




AXFOUNDATION



Act to  
inspire  
& inspire  
to act  
2020





**We shed light on  
global sustainability  
challenges, and  
work to find  
practical solutions.**

# This is Axfoundation

Axfoundation works practically and concretely towards building a sustainable society. We see our organization as more of a 'do tank' than a think tank. Believing strongly in business as a driving force for change, we often initiate and run projects together with the private sector. Together we tackle local and global sustainability challenges based on practical issues related to the things we buy, the food we eat, the resources we use, and the people we meet.

Axfoundation takes on sustainability challenges holistically at the point where environmental, social and economic sustainability meet and overlap. We accelerate and innovate solutions within four programs: Future Food, Circular Economy, Sustainable Production and Consumption, and Inclusive Societies.

Axfoundation was founded in 1993 by Antonia Ax:son Johnson. This report presents highlights and results from a selection of initiatives to which Axfoundation has contributed from the beginning of 2018 through early 2020.

Industry associations

Labels & standards

Private sector

Networks

Our projects engage and reach

**22,000+**

sustainability professionals, entrepreneurs, supply managers, factory workers, suppliers, primary producers, door openers, policy makers, executives and many others.

Accelerators & incubators

Civil society

**Our 15 employees**

are proud business developers, facilitators and sustainability experts with an entrepreneurial approach to solving problems.

Axfoundation collaborates with around

**225**

partners across sectors and industries.

Axfoundation works together with over  
**40 researchers**

to find solutions to complex business problems and ensure our ventures and results are research based.

Axfoundation acts as a bridge

Researchers

Practitioners

Academia

Public sector

Trade Unions



## Future Food

- ∞ Sustainable farming and aquaculture methods.
  - ^ Increased use of regenerative agriculture.
  - ^ Increased biodiversity.
  - ✓ Reduce leakage of nutrients.
  - ∞ Efficient use of resources and circular use of resources.
  - ^ Increased production and consumption of alternative proteins.
  - ✓ Reduced use of antibiotics in food producing animals.
  - ✓ Reduced climate and environmental impact.
- Swedish legume mince went from concept to ready product.
  - Torsåker farm hosts genetic material from three different perennial wheat plant breeding programs.
  - Circular fish feed has been developed and successfully used to produce more sustainable salmon.



## Circular Economy

- ∞ Businesses apply profitable circular business models and sustainable use of resources.
  - ↻ Economic growth decoupled from increased use of resources.
  - ^ Increased resource efficiency.
  - ∞ Use of renewable and recyclable resources.
  - ✓ Reduced climate and environmental impact.
- Successful proof of concept in the pilot project "From waste to fashion", turning discarded polyester from the transport industry into PET pellets to be used in fashion.
  - We contributed to successful testing of depolymerization on industrial waste streams of polyester with a more than 90% output as a result.
  - Mapping of resource flows at Axel Johnson companies highlighted the group's substantial use of materials as predominantly linear.





# Sustainable Production and Consumption

- ^ Improved working and living conditions in global supply chains.
- ! Responsible buying practices.
- ✓ Reduced climate and environmental impact from production and consumption.
- ^ Increased consumer awareness of the social and environmental impact of consumption.
- ^ Increased transparency and traceability.

- Axfoundation hosts the Swedish Soy Dialogue with 52 member organizations.
- Axfoundation contributed to nudging trials lowering the climate impact of consumers' food purchases at Mat.se by 7%.
- 2,250 farmers and workers in Pakistan, trained in sustainable rice cultivation.
- Axfoundation supported rights training of 10,300 factory workers and managers in China and Thailand.
- We contributed to the formation of ETI Sweden in 2019 to improve working conditions in global supply chains.



# Inclusive Societies

- ✂ Facilitating meetings between new and established Swedes – because meetings lead to networks and networks lead to jobs.
- ^ Faster integration of foreign-born people into the Swedish labor market.
- = More equal opportunities and conditions.
- 58,000 new and established Swedes have met through ÖppnaDörren since 2015 (10,000 in 2019 alone).
- 42% have had the chance to meet potential employers through meetings facilitated by their door openers.
- 38% of those who met an employer have landed a job and 19% have been offered an internship.









# Explore

**4** Founders for generations to come

**6** Getting things done.

**8** Future Food

- Torsåker farm
- Swedish legume mince: From pea to product
- Perennial grains: Contributing to an agricultural revolution
- Five tons of green fish
- Intensive animal farming: A driver of antibiotic resistance

**26** Circular Economy

- From waste to fashion: Recycling polyester
- Chemical recycling of plastics
- Circular flows of materials

**36** Sustainable Production and Consumption

- Nudging consumer behavior in online food retail
- Partnership for sustainable rice production
- Ethical Trading Initiative Sweden
- Training in rights and responsibilities in Asia

**50** Inclusive Societies

- ÖppnaDörren
- Yrkesdörren

**60** Courage to fail

**64** Meet our partners





# Founders for generations to come

Challenging times are not ahead; we are already living in them. Some say that sustainability issues are piling up and the window of opportunity is shrinking. Others argue that the potential to solve complex global problems has never been greater. I choose to join the latter crowd. No matter which side you are on, the Sustainable Development Goals have provided us with a roadmap for where we need to be by 2030, and planetary boundaries make clear what limits we must respect along the way. How we get there is for us to figure out.

I have been a part of the Axfoundation journey since 1993 when the organization was set up by Antonia Ax:son Johnson. It was founded at a time when few knew what the word 'sustainability' meant and fewer still understood what businesses had to do with it. Regardless, Antonia was at the forefront, talking about the 'good company' and that the corporate world has enormous potential to be a positive force for change in society.

In the beginning Axfoundation was more of a traditional foundation in that we received proposals and apportioned grants. Over time, we wanted to do more and decided to change our game plan. We identified a number of challenges faced by consumers and businesses and started to work hands on. We brought with us an entrepreneurial approach, built a strong team and joined forces with partners across sectors and markets. Some issues that we take on may seem straight forward at first and only more

complex once we scratch the surface. Many require systematic shifts which in turn can lead to transformative change in society. Looking back, this has been a successful approach.

Over the past two years, Axfoundation has formed alliances and collaborations with some 225 partners, contributing to positive development in society by exploring new solutions. Using business as an accelerator to drive long-term change, we tackle a wide range of practical sustainability challenges – hands on.

I am proud to look back at so many successful projects and summarize the results so far here in our first progress report. We have also taken the time to scrutinize ourselves and evaluate what we could have improved along the way. Nothing is as learning as a mistake, after all. We are happy to share what we have learned.

What's next? Well, I look forward to seeing Axfoundation further increase pace, with a team who are full of innovative ideas and solutions, to drive the transition towards a smarter and more sustainable future. We are passionate about what we do, not only because we can see things evolve, but also because we can contribute to make a change for generations to come.

**Alexandra Mörner**  
**Chairman of the Board**  
**Fifth generation of a family of entrepreneurs**



"

Axfoundation combines impartiality with high ambitions, flexibility, a practical focus and strong partnerships. We find strength in our access to a large corporate group. It gives us the power to test new ideas and the opportunity to influence and contribute to transformative change. We see ourselves as a lab for new ideas - a 'do tank' rather than a think tank. "

Alexandra Mörner, Chairman of the Board



# Getting things done.

**We believe that entrepreneurship is a powerful force for change.** And we are convinced that companies of all sizes have important roles to play in contributing to the sustainable development of society. Axfoundation uses business as an accelerator of long-term transformative change. Our proximity to the Axel Johnson Group means that we can often start with a pilot project in a company. We then broaden the approach by including relevant partners and providing small-scale solutions with growth power – both within and outside the Group.

**The starting point is always a practical sustainability challenge.** It can be that a best-



The planetary boundaries define the environmental limits within which humanity can safely operate. They mark major existential challenges that countries, companies, communities and citizens must address and act upon. The global sustainable development goals must be achieved by 2030. These wider frameworks are starting points for Axfoundation's practical and solution-oriented work.

selling food item produced somewhere in Asia has red flags on all sustainability parameters.

→ p.42 Or that a company has a hard time recruiting while thousands of new Swedes have no contacts in the labor market. → p.54 Or that a corporation in heavy industry discards tons of used polyester straps, while the fashion world has an ever-increasing demand for recycled polyester. → p.30

**We are confident that broad collaborations between relevant actors in society can solve complex problems.** Our position as an independent and non-profit player, with strong networks in several sectors, enables us to form a bridge between parties who would likely not otherwise cooperate. One example is the founding of the Ethical Trading Initiative Sweden, in which Axfoundation was one of the driving forces for bringing together Swedish companies as well as trade unions, industry associations, civil society and public bodies. → p.44

**Axfoundation's work is always knowledge based.** Central to our operations is collaboration with researchers and experts. Such as the initiative together with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), in which we aim to breed perennial wheat suitable for cultivation in Sweden. → p.20 Or our collaboration with RISE to nudge Mat.se's customers to choose foods with a lower climate impact → p.40



Axfoundation is a catalyst that challenges. We want to inspire, share knowledge, spark debate and drive processes both locally and globally. The road ahead is often winding. It takes courage, curiosity and power to bring about real change. Our co-workers' drive, competence and expertise is our true asset. In some projects we take on the role of project managers, in others we are bridge builders. Sometimes we are the initiators. Regardless, we always have one mission: act to inspire and inspire to act. "

Maria Smith, Secretary General, Axfoundation

# This is how we do it

Axfoundation's ambition is to contribute to transformative and positive development in society by exploring new solutions through smart collaborations. We work concretely and practically to bring about long-term change.



The Swedish legume mince is a typical example of how Axfoundation works. It all started with the problem that we eat too much animal protein in Sweden to stay within planetary boundaries. We gathered food retailers, chefs, farmers and researchers to investigate: Is it possible to find an alternative protein that does not contain soy, to replace the most used meat in Sweden; minced meat? → [p.14](#)



# Future Food



## The program contributes to

- ^ Sustainable farming and aquaculture methods.
- ^ Increased use of regenerative agriculture.
- ^ Increased biodiversity.
- ✓ Reduce leakage of nutrients.
- ∞ Efficient use of resources and circular use of resources.
- ^ Increased production and consumption of alternative proteins.
- ✓ Reduced use of antibiotics in food producing animals.
- ✓ Reduced climate and environmental impact.





Developing solutions for future sustainable food systems.



# What's all the fuss about food?

Global food production and consumption drastically affect the environment, the climate and our health. The challenges are piling up: eutrophication, soil degradation, declining biodiversity, over-usage of antibiotics, deforestation. The list goes on... At the same time, the global population is growing, which in turn will increase the demand for more food with better nutritional content. The world needs more initiatives to build a system capable of solving this equation.

Axfoundation explores solutions to complex problems together with representatives of the entire food chain: producers, researchers, municipalities, industry associations, food processors, chefs, entrepreneurs and consumers. Together, we aim to change the way food is produced and consumed. This is the rationale.

## Climate

The food sector is responsible for a third of all greenhouse gas emissions. As much as 23% comes from farming. These emissions include nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide released from arable land and soils, methane gas from beef cattle, and carbon dioxide from farm machinery and transport. Global warming must stay below 1.5°C to minimize irreparable damage to the planet and its inhabitants. This means emissions must be halved by 2030 and reach net zero around 2050. All sectors need to transform their operations to fulfill the Paris

Agreement. The agricultural sector simply has to store more carbon than it releases.

## Environment

Agricultural land accounts for 40% of the Earth's landmass and affects the environment in multiple ways. Leakage of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus into the sea and watercourses contribute to eutrophication, also known as hypertrophication. Soils that form the basis of all our food production are degraded, polluted and eroded in many places around the world. This leads to a long-term decline in production capacity with lower yields from soils of lower quality. Moreover, farming uses 70% of fresh water globally and is also the single largest cause of loss of biodiversity. Shifting to sustainable farming and aquaculture methods is essential.

