The Business Agroecology Criteria Tool (B-ACT):
A tool to assess and identify enterprises that contribute to sustainable food systems

Goal of the tool

The B-ACT is a tool to assess and identify inspiring and promising agroecological enterprises that contribute to sustainable food systems. The extent to which an enterprise 'inspires' is reflected in its alignment with the 13 agroecology principles (HLPE, 2019) while the aspect 'promising' is reflected in its business model, value-generating activities and scalability.

A tool to assess and identify inspiring and promising agroecological enterprises:

Inspiring:
Assessing the alignment of the enterprise with the principles of agroecology

Promising:
Assessing the potential (business model, value generating activities and scalability) – ability to transforming food systems

Target Group

The tool is intended to:

- inform and sensitize interested donors and investors about the nature and benefits of agroecological enterprises;
- inform and support entrepreneurs on how agroecological their enterprise is and where there is potential for improvement;
- inform other interested stakeholders such as civil society or policy makers interested in learning more about the nature of agroecological enterprises

HLPE (2019): Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

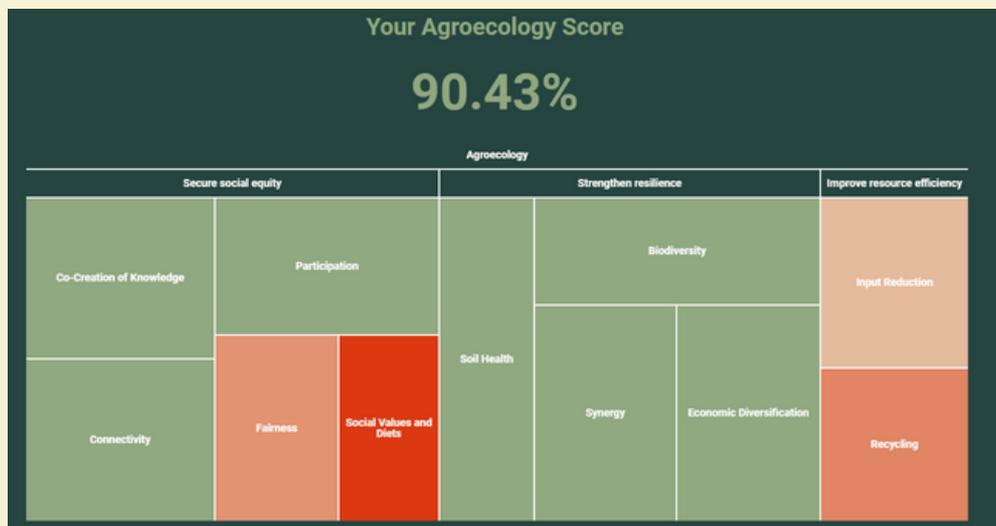**Use this QR Code to access the tool online!**

Evaluation

The evaluation of the B-ACT currently includes:

- Agroecology Score: measuring the alignment with the 13 agroecological principles
- SDG Alignment: highlights which SDGs the enterprise works towards and to what extent
- Suggestions for Agroecological Improvement: Suggestions on how to improve the lowest scoring agroecology principles
- Screening questions: identifying any practices and activities which are in direct conflict with the agroecological principles
- Impact questions*: measuring the enterprises impact on carbon, water, biodiversity, soil health, economic and social indicators
- Systemic potential score: measures the potential of an enterprise to make a systemic impact

*The impact section of the tool should be considered a first draft of what the impact measurement could look like. It is therefore still the weakest section of the tool and we are always looking for feedback or inputs from others working towards solving similar problems.

Evaluation Dashboard of the B-ACT:

Potential Application

The B-ACT is planned to be incorporated and used in relevant initiatives that Biovision Foundation is designing and implementing together with partner organizations such as:

The Agroecology Accelerator

In partnership with Shona from Uganda, Biovision is setting up an Agroecology Accelerator, which aims to support the acceleration and scaling of agroecological enterprises (AEEs) along the value chain, from production, aggregation, to processing and marketing level. This will be achieved by two main components of the accelerator, a holistic set of business assistance and mentorship as well as an associated investment vehicle for provision of suitable loans. The services provided will focus on access to capital, skills and exposure, and bespoke, hands-on technical business and Agroecology assistance. The B-ACT will play a key role in the selection of enterprises, the analysis and AE assistance. The Agroecology Accelerator will be intentional about a fair representation of women and youth and entrepreneurs from diverse origins within the country. In addition, it will be an African-led and -located accelerator with both technical expertise and governance run by a majority of Africans on the ground.

The Award for inspiring and promising agroecological enterprises

An award for inspiring and promising agroecological enterprises is planned to be held in 2023. The goal of this initiative is threefold:

- To have a collection/pipeline of outstanding agroecological enterprises from Africa to be used in different follow up activities such as the Agroecology Accelerator;
- To support these enterprises by presenting them to potential donors and investors and by granting them a small prize money and
- To give these enterprises the required visibility in relevant (policy and investment) fora.

An independent jury composed by renowned members from relevant organizations will be assembled for the assessment of the AEEs. It is further planned to use the B-ACT for the analysis and selection of the short-listed enterprises.

TIFS Systems Investing Assessment (SIA)

The TIFS Initiative, in collaboration with ISF Advisors, has created the "System Investing Assessment" Tool to comprehensively identify and compare investment funds that are aligned with TIFS' principles and are well positioned to transform the food system. The objective of the tool is to foster a food systems approach to investment decision making and to support the match-making of investments and suitable enterprises contributing to sustainable food systems.

The two tools – the "System Investing Assessment (SIA)" and the "B-ACT" - are seen as highly complementary as the SIA tool is analyzing the funding side and the B-ACT the enterprise side. It is therefore planned to integrate both tools in a single framework.

Redefining Process

Biovision together with Metabolic Ventures has just finalized a new version of the B-ACT, which can be accessed and used on Google sheets. For this version of the tool we have engaged in multiple rounds of user engagement processes to identify the needs of potential user groups.

We will also continue to work on the tool, therefore please do not hesitate to contact us for questions or feedback.

For Further Information

www.agroecology-pool.org/b-act/

agroecology@biovision.ch