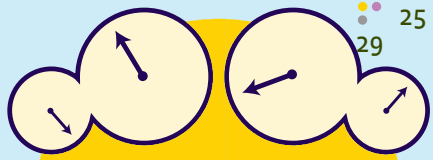
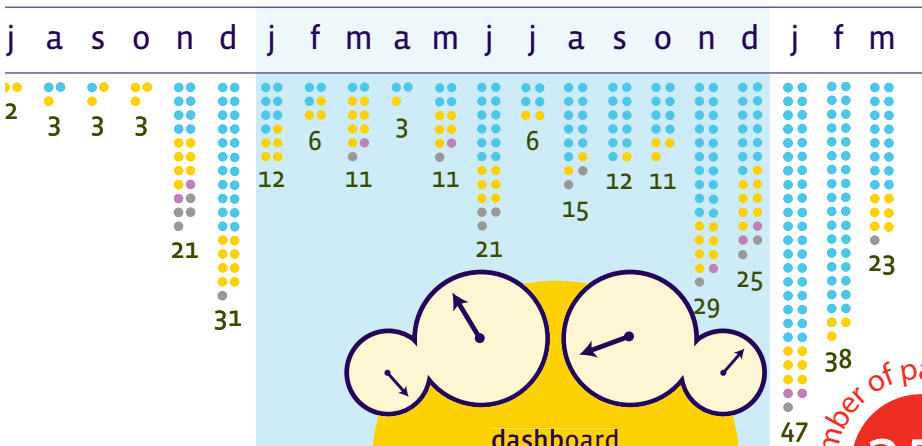


# akvo.org

## Annual report

### 2011



dashboard



map based reporting tools

Akvo FLOW



handheld data collection

Total number of partners on the system

350

Akvo uses the internet to tackle international development issues.

We create open source web and mobile software and build networks of skilled partners that can change the way development aid is allocated and reported.

This is important because it improves the way projects are implemented, making them more sustainable, effective, efficient and visible.

Our systems are designed to work on a very large scale. Many of our partners focus on water and sanitation, but we now also cover health, education, economic development and IT projects.

# Akvo

## See it happen

Part of the uniqueness of Akvo is the special place we've carved out at the intersection of information technology and international development co-operation.

It's an exciting place to be. IT is now an industry without rules about who can make a difference, and where they can do it. And as innovation shifts from desktop to mobile, the biggest impact will be on those accessing the Internet and phones for the first time, who today are desperately poor.

Akvo's work on the face of it is harnessing computer software to empower a new generation of international development co-operation. But our real advantage is the ability to build trust with established networks of partners and finance, and bring that work online – the project data, stories and updates – in ways that are easy to understand and share.

In 2011, Akvo's work with a new generation of aid consortia really got underway. The Akvo RSR (Really Simple Reporting) system began to be deployed on a tranche of more than €100 million of aid projects across Africa, Asia and South America. Project value in the system grew over the year by 40%, from €8.6 million to more than €12 million. By the end of 2011, the number of partners using Akvo RSR went from 265 to more than 350.

### **Going mobile**

We have been keen, for some time, to expand our capabilities in mobile phone-based tools and also eyeing market demand for phone-based field survey systems. In 2011 we began talking with the team behind FLOW, a promising product developed for US NGO Water For People. By the beginning of 2012 we finalised a partnership where Akvo assumes responsibility for the ongoing development of the product, now branded Akvo FLOW. This means we now offer two core products – Akvo RSR (web-based project visualisation, reporting and updates) and Akvo FLOW (smart phone-driven field monitoring and evaluation).



Gino Lee, who died on 27 December 2011, was one of the most extraordinary people I've ever known, let alone worked with.

There is nothing that brings into focus the place that work has in your life more than the death of a colleague. But losing Gino was different again – it was painful to so many of us at Akvo because he was so subtle in his influence, yet so omnipresent in all our work. Thomas recently described him as being more like the air in the room, that everyone breathed, that everyone shared. He's spot on.

Gino spent his early career in printmaking and typography, crafting several digital fonts, most notably Zapfino. After moving to San Francisco, he was among Silicon Valley's first wave of pioneers in marketplace-oriented web design. Co-author of *Creating Killer Websites*, Amazon's top-selling book in 1996, he went on to create foundational websites for such clients as Hewlett-Packard, Motorola and Verizon. He co-founded Viaweb, the first commercial web application, later sold to Yahoo.