## Health

More food must be produced with better nutritional content in a sustainable way. We eat an increasingly limited diet, with just four ingredients – wheat, corn, rice and soy – making up two thirds of the global food supply. These crops are often cultivated in enormous monocultures. In many parts of the world, including Sweden, people's main source of protein is animal protein. The hunt for cheap meat fuels the use of antibiotics in food-producing animals, which is among the reasons for growing levels of antibiotic resistance. It also fuels deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and climate change.







# Torsåker farm

## Axfoundation's test farm and development center for sustainable food production of the future.

Producers, researchers, food processors, chefs, entrepreneurs, representatives of municipal bodies and industry associations all come together at Torsåker farm to explore potential solutions to complex problems. Situated some 30 kilometers north of Stockholm, Sweden, the farm consists of arable land, forest, meadows and a restaurant kitchen, which gives us the ability to grow, raise, breed and develop new methods, new food products and new meals together with others. The merging of different skills is one of the many actions necessary to make tomorrow's products both better and tastier.

Axfoundation wants Torsåker farm to be the place where sustainability, nutritional content and taste overlap and amplify each other. Projects explored at the farm are at the intersection of research and practice and test what the producer or the market – and everyone in between – often is unable to test on their own. The needs are enormous and we are merely an island in a great sea, yet by being open for collaboration and, above all, transparent, we hope that Torsåker can help make a difference to the world.

“We aim for Torsåker to be a catalyst that contributes to the development of sustainable food production, innovation and knowledge sharing.”

Madeleine Linins Mörner,  
Program Director,  
Future Food,  
Axfoundation







In the experimental garden, a small part of Torsåker farm, we try out different kinds of sustainable fertilizers, test cultivation methods, and try both new and old vegetable varieties that used to be grown in Sweden but which have all but disappeared.



# Swedish legume mince: From pea to product

Increasing the cultivation of legumes and decreasing the consumption of meat produced unsustainably.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Axfood developed Swedish legume mince from concept to product together with Urban Deli, Grönsakshallen Sorunda, Martin & Servera and MatLust. Starting with protein crop trials at Torsåker farm and progressing to a commercially viable alternative to minced animal meat.
- 11 tons of Swedish legume mince were sold in 2019. If it replaced minced animal meat, it could mean that almost 300 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e would be avoided.
- 220,000 meals were served using Swedish legume mince in Sweden. 370 schools and restaurants purchased the mince in 2019.
- By creating and strengthening the market for sweet lupine, broad bean and grey pea for human consumption, we have stimulated an increase in the cultivation of legumes and improved margins for producers.

**It all started with a practical sustainability challenge:** how can we make it easier for Swedish consumers to eat within planetary boundaries? In 2017, work on the EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report was underway. Its authors discussed the recommendation of eating less than 100 grams of meat per person per week. This would spell a major shift from today's one kilogram in Sweden, and so Axfood took on the challenge to explore ways to encourage such a transition.

We gathered together food retailers, chefs, farmers and researchers to find a solution. The first step was to explore alternatives to meat, as well as finding a crop that could be cultivated in Sweden to be used as an

alternative to soy. The most commonly used meat in Sweden is minced meat, so was borne the idea of producing a minced-meat substitute out of Swedish legumes.

Many plant-based meat substitutes are made of soy, a crop that grows poorly in Sweden. Soy has many nutritional advantages but is often grown in non-sustainable farming systems and transported over a long distance before it reaches Sweden.

The recipe for Swedish legume mince took shape in 2018 – today it includes sweet lupines, broad beans, grey peas, rapeseed paste and a pinch of salt. That's it. Nothing else is needed to sustainably produce a tasty mince full of proteins with a high quality

amino-acid profile and fibers of which people generally don't get enough.

After its initial baby steps in the kitchen at the farm, the product was tested in large-scale catering establishments in collaboration with Urban Deli and the production kitchen at Grönsakshallen Sorunda, as well as in school canteens within the framework for the project MatLust in Södertälje, a city to the south of Stockholm. Axfoundation and its partners also processed the minced legumes to make

them appealing to a broad range of consumers as readymade products. Today, restaurants and public kitchens can buy Swedish legume mince from wholesalers, while consumers can find pre-cooked minced legumes in lasagna, Bolognese sauce and tacos at Urban Deli and selected Hemköp food stores in Sweden. Additional retail outlets are constantly being added to the list. The journey from pea to product has been a winding one – as entrepreneurial innovation so often is.

## Accelerating a sustainable protein shift – the rationale

We must change the way we eat to stay within the planetary boundaries, to feed a growing population and to stay healthy. A part of the solution is a protein shift, where for example legumes can substitute parts of – or all – the consumption of animal meat and provide us with enough protein and other important nutrients. Here's the rationale behind the call for change:

The emission of greenhouse gases from farm to fork for animal protein is substantially higher than for vegetable protein. Approximately

**25,000kg CO<sub>2</sub>e**

could be avoided for each ton of minced animal meat replaced by minced legumes.

Animals are often fed crops that could have been eaten directly by humans. Approximately

**3 kg**

of cereals and legumes or more is required to produce 1 kg of boneless meat from monogastric animals.

The majority of the world's farmland today is used for growing animal feed.

**8x**

as much food could be produced on each hectare of land when minced meat is replaced by Swedish legume mince.

Still. Swedish countryside must remain open and biodiversity maintained. Here, meat from grass fed and pasture-raised animals have many advantages. But far from all meat consumed in Sweden comes from natural grazing.

**“We wanted to make it easier for people to find a sustainable, tasty and nutritious alternative to minced meat.”**

Madeleine Linins Mörner,  
Program Director,  
Future Food,  
Axfoundation





The idea for Swedish legume mince was born at Torsåker farm.

### Axfoundation identifies the challenge

- The idea took shape when authors of the EAT-Lancet report discuss the recommendation of meat consumption within the planetary boundaries. At a research meeting with Stockholm Resilience Centre and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Axfoundation begins to consider ways to nudge consumers to transition to a maximum of 100 grams of meat per person per week.
- Axfoundation gathers together researchers, producers and food retailers at Torsåker farm for a legume cultivation workshop. The goal was to find an alternative to soy, since soy is the dominating protein crop globally but it is hard to cultivate in the Swedish climate.
- Axfoundation explores which protein crops for food and animal fodder would be interesting enough in Sweden to nudge a shift in protein sources. The spotlight eventually falls on sweet lupines, broad beans and grey peas.
- Early test cultivation starts at Torsåker farm with the three legumes with the valuable support of tenant Mats Eriksson and farmer Kjell Sjelin. Some tests fail, while others succeed. Sweet lupine trials result in both high yields and high protein content.



Sweet lupines possess a similar nutritional content and protein level as soybeans.



Grey peas are a historically staple ingredient for northerners.



Broad beans are mainly used for animal feed, despite their tasty flavor.

After initial baby steps in the kitchen at the farm, the product is tested at large-scale catering establishments together with partners.

### Recipe development and tests

- The legume mince is scrutinized by Axfoundation and researchers at Grythyttan – Örebro University, the sales team at Grönsakshallen Sorunda, Axfood and Martin & Servera in terms of taste, nutrition and sustainability.
- Axfoundation develops recipes and tests the mince in large-scale catering establishments in collaboration with Urban Deli and the production kitchen at Grönsakshallen Sorunda.

2017

Spring

Fall

2018

Spring

Fall

### Product development

- Axfoundation begins product development of Swedish legume mince in 2017. Legumes from Torsåker farm are evaluated for taste and nutritional composition, and Axfoundation starts trials by formulating legume mince as versatile as minced animal meat. A dialogue with nearby Nyborgs farm leads to the final ingredient in the mince: rapeseed paste, a waste product of oil production.



The project team processes the minced legumes to make them appealing to a broad range of consumers as readymade products.



The winding journey from pea to pilot to product has proven successful.

### Ready to scale

- Axfoundation hands over further product development to a commercial partner and moves on to innovate and accelerate new practical solutions for sustainable food production of the future.



Photo: Anna Henning-Moberg

### Testing new markets

- A unique recipe for a burger made of Swedish legume mince is developed. In October 2019, Choice Hotels launches its own Swedish legume mince burger at selected hotels before rolling it out across Sweden in spring 2020.
- Readymade products made of Swedish legume mince is sold at selected Hemköp food stores in Stockholm and launched at Martin & Servera.

2019

Spring

Fall

2020

Spring

Restaurants and public kitchens can buy Swedish legume mince from wholesalers. Consumers can find pre-cooked mince in food stores.

### Tastings, tests and expansion

- The product is tested on one of the most difficult crowds to please: 350 school-age children. The project MatLust in Södertälje helps school canteens serve tacos with Swedish legume mince. At Axfoundation we hold our breath... and get the thumbs up.
- The first Swedish legume mince appears on shelves at retailer Urban Deli. Consumers can buy readymade lasagna, Bolognese sauce and taco mince. Soon, the product is sold as mince at Grönsakshallen Sorunda.
- Production outgrows its capacity at Urban Deli's production kitchen, and is moved to Grönsakshallen Sorunda Köket in Hässleholm.

### Sourcing of ingredients, infrastructure and production capacity

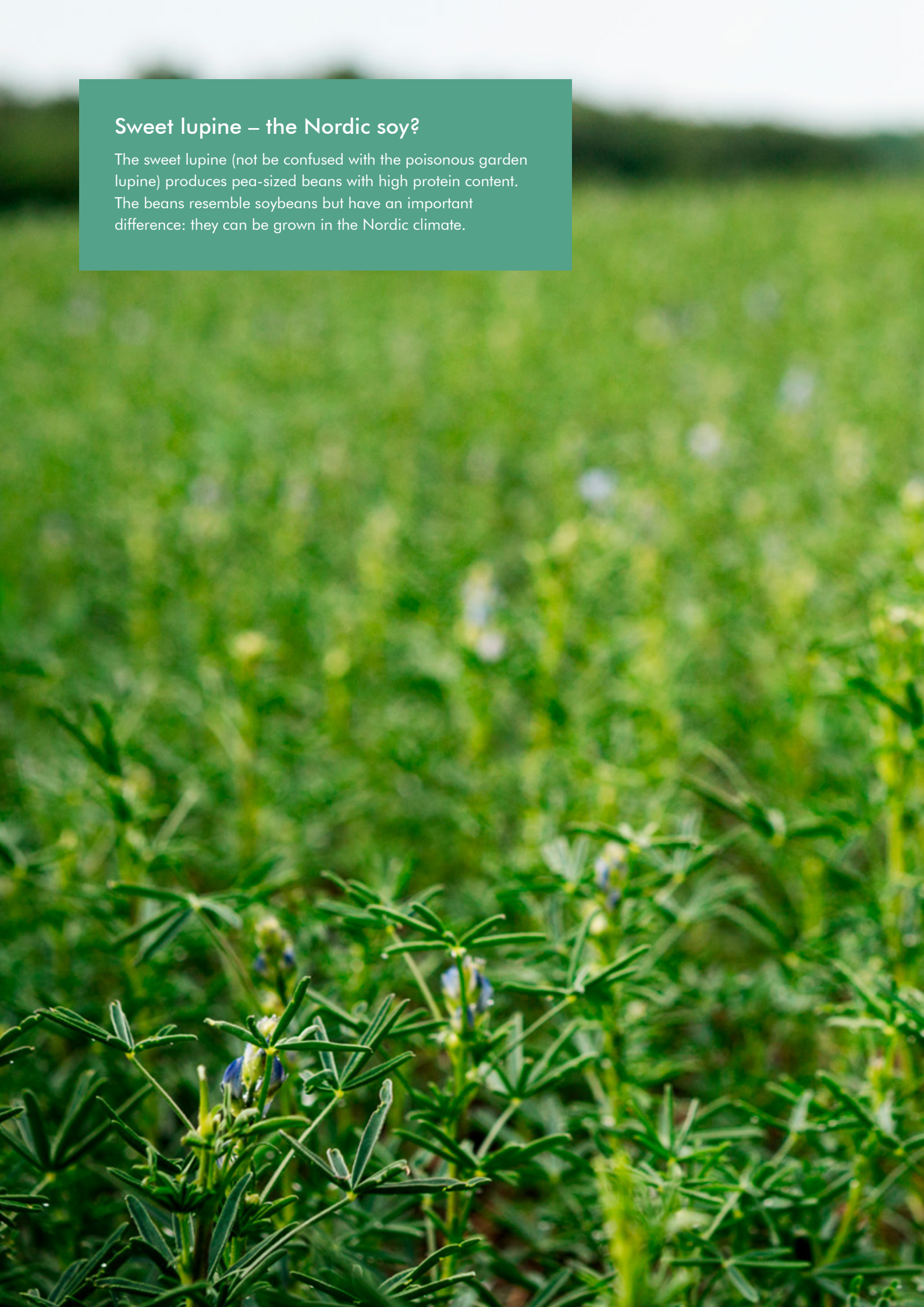
- Demand increases tenfold and the search for producers and larger production sites intensifies.



