



Knowledge sharing for
sustainable agricultural
development

Annual Report 2012



**ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
FOR THE DUTCH TAX
ADMINISTRATION**

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Institutional information

Name:	Agromisa foundation	
Website:	www.agromisa.org	
Address:	<u>Postal address:</u>	<u>Visiting address:</u>
	Agromisa Foundation P.O. Box 41 6700 AA Wageningen The Netherlands	Gebouw met de Klok Generaal Foulkesweg 37 6703 BL Wageningen
Telephone:	+ 31 (0) 317 483151	
E-mail:	agromisa@wur.nl	
Bank details:	Bank account number: 1172793 BIC or SWIFT code: INGBNL2A IBAN: NL03INGB0001172793	
RSIN/fiscaal nummer	002972451	

In 2013, Agromisa moved to another location.
Above, the contact information is presented as of September 2013.

Preface

This report has been composed as an accountability report for the Dutch Tax Administration. This is necessary because of changing legislation with respect to Public Benefit Organisations (PBOs) as per 2014. A more public-friendly annual report of Agromisa is scheduled for 2014.

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Who we are: mission and ambitions

The Agromisa Foundation is a non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation founded in 1934 in the Netherlands.

Agromisa: an independent organisation

Agromisa finances its work partially through donations, and partly through its own services. These include the production of practical, easy-to-read publications that deal with issues affecting the small-scale agricultural sector, the sale of its publications, and advisory services for partner organizations in international cooperation.



Our perspective on development cooperation

Agromisa believes that structural improvement of living conditions in the South can only take place through the initiatives and ideas of the local population. Agromisa wants to contribute to this indigenous development potential by making agricultural knowledge readily available. We understand that, to be effective, technological advice must be appropriate to the local context and must not lead to the depletion of locally available natural resources. It must also take gender aspects into account by considering the potentially different effects that the introduction of new technologies may have on men and women.

Knowledge sharing

As part of a large network of partners in the North and South, Agromisa is ideally placed to stimulate an active exchange of agricultural knowledge. We regularly add to our own ongoing series of publications, but also receive frequent requests from partners for support of local publications, many of which lead to formal co-publishing agreements. Our work includes the development of new publications, adaptation of information for specific target groups and support for translations in local/regional languages. We are also actively involved in the development of other information carriers like CD-ROMs, DVDs, online videos, posters and more integrated multimedia kits, which facilitate an increasingly interactive and dynamic exchange of information within our network.

Objectives

By providing access to practical, sustainable agricultural knowledge, Agromisa aims to contribute to improving the livelihoods of those who depend on small-scale agriculture in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Agromisa contributes to knowledge development, knowledge production and knowledge sharing for counterparts in small scale and sustainable agriculture, poverty alleviation and small scale entrepreneurial activities in developing countries by:

- The development, publication and dissemination of Agrodoks;
- Contributing to curriculum development for counterparts in developing countries;
- Developing new means to disseminate knowledge and develop a form of a knowledge sharing platform in development cooperation;

- Strengthen the organisational capacity through stronger ties with our organisational network and deploying more (wo-)manpower in the core activities (volunteers, and part time employees).

Policy plan

In 2011 Agromisa faced a redefinition of its role as Public Benefit Organisation or NGO (see also the annual report 2011). A survey revealed that the need for practical agricultural information is stronger than ever as small-holder farmers struggle to overcome the problems of their underdeveloped agricultural sector. Agromisa wants to strengthen its contribution to meeting this demand for information via its publications – including the Agrodok series –, its Question & Answer Service, website and additional projects.

The Agrodok series in particular represents a unique stock of practical information: its content is unrivalled.