One of the tragedies of life is that you never truly understand who a person is until they're no longer there. Yet each day I find comfort in the moments when I think "how would Gino deal with this?" Usually the answer is with more thought, more humility, more wisdom and more humour than I would have done myself. Each day I try to bring a bit of Gino into being me, and somehow I feel sure that doing so makes Akvo a better place to work and me a better person.

**Mark Charmer**

As the Akvo FLOW team took shape, Jeroen van der Sommen decided to step down as Akvo chairman and take on a bigger role in the team itself, helping lead our move into the market for mobile monitoring. Jeroen will be a terrific asset as we work with governments and multilateral institutions to help them adopt this new generation of tools on the ground, where Jeroen has lots of experience.

2011 ended for Akvo in the saddest way imaginable. Just after Christmas we learned that Gino Lee, our creative director, died while visiting his family in Michigan. Nothing can prepare you for the loss of an incandescent colleague like Gino. He lit Akvo's way – and Akvo's offices all over the world – via videoconference at all hours, from his atelier in the Mission District of San Francisco. I'm grateful to everyone at Akvo for supporting each other since. We'll never replace Gino but we are all far better people for having known and worked with him.

### **Building something users love**

Paul Graham, one of our industry's great figures and a friend of Gino's, once said, "There are only two things you have to know about business: build something users love, and make more than you spend." Success in the transition from "start-up" to "grown-up" requires a determined eye on this rule. In 2012 we expect to grow substantially and will be focused more than ever on building and supporting excellent products that our users love. At the same time, we will continue our shift towards earning sustainable revenues by providing a service to customers, moving away from reliance on grants and subsidies.

Ultimately it's Akvo's job to bring talent to bear to help people harness new technologies that create a better world. Akvo in 2012 is a healthy, growing enterprise with three product lines serving more than 600 partner organisations. We will continue to work hard to earn our place at the intersection of poverty and opportunity, harnessing great technology, encouraging openness and building trust. Which is surely the best way to build a better century together.

### **Mark Nitzberg**

Chairman of the board, Akvo Foundation  
June 2012



QUICK



Loretto

# What Akvo did in 2011

One of the very first things we did in 2011 was to have a team meeting in the Netherlands. As Mark Charmer, Akvo's Communications Director, said at the time, for an organisation as distributed as Akvo, getting everyone together in one room is "mind-blowingly useful."

We continued the late winter by significantly stepping up our partnership work into the United States, starting with a one-day workshop which the Skoll Global Threats Fund kindly offered to host in San Francisco, where we among others met Google.org, Cisco Foundation, Conrad F. Hilton Foundation, Skoll Foundation and Water for People. This was an important step in our work with Water for People, which would later – in early 2012 – turn into a full-blown partnership around Akvo FLOW.

In March we attended the World Water Day in Cape Town with the WaterCube, our digital joint venture along with SIWI and IRC. We participated in Walking for Water, which for the first time had significant international participation. Walking for Water engaged more than 24,000 children from 463 schools in the Netherlands and more than 1,000 children internationally. Including matching funds, they collected more than €1 million for water and sanitation projects.

In May Akvo co-hosted the very successful Open Data for Development Camp in Amsterdam. Peter van der Linde, our partnership director, opened the event with a presentation about the work we were doing with the Dutch Foreign Ministry to bring online part of the Dutch water portfolio, publishing this as IATI data. This month we also held one of our first workshops for the two Dutch MFS2 consortia which we are participating in, the Dutch WASH Alliance and Connect4Change. These workshops have since gone from strength to strength and have been very well received.

In the late summer we participated at World Water Week in Stockholm, which we have done for the last five years and, among other things, working with SIWI and IRC we staffed the much appreciated WaterCube. The WaterCube video channel now hosts

# International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)

## Role of IATI cemented in 2011

In February the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard was adopted at a meeting in Paris by a number of countries and donor organisations. This, as you will see in this annual report, will become a very important standard in the future and will play a key part in Akvo's work. IATI is a common, open, international standard for publishing more, and better, information about aid.



## Moving to Amsterdam

In 2011 we decided to move our headquarters from the Hague to Amsterdam. As we grew it felt the right time to establish our base in one of the most creative cities in the world, where we can attract the kind of talent we need, and our partners expect.