## Sweet lupine – the Nordic soy?

The sweet lupine (not be confused with the poisonous garden lupine) produces pea-sized beans with high protein content.

The beans resemble soybeans but have an important difference: they can be grown in the Nordic climate.









# Perennial grains: Contributing to an agricultural revolution

## Breeding and adapting perennial wheat for cultivation in a northern climate.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Axfoundation supports the research and development of perennial wheat suited to the Nordic climate.
- Torsåker farm hosts genetic material from three plant-breeding programs.
- In 2018, the fields at Torsåker farm had 3,200 plants of intermediate wheatgrass, a perennial wild relative of wheat. In 2019, the figure had multiplied nearly tenfold to 30,000 plants.
- Over 100 researchers from 15 countries on five continents gathered at the conference “Is the Future of Agriculture Perennial?” in Lund in Sweden in 2019. Supported by Axfoundation, the conference was the largest of its kind to date.

**Almost all grain crops grown today are annuals. They are planted from seeds, harvested after spike maturity, and then die, all in a single year. Farmers plow and till the soil, which leads to soil nutrient losses and erosion, decreased soil quality and release of greenhouse gases.**

Perennial plants, on the other hand, do not have to be sown every year and the farmers' fields do not require annual plowing and tilling. With their deep and well-developed root systems, present all year round, the perennial plants protect the soil from erosion and nutrient leakage. Their large leaf biomass increases carbon uptake and the sequestration of carbon in roots and soil, which result in reduction of greenhouse gases and mitigation of climate change.

Axfoundation supports the efforts to develop perennial wheat and contribute to revolutionizing agriculture. Together with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Axfoundation is running a large-scale experiment at Torsåker farm since 2018 on intermediate wheatgrass to breed perennial wheat for cultivation in Sweden and other regions with similar climates. The plant breeding focuses on adapting intermediate wheatgrass to seasonal changes in Nordic conditions such as long days in the summer, frost in spring and autumn, and low temperatures in the winter. Other desirable attributes are high and consistent seed yield, synchronous flowering and seed maturation, and seed retention also called non-shattering. Large, diverse populations of the crop are grown at Torsåker farm, and researchers at

SLU select the best plants of intermediate wheatgrass for the traits of interest. These individual plants will then be cross-pollinated, and the resulting seeds planted to produce the next improved breeding population.

The genetic material of intermediate wheatgrass comes from the plant-breeding programs at The Land Institute in Kansas, USA which has developed Kernza; the University of Minnesota, USA; and the University of Manitoba, Canada. The ongoing breeding program at Torsåker is to date the only one outside

North America and the only one based on genetic diversity from all three breeding programs in the USA and Canada carried out during different climate conditions. Part of the contribution of AxFoundation is to identify the commercial potential for the new crop in collaboration with chefs and bakers.

Trials at Torsåker farm are carried out by Anna Westerbergh, principal investigator of perennial cereals and Associate Professor in Genetics and Plant Breeding, and her research group at the Department of Plant Biology at SLU in Uppsala, Sweden.

## Perennial intermediate wheatgrass

The large leaf biomass and well-developed root system increase the carbon sequestration in the soil, thus decreasing carbon dioxide emission from perennial farming. The perennial crops are also more tolerant to stresses such as drought and waterlogging, and are efficient at taking up nutrients from the soil.





# Five tons of green fish

## Producing sustainable salmon of high gastronomic quality, fed with circular-based feed.

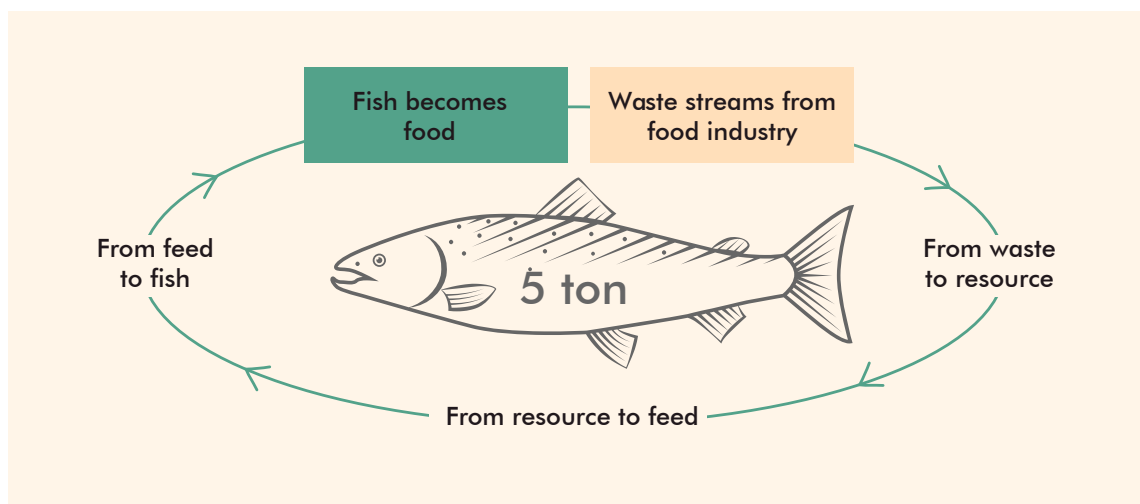
Our food should preferably not eat our food. This is one of the basic ideas behind the project "Five tons of green fish" that Axfoundation operates together with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and around 30 other partners. Today, farmed fish is often fed food suitable for human consumption: cereals, soy and fish caught in the wild. Through this project, Axfoundation is exploring substituting conventional feed through broad partnerships that examine insects that have eaten organic waste such as peel, cores and bread waste. The project also tests and evaluates other innovative primary products such as mycel, or sea squirts.

Collaboration across sectors aim to address the complexity of the aquaculture value chain. In addition to circular-based fish feed, the project hopes to produce at least five metric tons of Swedish sustainable salmon of

high gastronomic quality. Once completed, the project shall have reduced the use of fish caught in the wild and imported soy in conventional fish feed, as well as improved the utilization of biological residual streams.

The infrastructure being built will also be able to address the problem with our food eating our food in poultry and pig farming, whenever the legislation catches up for these animals and allows for insects to be used in these systems.

Partners in the project are Axfoundation and SLU together with Axfood, Eskilstuna Energi & Miljö, Fazer, Grythyttan – Örebro University, Grönsakshallen Sorunda, Fiskhallen Sorunda, Härnösand energi och miljö, Lantmännen Feed, Marine Feed, Processum, Raiso, Sweco, Vattenbrukscentrum Norr, Älvdalslax. Vinnova is a co-founder of the project.





## Over-exploited oceans and food waste call for a circular solution

Today, 93% of the world's oceans are either fully exploited or over-exploited. Although aquaculture is seen as an opportunity to provide the market with fresh fish, large amounts of wild fish and soy is used in feed, resulting in it not being a fully viable option. New possibilities to address this issue arose in 2017 when the EU approved the use of insects in fish feed – an opportunity Axfood hopes to seize.

Food waste also has an environmental, social and economic impact. The food industry today does not recycle nutrients to a great extent; it is mainly linear and the waste results in nutrient leakage. Less than half of all food wasted is currently being utilized and only in ineffective systems in terms of nitrogen and phosphorus recycling back to the food chain.

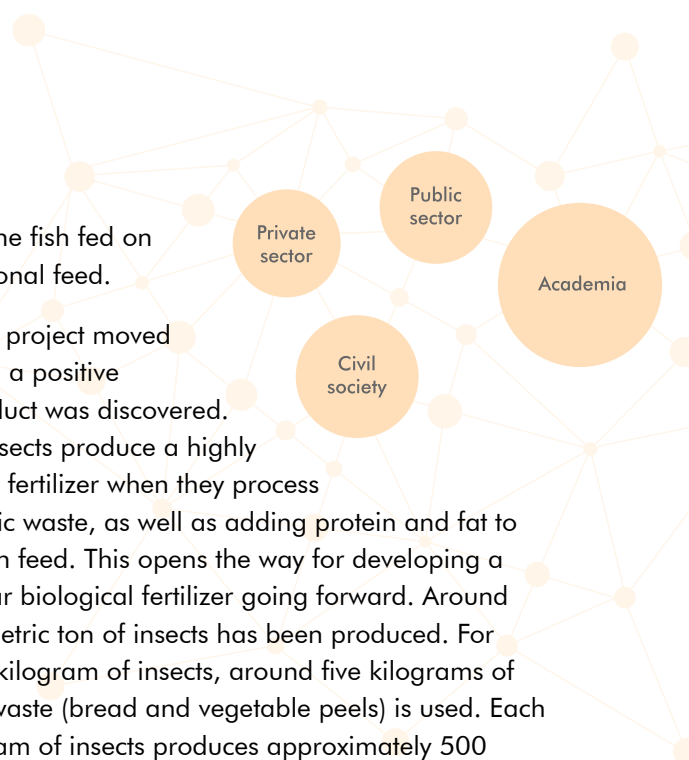
## Results

The project has gathered together partners across sectors to build an infrastructure for converting vegetable-based waste streams into quality protein-rich raw material. Plant-based residues from the food chain are converted into high-quality feed raw materials. The residues from Grönsakshallen Sorunda and Fazer are fed to black soldier larvae, which are then processed into circular feed.

Älvdalslax has produced a small number of sustainable Swedish salmon fed on circular fish feed. Initial results are positive; the fish grow at the same rate as the reference fish. Fish will be on the market and sold through members of the consortium. Some of Sweden's top chefs have examined the fish in terms of taste, flavor and texture. The fish fed on insects reportedly taste more like fish caught in the wild

than the fish fed on traditional feed.

As the project moved along, a positive biproduct was discovered. The insects produce a highly potent fertilizer when they process organic waste, as well as adding protein and fat to the fish feed. This opens the way for developing a circular biological fertilizer going forward. Around one metric ton of insects has been produced. For every kilogram of insects, around five kilograms of food waste (bread and vegetable peels) is used. Each kilogram of insects produces approximately 500 grams of fertilizer. This fertilizer have successfully been tested on Torsåker farm's experimental garden.



# Intensive animal farming: A driver of antibiotic resistance

## What can we do to reduce the use of antibiotics in food-producing animals and encourage others to do the same?

This was the question that Åsa Domeij, sustainability manager at Axfood, asked when she contacted Axfoundation in 2013. It was a starting point. Axfoundation approached some of Sweden's leading experts in antibiotics and animal welfare to devise a comprehensive list of criteria that buyers can use with their suppliers regarding antibiotic use and animal welfare.

The first list was piloted together with supply teams at Axfood and Martin & Servera. Following successful implementation, the criteria was shared with a wider audience. Soon enough, members of the Swedish

Food Retailers Federation followed: Axfood, Bergendahls, Coop, ICA, Lidl, IKEA Foods and Livsmedelshandlarna. They adopted a common trade agreement to decrease the use of antibiotics in food production. Today, the antibiotics criteria are used across the Swedish food retail industry.

Axfoundation is working with a broad alliance of partners to keep the criteria up to par with changing legislation, market and consumer demands as well as spreading the tool further to more actors in the food sector, national and international organizations, and authorities to achieve transformative change.

### The link between food and antibiotic resistance

Overuse of antibiotics is a widespread problem in food production and there is a clear link between sub-standard animal husbandry and an extensive use of antibiotics. Today, two thirds of all antibiotics in the world are given to animals. The more antibiotics are used, the greater the risk that the bacteria will develop resistance, resilience and immunity to them. Antibiotic resistance is one of the largest threats to people's health, according to the World Health Organization.

