions	Q1 2016
10	Multi-stakeholder Round Table on the findings of the first Access to Seeds Index Report	Q1 2016

8. Programs

1. Funding (goal 1, 2, 8)

The leading principle of the funding program is to secure funding for the next Index when the current Index is published. For the first Index this will be a challenge, as current funders will first want to see the results and the reception of the first Index to publish in Q3 2015. In general the goal is to secure funding with a solid base of three long-term funders.

Activities in this program are:

- Secure funding by the Dutch government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Find a third funder by the end of 2014
- Manage relations with current funders
- Reporting to funders
- Secure funding for the next Index

Responsible: CEO, CFO

2. Building the organization (goal 3)

The Access to Seeds Foundation is a network organization with a small staff based in Haarlem, a research partner for the data collection and analysis and a regional partner for the Regional Index. Furthermore experts from all stakeholder groups are involved in the development of the Indexes and the methodology through participation in the Expert Review Committee (global and regional) and the Advisory Committee.

Activities in this program are:

- Composing the global Expert Review Committee (ready)
- Contract with Sustainalytics (agreement for development phase is signed, written agreement for next phase will be signed when funding is secured)
- Contract with regional partner (search for candidates is currently done by Mr. Chagama Kedera)
- Composing the Supervisory Board (candidates are found, board can be established when funding is secured and key positions in staff are filled)
- Filling vacant positions in staff (candidates are found, contracts can be signed when funding is secured)
- Attract members of the Advisory Committee (Advisors from the previous phase will continue, others will be attracted)
- Manage governance
- Manage partner relations

Responsible: CEO, COO

3. Expand current communication platforms and stakeholder relation programs (goal 4)

Communication is key for the Access to Seeds Foundation. Building “brand” awareness, supporting the credibility and impartiality of the Access to Seeds Foundation as a source of information and expertise. The Foundation has to be transparent on all its activities. Stakeholder dialogue meetings have to be organized and all relevant stakeholder groups have to feel welcome, appreciated and heard. Relations with international A-media for media exposure on the results of the Index are essential. The internet platform of the Access to Seeds Foundation is a key tool for informing all stakeholders.

- Expand current internet platform
- Relation management programs for all stakeholder groups
- Presentations of the Access to Seeds Index on Industry congresses and other international platforms
- Media relations

- Round Tables / stakeholder dialogue events

Responsible: communication officer

4. Finalizing the methodology of the Global Access to Seeds Index (goal 5)

The proof-of-concept is approved by the Steering Committee of the preceding phase. The Expert Review Committee agreed at 10 March 2014 that the proof-of-concept is ready for finalization.

Activities in this program are

- Develop next draft methodology
- Second ERC-meeting on the methodology
- Finalize methodology
- Develop questionnaire

Responsible: CEO and research partner Sustainalytics

5. Developing the methodology for the Regional Access to Seeds Index (goal 6 and 9)

The methodology of the Regional Index is being developed in close cooperation with our Regional Partner in Eastern Africa. It will be based on the proof-of-concept of the Global Index, but will be tailored to regional specifics and characteristics of the regional seed industry. The first Regional Index will be developed for Eastern Africa. Based on this example, a format to roll out in other regions will be developed

Activities in this program are:

- Regional Round Tables on the Access to Seeds Index
- Development of the metrics of the Regional Index
- Composing of a Regional ERC
- Meetings of the ERC
- Finalization of the methodology
- Development of a format for other regions

Responsible: COO, regional partner

6. Developing and publishing the first Access to Seeds Index (goal 7)

The release of the first Access to Seeds Index report is scheduled for Q3 2015. The report combines the results of the Global and the Regional Index.

Activities in this program are:

- Company training
- Data collection and verification
- Analysis
- Report preparation
- Release

Responsible: CEO, COO and research partner Sustainalytics

7. Multi-stakeholder Round Table on the findings of the first ATSI Report (goal 10)

This Round Table marks the start of a new Index Cycle, in which the findings are discussed, the methodology is reviewed and refined for the next Index to come. The Round Table will be organized in Eastern Africa, as the event will also reflect on the findings of the Regional Index.

