

Position Statement on Plantwise Private Sector Engagement

Background

CABI has introduced Plantwise in 34 countries, with a strong focus on governmental partners, to varying degrees of success. Not all partners have shared the same level of commitment and capacity to support activities of the programme. CABI's in-country support based on donor funding will need to come to a conclusion at one point in time. This will require engaging with the private sector to explore alternatives to take up the programme or some of its components, improving its quality, scale and sustainability.¹ CABI will retain the responsibility for **quality assurance** while ensuring that **smallholder farmers** continue to be served.

Most private sector interactions in Plantwise have so far been driven by specific country needs. The Plantwise Private Sector Strategy is being developed to guide further partnerships, particularly with respect to new collaborations and concepts that can be scaled out to multiple countries. This strategy will build upon lessons on what has worked well and what has not in countries where Plantwise has been introduced, thereby guiding the programme teams on private sector partnerships that are likely to yield long-term benefits for Plantwise.

CABI follows a dual approach to engaging with the private sector, with the aim of reducing dependency on donor support for Plantwise viz. transferring ownership of specific Plantwise activities to the private sector and promoting private sector interest in specific products or services to create new income streams for the organisation.

One vision, two pathways and three goals

The **vision** of Plantwise for engaging with the private sector is to leverage the resources, partnerships and expertise of private actors to increase the **sustainability, scale and impact** of the programme in the long term. These three goals can be achieved through two different pathways:

Pathway 1: Partnering with the private sector to increase the in-country sustainability of certain elements of Plantwise implementation through transferring responsibilities over some programme activities

Through this pathway CABI can:

- i. Improve the overall **sustainability** of the programme while ensuring the interventions of the programme also contribute to achieving adequate return on investment by private sector organisations.
- ii. Increase the **scale** and reach of the programme while expanding the service and product offering and having more efficient collaborations with international companies, whose reach extends beyond national borders.
- iii. Enhance the **impact** of the programme by providing tailored and regular advice, combined with access to additional and complementary products and services that increase the value added to smallholder farmers.

Pathway 2: Leveraging the potential of existing Plantwise products or services such as factsheets, trainings and training material, to generate additional revenue or, developing a product or service jointly with private sector to create new revenue streams for CABI. The net profit will be reinvested to support Plantwise.

Through this pathway CABI can:

- i. Improve the overall **sustainability** of the programme by reducing dependency on donor funding.
- ii. Increase the **scale** of the programme by expanding the network of clinics and the application of innovations (e.g. mobile services) for increased farmer reach.
- iii. Enhance the **impact** of the programme by investing and adjusting programme activities and services to maximise its contribution on improving food security and rural livelihoods.

¹ For additional information about overarching Plantwise strategy see: <https://www.plantwise.org/about-plantwise/strategy/>

To achieve the vision and goals of the strategy, CABI will prioritise engagement with private sector organisations whose target reach is compatible to that of Plantwise i.e. those that operate across the whole range of small-holders (commercial oriented, transitional and subsistence farmers) and those that focus on transitional farmers instead of those that focus only on commercial-oriented smallholder farmers.

High priority will be given to interventions targeting farmer based organisations (FBOs) that supply agricultural inputs and/or are involved in joint production and/or marketing of farm produce. Embedding Plantwise components in such businesses can help make Plantwise more sustainable than when only engaging with public sector organisations. It can also increase reach of Plantwise while improving its impact.

Short Term wins:

- i. Identifying small or medium businesses (e.g. farmer associations, private agro-advisory service providers or agro-input dealers) interested in running plant clinics in those countries where Plantwise has not managed to get enough government buy-in or has not progressed much from the assessment and pilot phases.
- ii. Providing plant doctor training or any other standalone services to medium-large size businesses.
- iii. Linkages to agro-input dealers in countries where Plantwise is well established but connections to agro-input dealers have not been made under current partnerships.
- iv. Dialogue and information exchange with agro-input manufacturers interested in learning more about contemporary plant health issues and expanding the user base for some of Plantwise resources.
- v. Repurposing existing Plantwise products, including mobile apps, for medium-large companies sourcing produce from or selling inputs to smallholder farmers.

Long-term wins:

- i. Using a franchising model in which small or medium businesses (e.g. farmer associations, private agro-advisory services or agro-input dealers) use Plantwise approach under a particular regulatory framework. This type of engagement will require significant quality assurance processes and involvement of CABI while giving up the day to day operations to private sector organisations.
- ii. Becoming a service provider to medium/large businesses (e.g. food and beverage or consumer goods businesses with operational links with rural agro-enterprises).
- iii. One-off or ongoing service to medium/large businesses with operations to expand within a given country/region.
- iv. Providing content to ICT based businesses like mobile network operators with existing or new content for agriculture value added services.