Swedish animal welfare laws are among the strictest in the world. The welfare of Swedish animals is protected and the use of antibiotics is kept at a low level. The problem is worse in many countries both within and outside the EU.







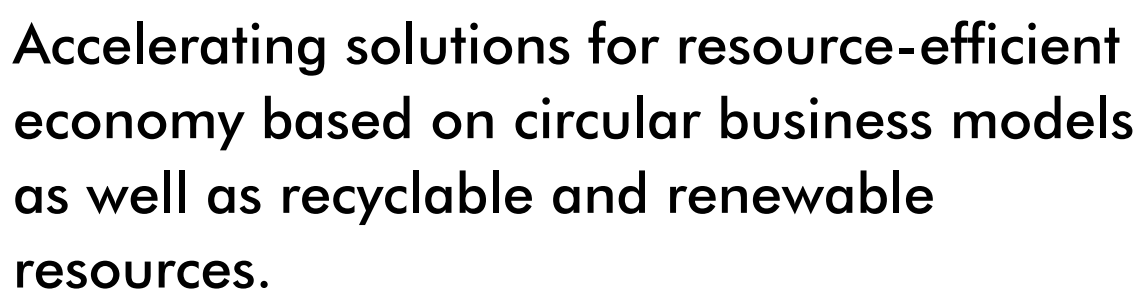
# Circular Economy



## The program contributes to

- ∞ Businesses applying profitable circular business models and sustainable use of resources.
- ↻ Economic growth decoupled from increased use of resources.
- ^ Increased resource efficiency.
- ∞ Use of renewable and recyclable resources.
- ✓ Reduced climate and environmental impact.





# Transitioning to a circular economy necessitates new business ecosystems

Tomorrow's successful companies will be those implementing circular business models and moving away from the current model of take, make and dispose. By decoupling economic growth from the ever-increasing extraction of raw materials and non-renewable resources, circular business models are designed to keep resources at their highest value for the longest possible time while minimizing waste.

Transitioning to a circular economy necessitates new business ecosystems, with new mindsets, capabilities and partnerships. Axfoundation is working to find and develop solutions rooted in the principles of the circular economy using business as driving force and in collaboration with various partners. In today's linear economy, value is created by

producing and selling as many products as possible. However, increasing resource scarcity and depletion means that previously profitable business models now carry significant risks. A significant change is necessary.

Companies who implement circular business models concentrate on rethinking products and services by working towards durability, renewability, reuse, repair, replacement, upgrading, refurbishment and reduced material use. Through these strategies, companies can design out waste, increase resource efficiency and decouple growth from natural resource consumption. Axfoundation's Circular Economy program was initiated in 2019 to locate, pilot and scale such business models, and future resource and material flows.

## Principles of a circular economy

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems









# From waste to fashion: Recycling polyester

Creating a circular business model for discarded industrial polyester straps and round slings.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- A successful proof of concept turned discarded polyester products from the industry into PET pellets to be used in fashion.
- The first trial of a mechanically recycled raw material has been used for sample testing for a product line from Filippa K.

How can one industry's waste become another's resource? Together with Swedish clothing company Filippa K and privately owned industrial group Axel Johnson International, Axfoundation hopes to develop a new circular ecosystem for polyester. Discarded straps and round slings from heavy industry can get a new life in fashion.

"Worn-out straps and round slings for transport and heavy lifting might seem a world away from fashion, but the two industries have one thing in common: the use of virgin polyester as a key material. Due to the significant volumes of discarded polyester and an increasing demand for recycled polyester in fashion, we see great potential in a larger scale circular model." Hanna Skoog, Program Director, Circular Economy, Axfoundation

"Our partnership with Axfoundation and Filippa K to recycle polyester is a great example of using innovation to explore more circular systems and improve resource efficiency while also developing our businesses." Lena Ekbohm, former Head of Sustainability, Axel Johnson International

"We already have circularity as a strategy within our own products and production. Moving into a waste stream from a different industry is something we absolutely believe in. It fits in with our values." Jodi Everding, Fabric and Trim Manager, Filippa K





---

## Results

Together with Filippa K's polyester supplier, the project partners jointly developed a successful proof of concept in 2018 and mechanically turned the worn-out polyester straps into PET pellets. The concept showed substantial recycling potential of the material and the first trial of the recycled raw material has already been used for sample testing for

a product line from Filippa K. In 2019, Axfoundation together with project partners focused on scaling up the initiative by a consortium set up, involving stakeholders from every step in the value chain. Axfoundation also started to build the business case for the collection and handling of the waste materials. The next steps will be decided based on the results.



# Chemical recycling of plastics

**Bridging business and the research community to accelerate the development of chemical recycling of plastics.**

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Axfoundation contributed to the successful testing of depolymerization on industrial waste streams of polyester, resulting in an output of more than 90%.
- By using activated carbon in the chemical recycling process, hard to recycle contaminated polyester can be chemically recycled.

Axfoundation is exploring future solutions to increase the recyclability of today's useless plastic waste streams. We do so by contributing to a project funded by Swedish innovation arena RE:source. The project, focusing on chemical recycling processes, is run by Swedish research institute RISE in collaboration with leading industry actors. Together with Axel Johnson International and Axfood, Axfoundation has enabled collaboration between researchers and businesses and now plays an active role in scaling the initiative through a consortium set up, with the goal of running a demo-scale pilot.

## Results

Successful testing of chemical recycling (depolymerization) has been carried out on food packaging from Axfood, as well as polyester straps from Axel Johnson International customers' operations. Such materials are hard to recycle through mechanical processes, but by using activated carbon in the chemical recycling process the waste can be remade into new plastic material in the form of pure monomers. These monomers can in turn be used in the production of new plastics.

In addition, tests of repolymerization have been successfully conducted. The quality of the new polymers is sufficient for melt spinning and can be used for textiles, for example, by twisting it into yarn. More than 90% of the weight of the original strap becomes monomer, which is then used to make new polymer. The project indicates good recycling potential for the waste products, which are excellent resources for a circular model.





From  
contaminated  
plastics to  
recycled  
plastic pellets.



# Circular flows of materials

## Accelerating commitments on plastics within the Axel Johnson Group.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Mapping of resource flows at Axel Johnson companies highlighted the Group's substantial use of materials as predominantly linear.
- Plastics were identified as key materials and Axfoundation initiated a project to set a common goal for plastics at the Axel Johnson Group.

With one million daily customers, the Axel Johnson Group accounts for a considerable share of the packaging put on the Swedish market. With most materials being discarded after use, what would be the potential effects of increased resource efficiency and keeping materials in use? Axfoundation and the Axel Johnson Group decided to map resource flows to identify circular opportunities.

## Results

The mapping of resource flows highlighted key risk materials and identified hotspots to address. Plastics, key materials in both packaging and products, were identified as materials with similar challenges and opportunities for the companies. A new journey begun where Axfoundation supported Axel Johnson companies to raise the bar with a joint commitment regarding the use of plastics – a goal which today is adopted on Group level.

The purpose is to streamline commitments on recyclable plastics, assessing the amount of plastics used, push to reuse models as well as prioritize renewable and recyclable raw materials. In the process of setting the goal,

Axfoundation worked in close collaboration with representatives from Axel Johnson companies through our collaborative Circular Economy Network.

Axfoundation later initiated yet another a venture together with Axel Johnson companies to map plastics flows in more detail. Together with experts and consultants, Axfoundation is currently building a methodology and a tool for companies in retail to map and analyze plastics footprints, enabling businesses to act upon the accumulated knowledge. The aim of Axfoundation is to spur dialogue in the whole value chain through increased understanding of the materials put on the market.









# Sustainable Production and Consumption

## The program contributes to

- ^ Improved working and living conditions in global supply chains.
- ! Responsible buying practices.
- ✓ Reduced climate and environmental impact from production and consumption.
- ! Increased consumer awareness of the social and environmental impact of consumption.
- ^ Increased transparency and traceability.





Pushing for responsible trade and conscious consumption throughout the value chain.



# Building alliances and innovating solutions throughout the value chain

A prerequisite for the survival and prosperity of the planet and its inhabitants is sustainable production and consumption. This applies to everything: from the food we eat to the clothes we wear; from the technology we use to the items with which we decorate our homes. By joining forces with partners across sectors and industries, Axfoundation tests new methods, builds knowledge and makes good examples visible, to fast forward a transition towards all aspects of a more sustainable society.

Axfoundation collaborates with both Swedish and international companies, as well as public and international bodies to improve working and living conditions of employees, migrant workers and smallholder farmers in the global production chain.

A case in point is the public-private partnership “Sustainable Rice in Pakistan”, which gathers together representatives throughout the basmati rice value chain in an attempt to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and their workers. Another is the digital training efforts in China, Thailand and Bangladesh designed to increase knowledge about rights and mobilize employees to defend them.

Axfoundation also tests and develops novel methods for increased transparency and traceability, including possibilities within blockchain technology. Increased transparency makes it possible to detect and address problems, to place responsibility where it belongs and to provide accurate product information to customers.

“

**The customer is always right but doesn't always make the right choices. We help them make more sustainable decisions.**”

Viveka Risberg, Program Director, Sustainable Production and Consumption, Axfoundation







# Nudging consumer behavior in online food retail

Guiding customers towards climate-smart choices.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 3,000 food items on Mat.se were matched with climate data, calculated by researchers at Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE), showing the CO<sub>2</sub>e per kilogram.
- Axfoundation contributed to nudging trials which reduced participating customers' climate impact from food purchases by 7%, based on average CO<sub>2</sub>e per order.

Today, food accounts for 25% of our individual climate footprint. At the same time, studies show that through increased knowledge, consumers can half their food-related climate impact. So, how can we encourage more sustainable behavior

among consumers? In a pilot project, Axfoundation supported online food retailer Mat.se's use of the economic nudge theory to guide customers towards climate-smart choices through a climate labelling at product level.



For Axfoundation, the long-term goal is to stimulate sustainable behavior by contributing to building reliable and easily communicable climate data that can be used by consumers. We hope that, initially, the climate data is shared among the companies within the Axel Johnson Group and then integrated into RISE's climate database to reach as many actors as possible.



Hanna Skoog, Program Director, Axfoundation





Photo: Axfood

## Results

In 2019, Mat.se launched the largest climate labeling of food items ever done, comprising approximately 3,000 products that are purchased frequently and in large quantities. A unique climate database used to produce the climate data was developed in collaboration with the research institute RISE, Axfood and Axel Johnson.

Climate-impact information on products works according to the same principle as the comparative price per kilogram. The CO<sub>2</sub>e per kilogram figure illustrates what one kilogram of the selected food corresponds to in carbon dioxide equivalents, i.e. emissions of greenhouse gases. Clear climate-impact marking on product level, combined with innovative

nudging solutions made it easier for consumers to compare the impact of different food items. Through nudging, rather than coercion, consumer behavior moved gradually towards more sustainable habits.

Nudging tests clearly indicate that customers are interested in and willing to adapt their purchases based on the food's climate footprint. For example, by showing potatoes, rice and pasta next to each other, Mat.se customers could compare the climate impact of different products. In total, the climate impact of food purchases reduced an average of 7% among the consumers who participated in the test.

# Partnership for sustainable rice production

Improving livelihoods for farmers and seasonal workers in the basmati rice supply chain.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 2,250 farmers and workers in Punjab, Pakistan, trained in sustainable rice cultivation.
- 25 grower organizations formed.
- 66% of the members in the grower organizations are women.
- 50% of leading positions in the organizations are held by women.
- Increased yields and higher price per kilogram of rice.
- 30% less water usage in the rice cultivation.
- 15% fewer CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.
- Living wage assessment and buying practices program includes Axfood buyers.