In October we moved to the former headquarters of the Dutch West Indies Trading Company, built in 1642. We're bringing a new face to this fascinating building by sharing with two other dynamic young organisations focused on international development and innovation, the 1%CLUB and Text to Change.





more than 450 short interviews with people in the water and sanitation sector. We also had an Akvo demonstration booth where we were using a giant 103 inch monitor – which amazed everyone who saw it – to demonstrate Akvo RSR and Water for People’s FLOW.

To cope with our rapid growth we moved our head office to Amsterdam in September to a building with a very interesting history, to say the least. This month we also released what is probably the most important new set of features for Akvo RSR, features which allow the display all of projects on their own website, with their own URL, branding and styling. A very well received improvement to our flagship product, which is now called Akvo RSR 2.0.

In November the second Akvo product, Akvo OpenAid, an IATI XML parser and Application Programming Interface (API) was launched and the first implementation was for the Dutch Foreign Ministry in the shape of the website OpenAid.nl.

We spent significant time during the last half of the year in discussions with Water For People on the subject of taking over their mobile phone and internet-based field survey application: FLOW. This partnership was not announced until 2012, but it was a very important part of our work in 2011 and we are very happy that it will remain so for the foreseeable future.





## Training

It's great to be part of the new wave of web services that cost less to install and support, but you still need to get out there with your users, explain what you do and train them on the basics.

2011 was the year we started delivering training to local and regional field teams around the world as part of our work in consortia like Dutch WASH Alliance and Connect4Change.



# Akvo products Developments during 2011



Akvo's main product, Akvo Really Simple Reporting (Akvo RSR), had a number of important and exciting improvements during 2011.

During the later winter and spring we introduced map widgets, which allows you to embed a dynamically updating map with all your projects on any web page. We created video updates where you can embed videos from several online video providers, a feature which quickly became very popular. A seemingly minor improvement, but very well received was the ability to edit updates just after they have been submitted, to fix spelling errors which one always seem to see just after pressing the "Done!" button. During the summer we also piloted making Akvo RSR, International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) XML compatible – a project which was highlighted by the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands, Ben Knapen, during a presentation about open aid data, in The Hague on the 13 September.

# Akvo vital statistics 2011

# 12

project value in millions  
of Euro in Akvo RSR

number of project  
updates in Akvo RSR,  
Dec. 2011

# 1078

number of projects  
in Akvo RSR

# 217

# 1.5 million

people served, Nov. 2011

Akvo had 

# 350+

 project partners

However, the most significant update to Akvo RSR was released in October, which was important enough to give Akvo RSR a new major revision number, 2.0. This was a set of features which we call Partner Sites. Partner Sites allows an organisation that already has projects on the Akvo RSR system to display all of these projects on their own website, with their own URL, branding and styling. We believe that this will be the main way most people will think of Akvo RSR in the future. More importantly, Partner Sites was very well received and we secured several new important partnerships based on it. And finally, a nice feature which got to wrap up our year, was the Image RSS feed API, which came out in the last release in November.

During the second half of the year we also started working with our second product, together with the Amsterdam-based company Zimmerman & Zimmerman. The new product is called Akvo OpenAid. It takes IATI XML data and creates a visually appealing, searchable web site, where financial aid data can be browsed in human friendly form. Akvo OpenAid was launched at the end of November, with the first implementation being the attractive OpenAid.nl website, which contains all the IATI XML aid data published by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The screenshot shows the OpenAid.nl website in a browser window. The browser title is "Openaid.nl powered by Akvo & Zimmerman & Zimmerman". The website header includes the "openaid.nl" logo, the text "powered by Akvo.", and a "DUTCH" language selector. A navigation menu contains links for "HOME", "WHAT IS OPENAID.NL?", "SEARCH PROJECTS", "BLOG", "TOOLS AND PARTNERS", "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS", and "CONTACT".

The main content area features a yellow banner with the text "Want to know where Dutch development money goes?". Below this is a search prompt: "Search projects on country, sector, budget and keyword". Logos for "INTERNATIONAL AID TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE" and the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands" are displayed. A tablet device shows a map of the Netherlands with project locations.

