

## SDC at Expo Milano 2015: An app helps expo visitors understand food security

The theme of the 2015 Universal Exhibition “Feeding the planet – Energy for live” relates closely to food security and nutrition. The SDC will showcase its commitment and capacity for innovation in this domain at the Expo. The Plant Doctor Game, a mobile-app game specially developed for the Swiss pavilion at Expo Milano 2015, enables visitors to step into the shoes of a smallholder farmer who needs to protect his or her crops.

“Feeding the planet, energy for life” is the slogan of the Expo 2015 in Milano, open from May 1 to October 31 2015. This creates a direct link to the work of SDC and provides an opportunity to call attention to global challenges to a broad audience. On a worldwide scale, almost 500 million smallholder farmers are feeding two thirds of the global population. Crop diseases and pests can have devastating effects on their food security and their income. With the example of the Plantwise project Switzerland wants to show the problem of food insecurity in the world from the perspective of individual farmers.

### The “Plant Doctor Game“

At the interactive exhibition at the Expo Milano 2015 visitors step into the smallholder farmer’s shoes for a short time with the Plant Doctor Game. The Plant Doctor Game starts by briefing players about the context. Players receive some information about the situation of the world’s smallholder farmers and a general outline of the role and activities of the plant clinics that have been set up worldwide. Then the game begins in earnest. Players are shown a photo of a food and have to guess its main ingredient (coffee, cocoa, maize, etc.). They then meet the farmer who produces the ingredient, before being invited to step into the farmer’s shoes and choose the right time to sow the crop.

At this point, things take a turn for the worse: the crops are suddenly struck by disease. Players have to take action to ensure food security of both their own family and many other people. They will have to seek the aid of a plant doctor in order to identify the disease and determine the most effective way to treat it.

The interactive Plant Doctor Game sets out to show how modern technology can be used to improve the lives of smallholder farmers. Players aim to earn as many ‘food security points’ as they can – they will then be able to compare their scores with other players and add their points to the total achieved by all the participants.

The app is now available for downloading ([Apple](#) / [Android](#)) to a smartphone or computer. Player from all over the world can be a smallholder farmer for some minutes and contribute to feed the planet. The app was developed by Plantwise, the SDC partner behind the creation of plant clinics.



*The “Plant Doctor Game” app provides an insight into the problems faced by smallholder farmers.*

### About the project

The Plantwise project, which was launched by the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI), an institution supported by a number of bodies including the SDC, has created an online database that links more than 1,500 plant clinics in 34 countries. The information gathered in the database will make it possible to diagnose plant conditions and offer appropriate treatment. In the field, plant clinics are set up at local markets, places of worship and other places that are easy for smallholder farmers to access. Smallholder farmers can go to the clinics for practical advice on how to manage their crops and fight disease and pests.

### See more:

[Article about Plantwise \(in German, French, Italian\), \*Eine Welt\*, March 2015, page 24-25](#)

[Plantwise website](#)

[Swiss Pavillon at Expo 2015](#)

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