**What should a retail company do if a product turns out to be linked to human rights violations and unsuitable working conditions in its country of origin? Should the retailer stop purchasing the product? What if the producers' livelihoods depend on this specific product? Instead of cutting the business, human rights risks can be addressed and livelihoods improved. Building alliances is an extremely important path towards driving such change.**

While rice is a staple food crop, providing more calories to the global population than any other food, its cultivation comes with social and environmental challenges. It is both a major contributor to and a victim of climate

change. Rice farmers play an important role in adapting new farming practices and food retailers play a vital role in supporting them in doing so.

Axfoundation is involved in a long-term engagement in the public-private partnership project "Sustainable Rice in Pakistan" in collaboration with Axfood, Unil Norway, Oxfam, supplier Rol-Ryz and processing companies in Pakistan. Sustainable rice cultivation practices are being implemented, leading to improved working conditions and increased incomes for smallholder farmers and seasonal workers involved in the production of basmati rice sold under the Garant brand.



## Public-private partnership



"Sustainable Rice in Pakistan" is part of the regional program Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness in South-East Asia (GRAISEA) funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).



**OXFAM**

Med människor mot fattigdom

Oxfam is the implementing partner working with various local actors to improve working conditions and promote improved resilience to climate change with a specific focus on women's economic empowerment.



The training of farmers and workers is based on the Sustainable Rice Cultivation Standard by the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP).



**UNIL**  
merkevarerhus

**Axfood**

Three supply-chain actors are the private project partners. The local exporters provide technical support to the farmers.



**AXFOUNDATION**

Axfoundation's aim is to develop, test and share the project model with other actors in the Nordic market for transformative change.



"We want basmati rice from Garant to be grown, harvested and sold in a manner that benefits smallholder farmers and the environment. We have invited the whole production chain into the project. And everybody has the same goal: more sustainable rice." Kristina Areskog Bjurling, Sustainability Manager, Axfood/Dagab

"There's strength in numbers. We women have always worked in the rice fields, but earlier we didn't get the right pay. No one listened to us when we made demands in small groups. Now, through the grower organization, our demands are met and we get better salaries." Kausar Bibi, project participant and farmer in Punjab

## Results

In total, 2,250 farmers and seasonal workers in Pakistan have been trained in sustainable rice cultivation, and 25 grower organizations have been formed. In total, nearly 17,000 people will indirectly be affected by the increased rice productivity and higher incomes.

Two multi-stakeholder platforms have been established in which smallholder farmers can meet to discuss social, economic and environmental challenges with authorities and experts.

Analysis of the value chain has been conducted to identify the gap between net income and living wages for rice farmers in the project area.

Through this variation of social mobilization on the ground, advocacy work in multi-stakeholder forums and assessments of pricing and buying practices, the project aims to involve the whole chain. In Punjab, it has strengthened smallholder farmers' influence in general and women's voice in particular.

# Ethical Trading Initiative Sweden

Creating a cross-sector platform for improved working conditions in global supply chains.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ETI Sweden was formed on December 12, 2019 and gathered together companies, trade unions, civil society organizations and the public sector.
- 20 member organizations joined ETI Sweden the first two months of 2020.

Responsible trade builds sustainable development for people and society. Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) encourages businesses to act responsibly and promote decent work. Its members are forward-thinking companies, trade unions, NGOs and public actors. Together, they tackle complex challenges of today's global supply chains, improving the lives of workers worldwide.

ETI first appeared in the UK in 1998, followed by Norway in 2000 and Denmark in 2008. The formation of ETI Sweden in 2019 signified a vigorous joint effort for fair conditions, reduced environmental impact and anti-corruption in world trade and business operations. Axfoundation was one of the driving forces behind the formation of ETI Sweden and one of its founders.

"Axfoundation co-founded ETI Sweden for its transformative change potential. The aim is to push the agenda of responsible supply chain management through broad and strategic collaborations." Viveka Risberg, Program Director, Axfoundation

"Today, traceability and the knowledge about how to prevent, mitigate and manage risks throughout the supply chain is low. Global supply chains, including those of Swedish companies, are rife with human rights violations and poverty. Different actors must collaborate to solve this." Hanna Nelson, Policy Manager, Oxfam Sweden

"Impetus from both trade unions and NGOs are necessary to address the challenges in the agricultural industry regarding for example low salaries and lack of trade union rights. For this reason, ETI is a very valuable initiative." Hanna Sutherlin, Sustainability Manager, Systembolaget





Photo: Solidarity Center/Carlos Villalon

ETI Sweden promotes sustainable business practices through skills training, collaboration and the promotion of good purchasing practices, risk management and capacity building in global supply chains. Human rights, workers' rights, environment and climate change are in focus.

## Results

ETI Sweden was founded by Axfoundation, Coop Sverige, Fairtrade Sverige, Oxfam Sweden, The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), Systembolaget, Unionen, Union of Commercial Employees (Handelsanställdas förbund), Union to Union, Västtrafik, and We Effect. ETI engages all sectors and encourages members from the retail, industry, construction and energy sectors.

ETI Sweden was founded a few weeks before the first cases of coronavirus were reported in China. The pandemic exposed the urgent need for even greater responsible business conduct and long-term joint efforts to support workers and farmers in

global supply chains. What makes ETI unique is the cross-sectorial collaboration and the member service that aims to raise competence within business and human rights. The joint efforts increase the potential of improvements on the factory floor, at a shared supplier, or on policy level.

A key component of the work of ETI Sweden is to support members during human rights due diligence processes. ETI Sweden's member companies pledge to follow OECD guidelines for human rights due diligence and report their progress on a yearly basis, using a reporting tool based on OECD Due Diligence Guidance.

# Training in rights and responsibilities in Asia

Rights awareness enables workers to express themselves.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Through a strategic partnership with Quizrr, 7,800 employees and managers at 23 Axel Johnson companies' suppliers in China have been trained in rights and responsibilities, wage management and worker engagement during 30,500 training sessions.
- Axfoundation's impact assessment of digital training on rights and responsibilities on 19 factories in China in 2019 indicates improved communication and worker engagement.
- Axfoundation became a co-founder of the Nordic Initiative, along with food retailers and Quizrr, to empower migrant workers in the food supply chain in Thailand.
- 2,500 workers and managers at 15 food factories in Thailand supplying Nordic companies have been trained in labor law and human rights with a focus on ethical recruitment. Training in Thailand is done multi-lingually so as to include migrant workers from in Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, as well as Thai workers.
- Axfoundation acts as coordinator of MOVE, a broader development of the Nordic Initiative, targeting more markets and companies in other sectors than food.

**China and Thailand supplies most of the world's goods and food. Common challenges for workers in these countries include precarious work contracts, bans on unions, extreme overtime demands and unsafe working conditions. Migrant workers are among the most vulnerable.**

Axfoundation has engaged in capacity-building measures for both workers and managers at supplier factories in Asia since 2014 – first in China then in Thailand. We encouraged Axel Johnson companies to use Quizrr, a digital and gamified education tool, on supplier factories. This spurred related initiatives such as the Nordic Initiative

(later MOVE), whose aim is to mitigate discrimination and the exploitation of migrant workers through efficient and modern training.

Quizrr training at Axel Johnson companies' suppliers in Asia has been part of a long-term collaboration between Axfoundation and the companies. Axfoundation has accelerated, supported and monitored these efforts and has been able to engage closely with the factories thanks to the companies' business relations with their suppliers. What once started off as a pilot proved successful and could be scaled up and outwards for transformative change.





### Quizrr: A digital tool for training in rights and responsibilities

Quizrr is a Swedish tech company which develops digital training in worker's rights and responsibilities. The training aims to build shared knowledge and mobilize employees to exercise their rights. The training is performed on mobile devices like tablets through gamified content combining live-action videos and quiz-style questions in local languages. Its measure-and-share concept allows customers (buying brands) and suppliers to track progress and benchmark results through an online dashboard. The training targets employees, middle managers and executives. It also covers several modules including: a basic module on rights and responsibilities, a module on salary setting; and a module on social dialogue and worker representation.

# From China pilot to the Nordic Initiative to MOVE

## China

**Pilot in China:** Axfoundation initiates digital training at Axel Johnson companies' suppliers in China. Five Axel Johnson companies start implementing the training: Axfood, Filippa K, Kicks, Martin & Servera and Åhléns.

**370**  
workers and managers trained

**4** factories participating

**11,176**  
workers and managers trained

**24** factories participating

**3,601**  
workers and managers trained

**21** factories participating

2014

2015

2016

2017

## Thailand

**Forced labor among migrant workers in Thailand spurs the Nordic Initiative:** Every year, millions of people cross borders to work. Many work in global supply chains providing foods and goods to Europe. Migrant workers help fill labor shortages and contribute to economic growth. But many risk exploitation and exposure to discrimination and forced labor.

To address these issues, The Nordic Initiative was formed in 2017, consisting of Axfood, Axfoundation, Coop Sweden, CPF Denmark, ICA, Martin & Servera, Menigo, Norvida, Unil Norway and Quizrr.

Through joint efforts, the initiative aims to raise awareness among farmers and factory workers in Thailand, so that trafficking, discrimination and other ill treatment can be prevented and stopped.



**Expansion:** Axfoundation and companies tweak the training approach and roll-out. Trainings pick up speed, more buying brands and factories join. The brands and suppliers finance the training themselves while Axfoundation focuses on measuring the results.

**34,167**   
workers and managers trained

**28**   
factories participating

**Assessing the result:** Raoul Wallenberg Institute assesses the impact of Quizrr program Rights & Responsibilities in China. The report suggests that Quizrr training has contributed to greater awareness and new routines.

**Assessing the impact:** Axfoundation assess the output and outcomes of digital training at 19 factories in China that had been using Quizrr training both for workers and managers. The survey was answered by 1,869 managers and workers and the assessment indicates improved communication between workers and management. Workers and managers report that democratically elected worker representatives are in place thanks to the trainings, and that these representatives can ensure that employees gain influence in their workplace. More than half of the respondents claim these changes occurred after the training.

The Axel Johnson companies continue implementing Quizrr as part of their sustainability strategy with the aim of sourcing responsibly and contributing to positive change within their sphere of influence.


# 2018

**Digital training developed:** Based on the experience from the digital training pilot in China, the Nordic Initiative supports the development of Quizrr training material for Thai food supply chain actors. The aim is to mitigate unethical recruitment and forced labor.

# 2019

**Training rolled out:** In 2019, the training is rolled out in 3 languages on 11 factories in Thailand. Through this pilot, co-funded by the buying companies and Sweden's innovation agency Vinnova, over 2,300 employees and managers test the Quizrr training.

**2,300**   
workers and managers trained

**10**   
factories participating in the pilot

# 2020

**The Nordic Initiative evolves into MOVE:**

Welcoming organizations and companies from different sectors and different market to join, MOVE aims to empower migrant workers in global supply chains through easily accessible digital training, shared knowledge and constructive dialogue.



# Inclusive Societies

## The program contributes to

- ^ Faster integration of foreign-born people into the Swedish labor market.
- 🔗 The widening of networks between new and established Swedes.
- ≡ More equal opportunities and conditions.





Facilitating meetings between new and established Swedes – because meetings lead to networks and networks lead to jobs.

# One hour makes a difference

Inclusion in society and its labor market represents a major challenge in Sweden. In recent years, Sweden has seen the greatest levels of immigration since the 1990s and, while this in several ways contributes directly to the country's economic growth, segregation is increasing, skilled labor is being left unutilized and foreign-born people are being excluded. The time it takes to settle and find a job is simply too long. Studies show that it takes an average of 7-8 years for a foreign-born person to find employment in Sweden. Finding successful ways to address the challenge of inclusion requires the public sector, businesses, civil society and private individuals to work together.

Axfoundation's work with diversity, settling in and integration is rooted in people's equal value and the belief that diversity is an important asset for Sweden's development. Physical meetings are a useful way of reaching cross-cultural understanding and can be important steps in stopping the increasing level of segregation in Sweden. In order for people to find the time and mobilize the courage to take part in integration activities, the threshold for engagement must be low. This is why Axfoundation launched ÖppnaDörren (Open The Door). Since the start in 2015, over 58,000 new and established Swedes have met. Now, it's time to scale up, scale out and dig into new opportunities.