In order to strengthen viability for its core business, Agromisa seeks to consolidate several aspects of the organisation on the short and longer term:

- Increase the capacity for organisational tasks and capacity that contributes to Agromisa's mission and aims (through part time employees, volunteers, trainees, students, free lancers etcetera);
- Growth in turn-over and in projects and products for counterparts in developing countries. This will support the aim of increasing capacity to support the organisation;
- Supplement and rejuvenate its Board and Advisory Board;
- Integration of online sales of publications in the Agromisa website;
- Strengthen its fundraising capacity to support the organisational aims.

However, like other publishers Agromisa faces the challenge of further content valorisation. Agromisa needs to find new ways of generating income from its published content. Tailoring its subject matter to meet clearly identified demand and by exploring new forms of finance and development strategies will become increasingly important in future.

In order to decrease its dependence on traditional funding, Agromisa intends to profile itself more strongly and broaden its range of services. It will collaborate more often in knowledge-development projects, where Agromisa can make a significant contribution. At the same time it will work intensively with its partners in the extensive Agromisa network.

Currently Agromisa is exploring the potential of digital applications: how these can be used best to extend the dissemination of its content-based practical knowledge and to encourage and facilitate networking amongst users. Agromisa sees this as one of its main challenges in the coming years. Paper publications will continue to fulfil an important role, and to ensure their continued existence Agromisa needs to go in search of new partnerships and forms of finance.

Projects and activities

Agrodok series

Agrodoks are practical, easy-to-read publications and deal with issues affecting the small-scale agricultural sector. The manuals provide relevant theoretical background on a particular topic together with a careful explanation of the practical steps that need to be taken. Most manuals deal with plant and animal production but there are also Agrodoks that deal with closely related subjects such as soil and water conservation, food storage, processing, marketing and other socio-economic subjects critical for the development of the small-scale farming sector.

All Agrodoks are published in English, French and Portuguese; and some are also translated into Spanish or other languages (Kiswahili, Hindi).

Agromisa co-publishes the Agrodok series with *The Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA)*.

A sample of each Agrodok showing cover, table of content and introduction can be downloaded in PDF format from the Agromisa website. Agrodoks can be ordered from Agromisa and CTA. In 2011 Agromisa published its fifties title.

As from Agrodok 51 onward, Agrodoks will have a **full colour** cover and a modern and reader friendly layout. The new format has been developed by *GAW Ontwerp en Communicatie, Wageningen*.



Distribution

In 2012, the Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) distributed some 15,000 Agrodoks in various languages. Agromisa distributed some 3,000 Agrodoks.

In addition to the distribution of these hard copies Agromisa publications reached a much broader readership via the digital versions of its publications posted on its website. Because of the growing importance of this distribution channel, at present we are investigating how to keep track of the organisations and individual people who download Agrodok contents and investigate the possibilities to include this growing interest in knowledge building and sharing with new target groups.

There was also a demand for Agrodoks from local NGOs, CSOs and training institutes who used them as a basis for developing training material.

New and revised Agrodok publications in 2012: work in progress

Agrodok 51 – Lowland rice cultivation

Lowland rice cultivation is practised in all countries in tropical Africa and on about half of the total rice area. Although rice is both the main crop and staple food of many farmers in Africa, most sources of information on small-scale rice production are focused on Asia. The aim of this Agrodok is

therefore to provide extension workers and smallholder rice farmers in tropical Africa with practical and current information about efficient, profitable and sustainable lowland rice farming and rice processing that is applicable to their local circumstances. Every step in rice production is discussed, showing the importance of each management operation. Sourcing from a large body of scientific knowledge, this Agrodok focusses on the main rice management practices which farmers can adapt to their needs – paying particular attention to water management practices. By applying the clear and concise information provided in this booklet, farmers can improve the quantity and quality of their rice yield.