Activities in this program are:

- Round Table preparation and organization
- Reporting

Responsible: COO and regional partner

groups and a (Regional) Expert Review Committee with a special responsibility to review and establish the methodology.

Executive Board and ATSF staff

The two project managers carry out the management of the project and the Access to Seeds Foundation; one end is responsible for the Global ATSI, the other for the Regional ATSI. Together they form the Executive Board. From 2015 a new head of research will start, who will be responsible for the research quality of the Index going forward and the external representation of the Index findings.

Role	FTE	Responsibilities
Project manager Global Index (CEO)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing process to develop the Global ATSI - Manage relations with Sustainalytics - Daily management of the Access to Seeds Foundation - External representation of the Access to Seeds Foundation
Project manager Regional Index (COO)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing process to develop the Regional ATSI - Manage relations with Regional Partner - Develop format for regional Indices
Communication officer	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop webplatform for the Access to Seeds Foundation - Support relation management with all stakeholders - Manage all communication by the Access to Seeds Foundation - Arranging media coverage for the Index publication
Senior Researchers	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the development of the content of the Global and Regional ATSI - Responsible for conclusions and lessons learned in each Index
Researcher	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the senior researchers - Business analysis - Monitoring market trends
Project assistant	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Office management - Event organization - Other supporting activities
Head of Research (from 2015)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing the research team - Managing research activities of Research Partner and Regional Partner - External representation on Index findings

Status organization and governance

In anticipation on the securing of funding several candidates are sought for the various bodies, partnerships and positions in the organization, network and governance of the Access to Seeds Foundation.

Supervisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal: Supervisory Board with 5 members by Q3 2014 - Current three members of (one-tiered) Board are willing to become members of Supervisory Board - Other two candidates, including Chairman, are found - Point of attention is the international character of the Supervisory Board
Executive Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current project manager becomes member of Executive Board - Two candidates for second position
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three candidates for researcher positions
Communication officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two candidates
Global ERC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Composed., with eight members. First meeting took place at 10 March
Region ERC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be composed by Regional Partner
Research Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainalytics, based on a tendering process in November 2013. - Agreement for next phase when funding is secured
Regional Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search is currently being done by Mr. Chagama Kedera
Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two members of current advisory committee will proceed - New (international) members to be found by Q1 2015

11. Budget 2014-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2014-16
Item						6 months	2,5 years
Expenses in Euros	realized	realized	realized	budget	budget	budget	budget
staff	5.236	29.592	156.718	395.521	782.820	418.367	1.596.708
travel	-	-	67.404	67.660	111.860	52.019	231.539
consultants	3.789	43.007	434.532	392.603	669.744	363.294	1.425.641
communication & PR	-	-	33.323	31.740	60.000	30.000	121.740
supplies & services	85	24	3.967	19.253	34.247	22.216	75.716
office rent	-	-	10.508	30.640	55.000	30.000	115.640
depreciation	-	-	506	3.000	4.000	2.000	9.000
other	-35	-802	-3.039	8.111	8.203	4.765	21.079
Total	9.076	71.822	703.918	948.528	1.725.874	922.661	3.597.063
Staffing							average
Project manager global index			1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Project manager regional index				0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Communications officer				0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Senior Researcher 1			0,50	0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Senior Researcher 2				0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Researcher 1			0,50	0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Project assistant				0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Head of Research (from early 2015)				0,50	1,00	1,00	0,83
Total			2,00	4,50	8,00	8,00	6,83
Funding							
Ministry Ec. Affairs - NL	11.495	71.680	739.737	100.000	-	-	100.000
Ministry Ec. Affairs - NL	-	-	-	600.000	900.000	300.000	1.800.000
Gates Foundation	-	-	-	504.733	562.445	-	1.067.178
Other (3rd funder)	-	-	3.000	-	-	587.294	587.294
Total	11.495	71.680	742.737	1.204.733	1.462.445	887.294	3.554.471
check (net result)	2.419	-142	38.819	256.205	-263.429	-35.367	-42.592
							cum. result
							-1.495