Photo: Lo Varg



“ Face-to-face meetings, conversations and the opportunity to understand Swedish culture – as well as for Swedes to understand the culture of others – is absolutely crucial for integration. ”

Antonia Ax:son Johnson

Photo: Private



# ÖppnaDörren

**Our vision is to create a movement of 'door openers' that contribute to a more open Sweden.**

## HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 58,000 new and established Swedes have met through the partner organizations of ÖppnaDörren: Yrkesdörren, Nya Kompisbyrån and Svenska med baby since early 2015. More than 10,000 people met in 2019 alone.
- 42% have had the chance to meet potential employers through meetings facilitated by their 'door openers'.
- 38% of those who met an employer has landed a job and 19% have been offered an internship.
- 80% of the participants say they felt more included in Swedish society after their meetings with an established Swede.
- 79% of participants say they better understand the Swedish labor market.

The most effective way to get established in a new country is to find a job and learn the language. However, in many cases, finding a job requires a strong network. As many as 8 out of 10 open positions in Sweden are filled with the help of contacts. The starting point for ÖppnaDörren is that individual-level meetings and the informal validation that comes with it, are crucial to speeding up and improving economic and social integration, as well as combating growing levels of segregation. ÖppnaDörren works on the premise that meetings lead to networks and networks lead to jobs.

ÖppnaDörren comprises three integration initiatives: Yrkesdörren, Nya Kompisbyrån and Svenska med baby. The common denominator is that they all have a low threshold for participation: They match new and established Swedes for informal face-

to-face meetings on an individual level. The meeting could be a coffee, a dinner or an activity with children to talk about jobs or common interests.

ÖppnaDörren collaborates with a wide range of partners, beyond the three initiatives. Among them are Apel, Axel Johnson, Centre for Business and Policy Studies (SNS), Demokratikonsult, Dustin, EFFSO, Ernst & Young, The European Social Fund, The Global Village/Järvaveckan, Integrationsnätverket, The Immigrant Index, KICKS, Luckan by Dörren in Finland, Martin & Servera, MittLiv, Nordregio, Ocean Observations, Oriflame, Phil's burger, Spotify, The Swedish Employment Agency, The Swedish ESF Council, The Swedish Federation of Business Owners (Företagarna), The Union for Professionals (Akademikerförbundet SSR), Urban Deli and Åhléns.





### Svenska med baby

**Svenska med baby** facilitates meetings between parents and children from different residential areas and with different cultural backgrounds. Through accessible and open parent groups, Svenska med baby works against segregation, building new bridges and creating opportunities to better people's Swedish and self-confidence as a parent through conversations and laughter.

Svenska med baby has been a partner of ÖppnaDörren since 2014.

- 100% of those surveyed say they were able to practice their Swedish during Svenska med baby activities.
- 80% feel more included in Swedish society after their meetings with an established Swede.



### Nya Kompisbyrån

**Nya Kompisbyrån** brings together people who want to improve their Swedish and people who speak fluent Swedish, over a homemade dinner, a coffee or an activity. These everyday meetings lead to an increased understanding between culturally different individuals.

Nya Kompisbyrån was formed when the initiatives Kompisbyrån and Invitationsdepartementet joined together.

- 94% say they have gained a greater understanding of Swedish society after having dinner through Invitationsdepartementet.
- 79% say they have had the opportunity to meet more established Swedes after their first meeting through Kompisbyrån.



### Yrkesdörren

**Yrkesdörren** matches established Swedes with people who are new in the country, based on having expertise from the same industry. These meetings help broaden professional networks and gives the participant an informal validation of his/hers qualifications, which is crucial for integration into the Swedish labor market.

Yrkesdörren was initiated and managed by Axfoundation until 2020, when it was scaled up via the Axel Johnson Group.

- 77% of participants say they feel more integrated into Swedish society after their meetings through Yrkesdörren.
- 51% get an interview with an employer after their meetings.



## Adapt, don't stop

During the coronavirus pandemic of 2020, ÖppnaDörren's partner organizations were quick to adapt to the new norm of social distancing. NyaKompisbyrån went live with the new service, *Digital Buddy*, and hundreds of new and established Swedes signed up for language practice via video chat in just the first few weeks after launch. Instead of offering open parent-children groups indoors, Svenska med baby moved all their activities outdoors to have bigger space between the participants. Yrkesdörren broadened its scope of operations to create digital meetings between pensioners isolated in quarantine and foreign-born people in Sweden in need of a network. The dual aim of the initiative is to reduce isolation due to the coronavirus outbreak as well as exclusion from the labor market.

# Results

ÖppnaDörren's 2020 impact assessment indicates that the meetings that have taken place have had a positive effect on the ability of the participants to integrate in Sweden. Many unemployed foreign-born people testify to the difficulty of getting a job interview through traditional application processes. The assessment shows that 42% have met potential employers thanks to the contacts that established Swedes have shared in meetings that took place within the framework of ÖppnaDörren partner organizations. ÖppnaDörren contributes to quicker integration into the Swedish labor market, helps reduce segregation and indirectly helps create jobs through its partner organizations.

In total, some 16% of participants get a job after their meeting through ÖppnaDörren. Studies show that today it takes an average of 7–8 years for a foreign-born person to get work in Sweden and calculations have been made of the social cost<sup>1</sup>. If the meeting through ÖppnaDörren leads to the time it takes participants to integrate into the labor market being shortened – if only by a year – it contributes to a socio-economic benefit of SEK 1 billion.

When door openers are asked about their experience of the meetings, many say their understanding has increased about the challenges foreign-born people face in the Swedish labor market and that they are happy to open more doors for people in the future. The trickle-down effects of the meetings can contribute to a more inclusive attitude among the general public, and an increased understanding of each other, thus reducing prejudice, increasing the likelihood of equal opportunities for new and established Swedes, and improving integration.

ÖppnaDörren has strengthened its partner organizations' capacities to facilitate more meetings between new and established Swedes by financing joint marketing activities, co-hosting events and contributing to the coordination of volunteers. In addition, ÖppnaDörren has created synergies between its partners, made it possible to transfer skills, carried out training initiatives and strengthened the partner organizations' opportunities for their own financing and coordinated grant applications. As such, ÖppnaDörren partners have been able to scale up their operations.

In a survey conducted in 2019, partners give ÖppnaDörren:

- 9 out of 10 points for strengthening their capacity to scale up.
- 8 out of 10 points for helping them create more meetings.
- 6 out of 10 points for helping them with their geographical expansion.



**A single meeting, of one hour, has proven to make a big difference to an individual's ability to get established in Sweden.**

Amelie Silfverstolpe, Program Director, Axfoundation

<sup>1</sup> According to "Being in the game: Adults with a foreign background in the labor market from a social investment perspective" (Swe: "Att vara med i leken: Vuxna med utländsk bakgrund på arbetsmarknaden ur ett socialt investeringsperspektiv") (Eva Nilsson Lundmark & Ingvar Nilsson/Krut AB, 2016), the socio-economic benefit of shortening the average introduction time into the labor market by one year is at least SEK 400,000 kr per person per year. For a highly paid person, the benefit is more than twice that amount (SEK 860,000).



# ÖppnaDörren: From pilot to scale

It all started with a practical challenge: If it takes 7–8 years for a foreign-born person to find a job in Sweden, what can Axfoundation do to help speed up the process?

This was obviously too great of a challenge for us to solve on our own. We needed to hook arms and build alliances between sectors if we were going to make an impact. We also needed to test different solutions and quickly achieve scale.

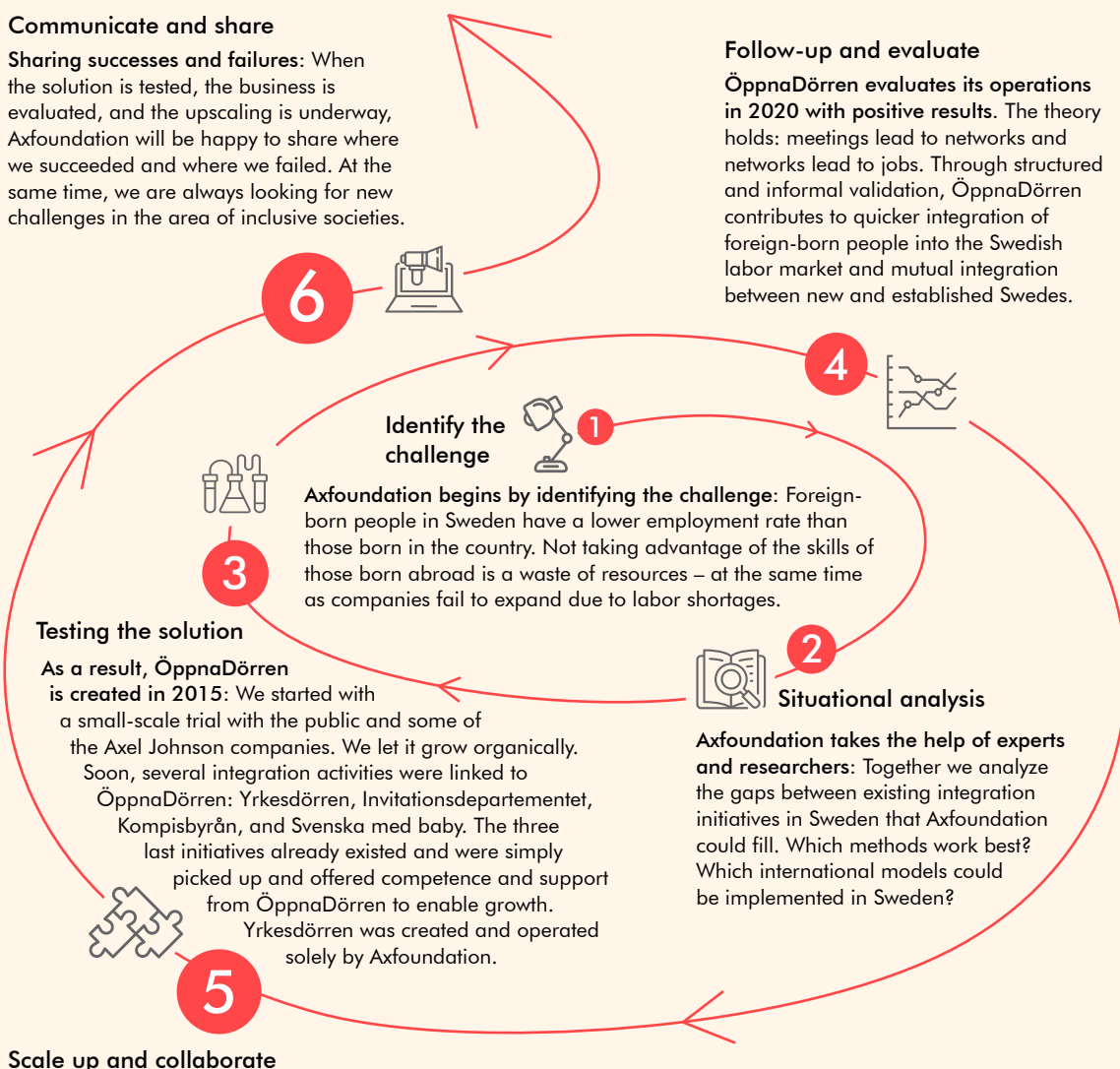
This led to Axfoundation creating the ÖppnaDörren accelerator with the mission to build capacity and scale up other integration initiatives sharing our approach to change. We all believe that meetings lead to networks and networks lead to jobs. ÖppnaDörren's partners Yrkesdörren, Nya Kompisbvrån and Svenska med baby have delivered substantial results and, in line with Axfoundation's working model, it is time for the initiatives to scale up even further. In 2020, ÖppnaDörren was incorporated into Axel Johnson's Axelerate program to reach even more people. This is the journey from pilot to scale.

## Communicate and share

**Sharing successes and failures:** When the solution is tested, the business is evaluated, and the upscaling is underway, Axfoundation will be happy to share where we succeeded and where we failed. At the same time, we are always looking for new challenges in the area of inclusive societies.