Agrodok 52 – Grass cutters

In 2012 Agromisa started the development of a new Agrodok title: Back yard grasscutter keeping. This Agrodok is the outcome of cooperation with authors of earlier grasscutter publications in various African countries. Agromisa believes in the potential of backyard grasscutter rearing. Producing high-quality grasscutter meat for household use and/or for the market is easily integrated into low-input ecological agriculture. Moreover, keeping grasscutters can be profitable: after the initial investments in stable(s) and stock, care and maintenance are relatively easy and feed can be cheap; and grasscutter meat sells at good prices. This Agrodok explains the details and hazards of grasscutter farming. Within Agromisa's overall aim of improving small-scale farming, this booklet offers an approach to make grasscutter farming a successful and rewarding enterprise.

Both titles are due to be published in 2013 . Other subjects Agromisa has started working on are:

1. Farmers' access to services
2. Edible insects
3. Crop residues for animal feed

Curriculum development for Afghanistan

Agriculture is central to the people and economy of Afghanistan. The country, once a net exporter of agricultural produce, now relies on imports and food aid, because the war destroyed much of the agricultural production capacity. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock and the National Agricultural Education Centre are involved in a Dutch-sponsored Agricultural Technical Vocation and Education Project (ATVET) which aims to contribute to reversing this situation. It will do so by establishing a National Agricultural Education Centre (NAEC). On the Dutch side a Green Knowledge Platform has been formed with organizations as PTCplus, STOAS, ILEIA, Agromisa and Groenhorst College who will contribute to Curriculum development. The set up of the project is a so called Public Private Partnership. It is based on a combination of an assessment of what set-up would yield the desired results most quickly, would have the best chance of being sustainable, and on what has been described by some as 'best practice' in Afghanistan (see project proposal Revitalizing Agricultural TVET in Afghanistan; Submitted by Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation and People in Need).

In 2012 the project has undergone a major change in project organisation; CDI has strengthened its leading role in the project implementation in accordance with the Afghan counterparts. Agromisa remains one of the main external contributors to the project.

NAEC trains and delivers teachers for agricultural high schools and institutes and provide new curricula specifically geared towards the needs of the country. NAEC is the first teacher's training college in Afghanistan specifically dedicated to training vocational teachers.

In the ATVET project, CDI, VHL and the NGO People in Need (based in Afghanistan) are implementing a programme to revitalise the ATVET in Afghanistan.

In 2011 Agromisa has contributed by writing two basic documents, setting the context for Curriculum development, about 'Afghan Markets and Chains' and 'Land and Water'. This work was continued in 2012. In 2012 Agromisa contributed by preparing Lesson modules on different topics for the Afghan stakeholders and by participating in the dialogue to enhance project organisation and effectivity. Agromisa delivered the two modules Beekeeping & Fish farming and Plant Pathology. For the module on beekeeping Agromisa has teamed up with its partner Nectar, the Netherlands Expertise Centre For Tropical Apicultural Resources.

Agromisa sourced former volunteers who have working experience in Afghanistan to contribute to these studies. Being part of the Green Knowledge platform, puts Agromisa in a relevant network and builds up an expertise in Curriculum development for Agriculture Education.



Students taking an exam outside at an agricultural high school in Nuristan. Photo: People in Need.

Student project Wageningen University: Agromisa as a networking organisation?

Will Agromisa be able to cope with the latest developments in information and communication technology, and what is the best way to stay in contact with our target groups? That was the main question during a study recently carried out by 5 master students of the Wageningen University and Research Centre (GEMMO Consultants) as part of their Academic Consultancy Training (ACT).



Agromisa commissioned this study to a group of students to find answers for this and other questions that we had. The students received supervision from one of the Agromisa team volunteers.

Research questions were aimed at defining new activities to support a sustainable future for our organisation: Should we set up a new platform for communication and knowledge sharing with farmers and members of staff of farmers organisations, NGO's, extension services and agricultural schools, or should we integrate in existing platforms? How can we stimulate the dialogue with and amongst our target community and more effectively provide service through our question and answer service?

The report is entitled: "Sharing knowledge Consultancy project for Agromisa on the development of a Small Farmers Agricultural Knowledge Platform".