## Follow-up and evaluate

**ÖppnaDörren evaluates its operations in 2020 with positive results.** The theory holds: meetings lead to networks and networks lead to jobs. Through structured and informal validation, ÖppnaDörren contributes to quicker integration of foreign-born people into the Swedish labor market and mutual integration between new and established Swedes.



# Yrkesdörren

## HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 5,700 new and established Swedes have met through Yrkesdörren since 2015. Over 2,000 people met in 2019 alone.
- 77% of participants say they feel more integrated into Swedish society after their meetings through Yrkesdörren.
- 83% of participants say they understand the Swedish labor market better.
- 51% get an interview with an employer after their meetings.
- 35% of those who meet an employer land a job and 19% get an internship.

Yrkesdörren sets up meetings between established Swedes and people who are new to the country and who have experience from the same industry. The purpose is to broaden the participants' professional networks and thereby contribute to speeding up their integration into the Swedish labor market. They meet

for an hour to talk about their common industry, such as social codes and how to improve their CVs. This way, an informal validation of the competence of the participant is made and the door opener has the opportunity to share suitable contacts. An hour may be all that's needed to change the course of someone's life.



Yrkesdörren was a great help, a way of getting feedback, support and the chance to meet people who work at similar organizations to where I wanted to work. I got to learn how it works and what they do. I got a clearer picture of what I want. "

Henna, Yrkesdörren participant





# Results

Meetings lead to networks. A one-hour meeting has a ripple effect, lasting longer than the meeting, with many keeping in touch later in life. By matching people in the same industry, Yrkesdörren facilitates the utilization of foreign-born skills: the meeting not only contributes to finding a job but also the right job. Thus, Yrkesdörren contributes to helping participants get established in Sweden and simultaneously increases the diversity of working life, as employers are given access to a much wider talent pool. The majority of door openers share a contact after the meeting, which in turn may lead to jobs.

- 80% of door openers share at least one contact.
- 80% say they will stay in touch after the meeting.
- 43% stay in touch six months afterwards.

**55%** are connected with 1-3 people that are already established in Sweden.

Networks lead to jobs. According to Yrkesdörren's impact assessment, more than half of participants get the opportunity to meet a potential employer after a meeting through Yrkesdörren, while 18% of job-seekers get a job through their meeting. An additional 10% receive internships.

**18%**

of job-seekers get a job through their Yrkesdörren meeting.

Long-term contact between new and established Swedes can change attitudes and contribute to improved integration in Swedish society.

- 68% of established Swedes who are matched through Yrkesdörren feel that they contribute to a more inclusive society.
- 37% of participants visited an area or district in which they had not previously visited.

**65%**

believe that Yrkesdörren has had a positive impact on their integration into Swedish society.



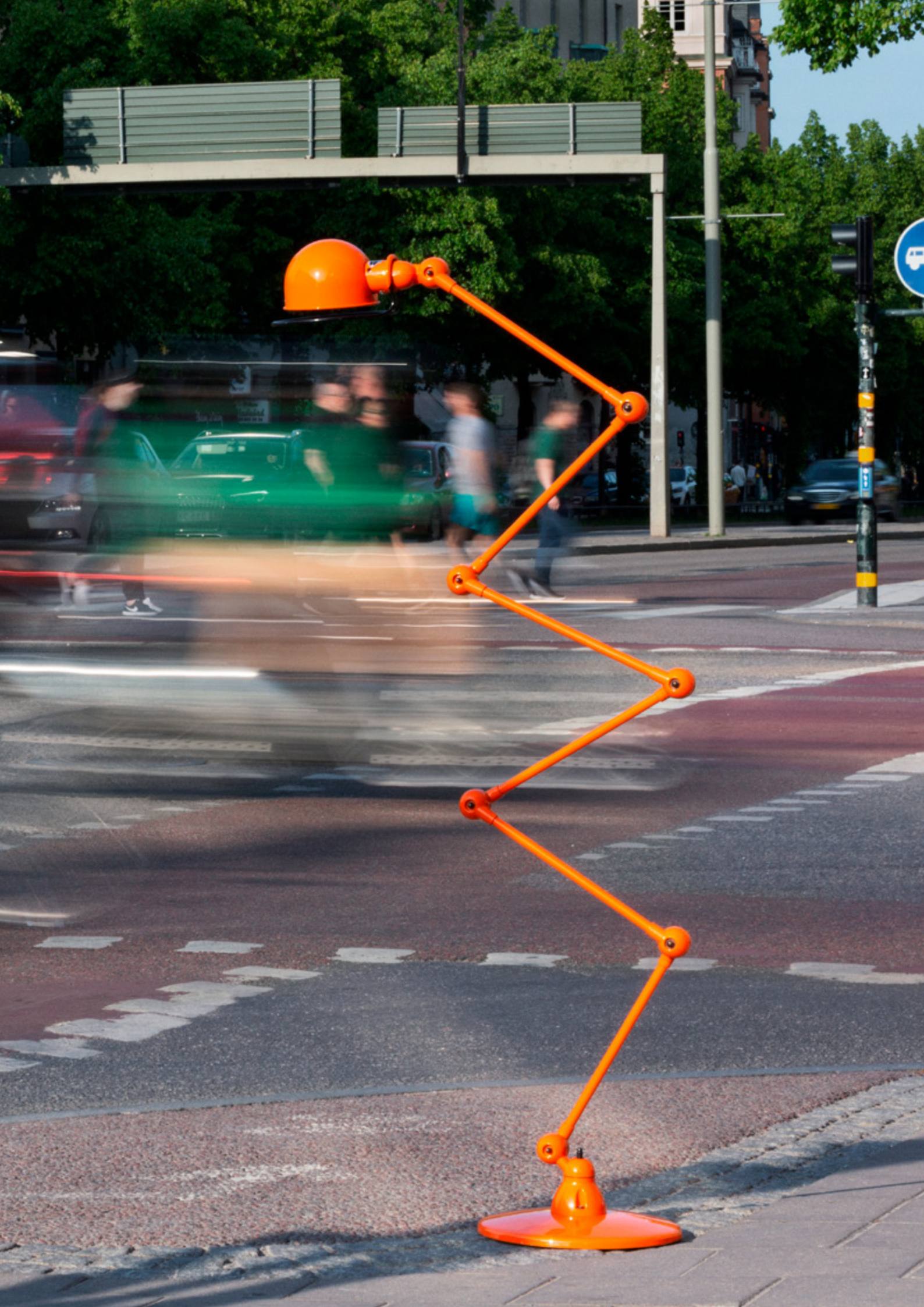




# Courage to fail

The goal of Axfoundation is to contribute to positive development in society by exploring new solutions. With that as our backbone, trial and error is in our DNA. In collaboration with others or working alone, we need to have courage to fail. And to learn from our failures. We believe in sharing not only our successes, but also our failures. Here are some examples from Axfoundation program directors of times when things didn't go quite as planned.









“We accidentally  
created a heaven  
for rodents.”

“In a project for Future Food, we had set our sights on a new biological fertilizer and started testing it at Torsåker farm. Not only did it prove to be superb for the crops, the fertilizer itself turned out also highly attractive to rats. Using the fertilizer, combined with our simultaneous test to cover the cultivation beds with silage, we had created a small heaven for rodents. I don’t know how many hours of work went up in smoke when the rats had a field day with the unusual and tasty beets we had planted with great love and care.” **Madeline Linins Mörner, Axfoundation**



“Our long planned  
tour simply didn’t  
convert.”

“At ÖppnaDörren, we had planned for a grand national tour to recruit a large number of door openers who would give one hour of their time to help people with a foreign background enter the labor market. We spent hours at Åhléns stores across Sweden to inform and recruit customers – only to realize a few events down the line that it didn’t lead to many registered door openers. So, ÖppnaDörren sat down

with Åhléns and re-drew the game plan. A new concept was developed overnight and we chose to instead invite customers through Åhléns’ members newsletter to a joint activity where they would be matched with newly arrived Swede’s over a cup of coffee. This method worked significantly better and a number of door openers signed up. Today, we still use this approach.” **Amelie Silfverstolpe, Axfoundation**





Photo: Bakki Frost/Oxfam

“The path to transparency using blockchain technology in the Moroccan strawberry supply chain turned out to be a long and winding one.”

“For a couple of years, blockchain technology was on the lips of everyone in the food industry. As far back as 2017, Axfoundation initiated a collaborative project to explore and evaluate the true potential of blockchain technology for the food industry to increase transparency and traceability.

We started off with an initial feasibility study which in turn led to design studies. In more depth we explored three sectors – strawberries, fish and pigs – to see how blockchain technology could create value. The project brought together technology companies, retailers, food producing companies, actors from public sector and non-profits, to share insights and learn about the challenges and opportunities of blockchain technology. Together, we found – at least on paper – that it could address some industry-wide problems.

Spurred by the positive findings, we continued exploring the potential for strawberry production during an in-depth field study in Morocco. With our feet on the ground at the strawberry farms, several challenges surfaced. Hands on, we saw that blockchain technology is never stronger than its weakest link, and in this case that was the trust between the supply chain partners.

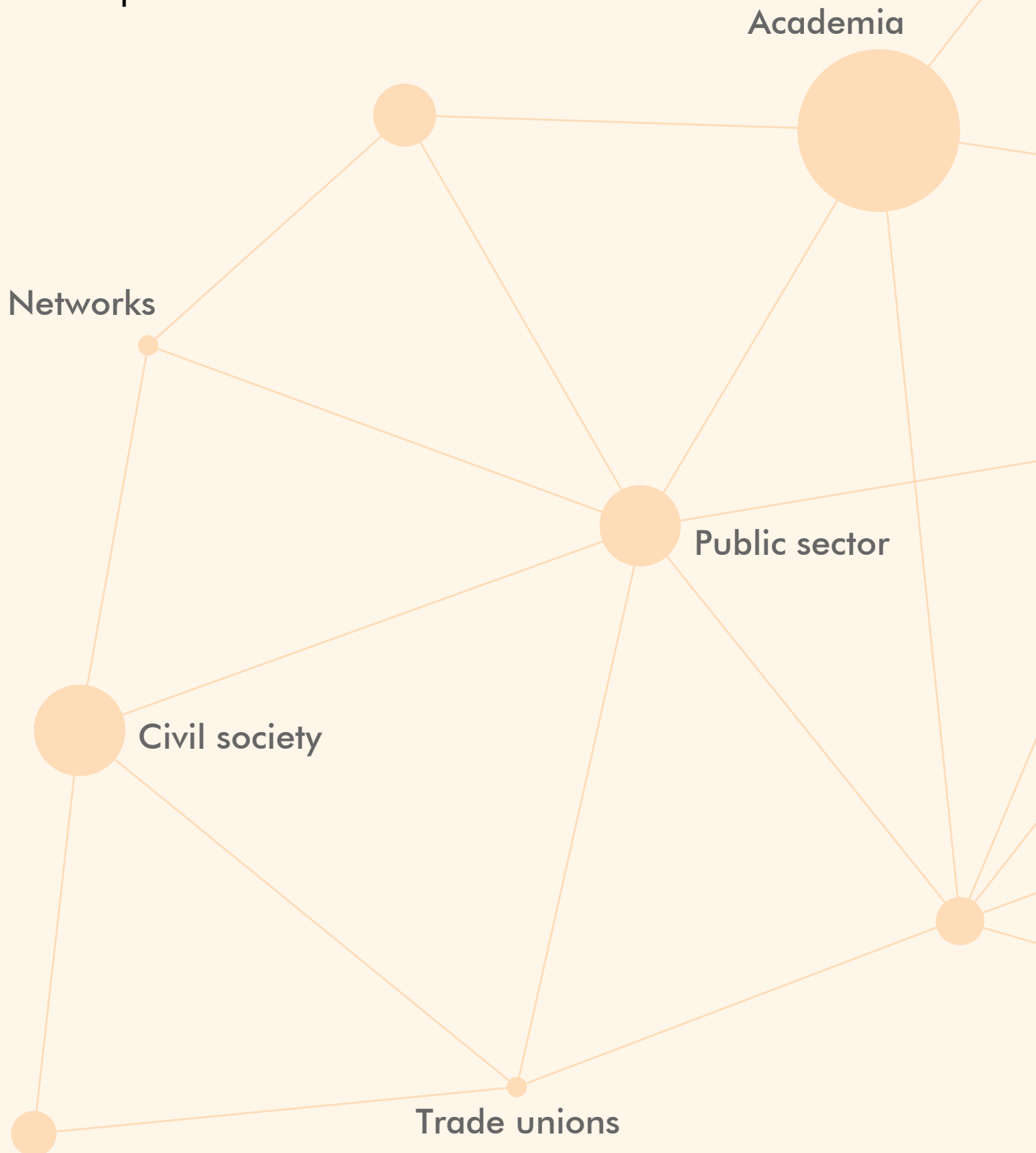
Before venturing into practical implementation of blockchain technology, it is crucial that all actors in the supply chain, including the informal ones, have been fully identified beforehand and that there is a clear incentive to share data and participate. Our field visit showed that this was not the case.

This as a human challenge, not a tech one. Once factors such as trust and clear incentive is established, blockchain technology can slowly begin to underpin the established trust and processes and gradually more data can be shared. Blockchain technology has the potential to radically simplify access to reliable data about a product’s origin, production conditions and distribution along the supply chain, however, there are also a lot of challenges along the way.

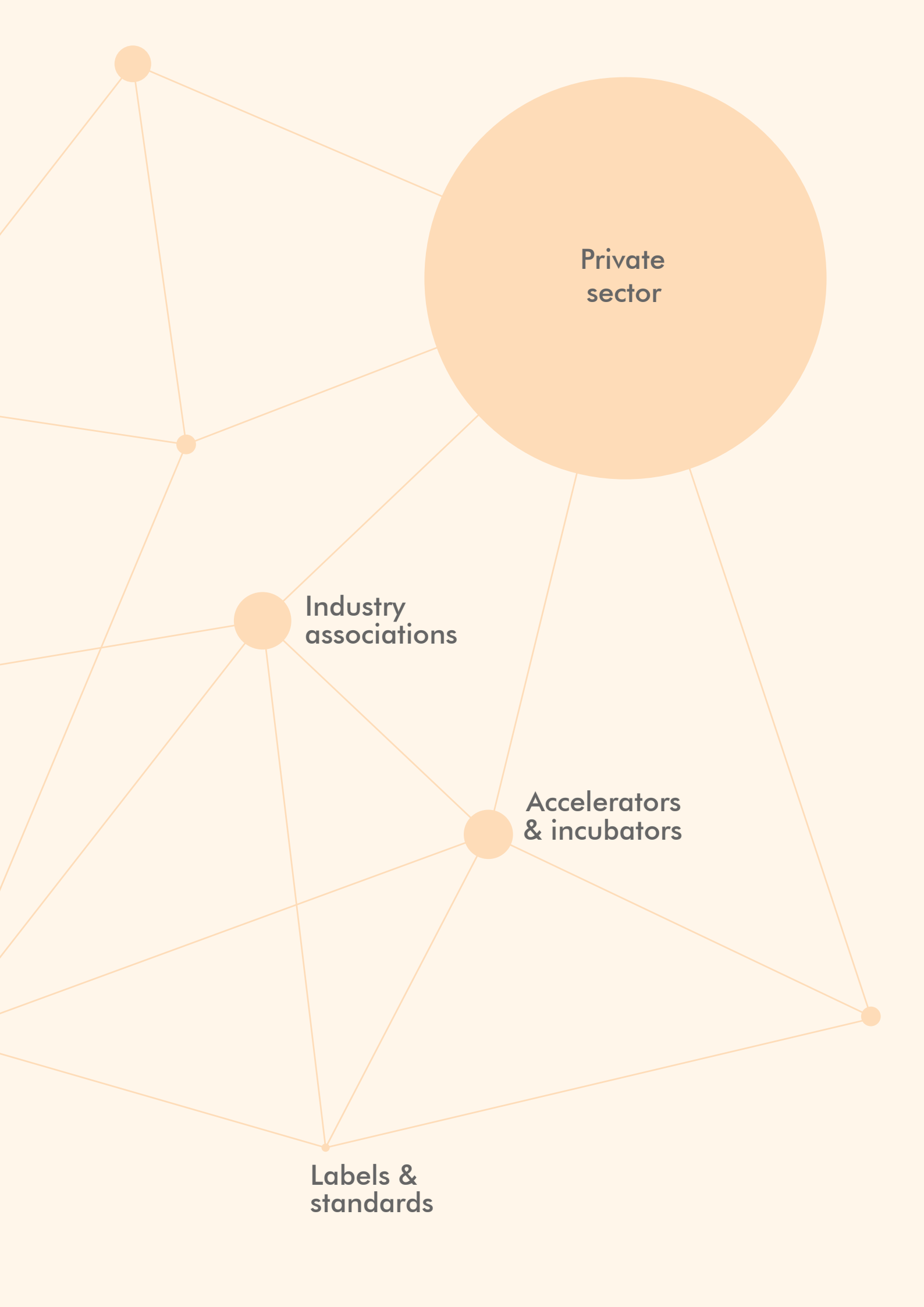
Axfoundation decided not to move forward with the pilot. Instead, we summarized our lessons learned in a report open for all to read. I hope this will spur further initiatives in this area.”  
Hanna Skoog, Axfoundation

# Meet our partners

Axfoundation collaborates with around 225 partners across sectors and industries.







**Former CEO of the Stockholm Environment Institute, Johan Kuylenstierna** is today adjunct professor and honorary doctor at Stockholm University and vice chair of the Swedish Climate Policy Council. He is an prominent lecturer, debater and is active in several organizations working with issues related to the environment, energy and climate. He has been a board member of Axfoundation since 2019.

“Major changes are underway that will fundamentally transform our societies in the coming decades. Environmental concerns increasingly drive everything from energy and transport-systems planning to the transformation of the global food system. Axfoundation operates in the midst of all this and builds its strong engagement on the basis that environmental and societal challenges can only be addressed by focusing on positive vision of development in which people and society are at the center and where broad collaboration is the key success driver. With the clear ambition to be a partner-oriented problem solver, and always action and result oriented, Axfoundation contributes to the development and implementation of knowledge-based solutions within four activity areas: sustainable food systems, efficient circular economies, sustainable consumption and production, and inclusive societies.”

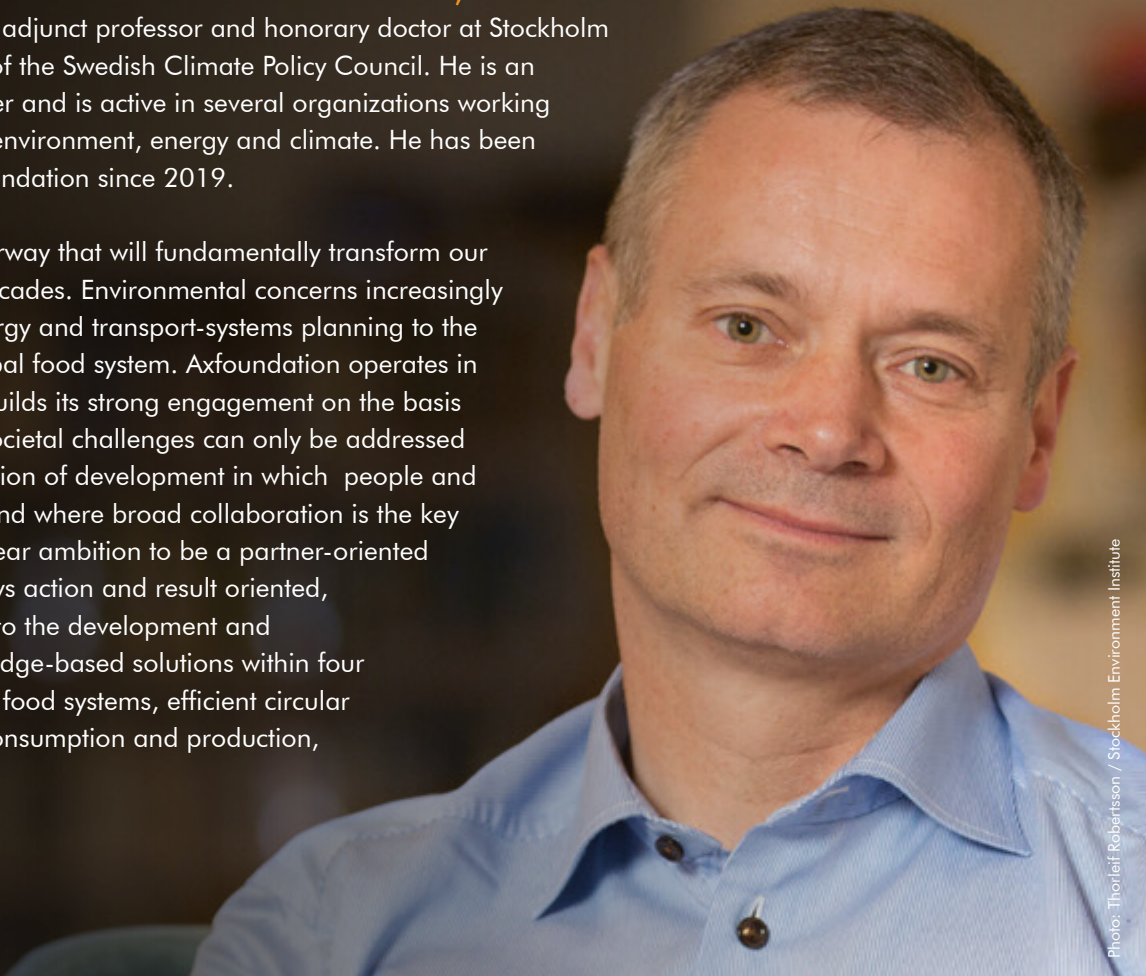


Photo: Thorleif Robertsson / Stockholm Environment Institute

**Senior advisor for market transformation at WWF Sweden, Margareta Renström** is the former convener of the Swedish Soy Dialogue and has been involved with Axfoundation as a steering committee member of the Soy Dialogue since January 2018.

“Axfoundation has professional competence and high credibility both with the corporate sector and with NGOs. It has played an important role in coordinating the Swedish Soy Dialogue, attracting new members and mustering them to engage, learn and commit to environmentally and socially responsible soy in the Swedish food market. The recent interaction with other European soy networks has been particularly beneficial on a mutual level.”



Photo: WWF



**Sustainability manager at Unil, Katrine Karlsen** interacted with Axfoundation as part of the Nordic Initiative.

"When working to find innovative and sustainable solutions to ensure that workers in our supply chains have their rights respected and access to decent jobs, close collaboration with stakeholders is crucial. Axfoundation's role in creating and facilitating collaborative spaces to address the number of human right issues found in the supply chains of Scandinavian businesses is critical to increasing our leverage and delivering real impact on the ground in supporting the improved livelihood of thousands of workers in our supply chains."



Photo: Unil

**Professor at the Department of Animal Nutrition and Management / Aquaculture at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Anders Kiessling** collaborates with Axfoundation on the project "Five tons of green fish", producing fish with feed that does not compete with the human food supply.

"The collaboration with Axfoundation offers a direct connection to both primary producers and retailers in the Swedish food industry, facilitating both project implementation and enabling researchers from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to connect with the practical side of the challenge. Our collaboration with Axfoundation also offers a direct exchange with some of the best chefs in Sweden, helping us not only to produce sustainable fish, but also of the highest culinary quality."



Photo: Private





AXFOUNDATION

Stockholm, May 2020

©Axfoundation

Axfoundation

Box 26008

Östermalmsgatan 40

100 41 Stockholm

[info@axfoundation.se](mailto:info@axfoundation.se)

[www.axfoundation.se](http://www.axfoundation.se)

Follow us on social media @axfoundation

Produced by: Linda Andersson, Axfoundation. Copy editor: James Pearse.

Photo: Linda Prieditis. Design: Katya Kuzi, Avocado Creative Studio.