The students made a clear presentation of existing types of Internet platforms and other tools for the future communication of Agromisa. Their recommendations help Agromisa to define a new role for the future of the organisation, so Agromisa is able to continue to play a valuable role as contributor to knowledge development, as information broker for rural and agricultural development and for providing platforms for stakeholders in cooperation development.

Agromisa wants to follow up various of the conclusions and suggestions of the study carried out. As a first step we will strengthen the contacts with our most relevant partner organisations. This is scheduled for 2013 the knowledge platform of Agromisa.

For the contacts with Wageningen University, follow up could mean the proposition of more applied research projects and look for student volunteers to help us improve our website and the capacity of the Question and Answer service.

Question & Answer Service

The Question & Answer (Q&A) Service provides information and advice on topics related to small-scale sustainable agriculture.

A network of experienced volunteers who are experts on tropical agriculture, animal husbandry and other related topics help answer the questions Agromisa receives. The coordinator of the Q&A service also draws on relevant and up-to-date information from the internet, libraries and other databases as well as from Agromisa itself, Wageningen University and Research Centre and other institutes and organisations worldwide.

The Q&A service is primarily aimed at small-scale farmers and their intermediaries. NGOs, development workers and extension officers also use this service.

In 2012, the Q&A service received by mail or website about 80 questions. Mostly from West and East Africa with the remainder coming from South America and Asia. The most popular queries were in the fields of animal husbandry, snail farming, mushroom production, fish farming and horticulture. There was also a substantial demand for information about Agromisa's publications.

Internal organisation

The Agromisa team and board

Agromisa's work is coordinated by two staff members and is carried out with the assistance of many volunteers and free-lancers coming from many different backgrounds.

It is not possible to mention everyone here by name, as some 30 people have contributed to the work of Agromisa in 2012. Authors, editors, illustrators and peer-reviewers have done a great job on the development of new Agrodok titles. Several experts have contributed to curriculum development for international cooperation. For the supervision of ACT students from Wageningen University, the Library, Q&A, administration, maintenance and Board, Agromisa relied on a steady group of volunteers. We thank all these people for their commitment to Agromisa in 2012!



Active team members (December 2012):

Eva Kok | Team Coordinator & Publisher
Lineke van Dongen | PR/Office Management
Liesbeth Dirks | PR, Editing
Marg Leijdens | Projects, Editing
Cris de Klein | Projects, Editing
Marilyn Minderhoud | PR, Editing
Domien Bruins | knowledge sharing platform/ ACT
Mark Rietveld | knowledge sharing platform

Board members (December 2012):

Ton van Schie | Chairman
Piet Scheepens | Secretary
Ruud Ludemann | Treasurer
Peter Holen | fourth board member
Eva Kok | fifth board member



Remuneration policy

The two (part time) staff members account for the salaries in the financial report. The board members received no payment (as stipulated for a foundation as legal entity).

Financial report 2012

Balance sheet (in euros)	31 dec. 2011	31 dec. 2012
Assets		
Inventory	1,994	1,650
Stock	30,431	36,808
	32,425	38,458
Claims	13,291	17,987
Liquid Assets	56,824	49,784
Total Assets	102,540	106,229
Liabilities		
Capital	46,781	36,628
Reservations	34,037	24,019
Debts (short time)	21,722	45,580
Total Liabilities	102,540	106,227
Profit and Loss statement (in euros)	2011	2012
Turnover	88,820	124,563
Boarded out work	3,313	50,682
Direct costs	27,415	2,788
Nett turnover	58,092	71,093
Housing costs	2,609	2,662
Salaries	38,372	59,567
Running costs	0	0
General costs	12,848	15,416
Sales costs	1,212	964
Depreciations	55,823	1,044
Result	2,269	- 8,560

For the accountability of the finances 2012 an accountancy report is available at Agromisa from BorghHave Accountancy.