Three columns of content are visible below the banner:

- TECHNICAL TOOLS FOR IATI:** Includes a "TOOLS" section with a globe icon and text: "Together with our partner Zimmerman & Zimmerman, we have been developing tools that help people to make sense of IATI data. Without other 'visualisations' and other user-friendly interfaces, open data is at risk of being perceived as just 'a telephone directory in second code', as a Dutch journalist put it. So, what did we do [...]".
- SEE IT HAPPEN - RESULTS ONLINE:** Includes a photo of two people and text: "Almost all programs in an IATI set actually consists of several individual smaller projects. Wouldn't it be great if we could give you that: search of data? Several organisations in the Netherlands are actively working to make this possible. Below, we show project details of one of the activities in the Dutch IATI activity set. [...]".
- VISUALISATIONS:** Includes a pie chart icon and text: "How do you make data meaningful? One way is using visualisations. Here you can explore the Dutch IATI data set in a different way - as a bubble map. Each bubble is a sector; growing sectors which receive most funding. [...]".

# Akvo's Product Portfolio for 2012

## **Akvo OpenAid**

[www.openaid.nl](http://www.openaid.nl)

a web-based tool for publishing large quantities of development aid data in a human-friendly format. Akvo OpenAid takes International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) XML data and transforms it into an attractive web site with maps, making the data searchable and understandable.

## **Akvo Really Simple Reporting**

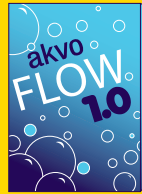
**Akvo RSR**

a web-based content management system for making development projects and programs visible online and with easy text, picture and video reporting on progress on the projects.

## **Akvo Field Level Operations Watch**

**Akvo FLOW**

an Android mobile phone and internet cloud-based service to collect, manage, analyse and display geographically-referenced monitoring and evaluation data.



Open source software platform	✓	✓	✓
Strong core data collection and reporting tools		✓	✓
Better user interface and experience		✓	✓
Self-service map displays		✓	✓
Online documentation and training materials		✓	✓
Partner training workshops		✓	✓
Scalability			✓
Scoring and trend/timeline reporting			✓
Custom report generation tools			✓
Enhanced map presentation of data			✓
Multi-language features			✓
Open APIs (open data)			✓
User platform to share datasets			✓
Timeline	2012	2012-2013	End 2013

## What is Akvo FLOW?

Akvo FLOW is a software tool that collects, manages, analyses and displays geographically referenced monitoring and evaluation data using mobile phones. It lets you create simple or complex surveys on any topic. The diversity is endless – surveys can include photos, videos, barcodes, and audio clips. Users have total flexibility to collect the information that will make an impact on their project.

Phones can store hundreds of surveys and data can be collected in areas where there is no mobile connection – Akvo FLOW automatically transmits the data once a connection is detected, so the system can be used anywhere in the world. Akvo FLOW has been under development for several years with significant field implementations already under its belt.

Akvo FLOW brings together three elements:

- Handheld data collection – the Akvo FLOW Field Survey application runs on Android phones with integrated GPS, camera, and custom adaptive surveys.
- A web-based dashboard where users manage and analyse Akvo FLOW surveys and data.
- Visual map-based reporting tools displayed in Google Maps and Google Earth.

# Financials 2011\*

## Income in Euro

---

### *Income own fundraising*

Fundraising activities	8.632	
Project contributions	70.170	
Total income own fundraising		78.802
Government grants		1.268.562
Other income		144.628
<b>Total income (A)</b>		<b>1.491.992</b>

## Costs in Euro

---

### *Expenditure on behalf of the objectives*

Projects	67.583	
Akvo Platform	990.816	
Total expenditure on behalf of the objectives		1.058.399
Charged staff costs		-1.010.278
Direct project costs – staff	1.010.278	
Direct project costs – material	231.075	
Total direct project cost		1.241.353
<b>Total costs (B)</b>		<b>1.289.474</b>

\*Audited and approved accounts available on request



# Financials 2011 continued

Operational result (A - B)	202.518
Revaluation Akvo platform	0
<hr/>	
<b>Result</b>	<b>202.518</b>
<i>Appropriation</i>	
designated reserve intangible fixed assets	-79.279
designated fund grants	82.504
continuity reserve	199.293
<hr/>	
<b>Result</b>	<b>202.518</b>



# Contact us

## Head office

Akvo Foundation  
's-Gravenhekje 1A  
1011 TG Amsterdam  
Netherlands

You can reach us by email, telephone or using social networking tools like Twitter and Facebook. We all use Skype but we'd prefer to connect initially with you via other means.

## Photo credits

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Petterson  
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van den Berg

## PARTNERSHIPS

Peter van der Linde  
(Netherlands)  
t: +31 (0)20 820 0175  
peter@akvo.org  
You can follow Peter on Twitter  
(@petervdI) and he's on  
Facebook.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Mark Charmer (London)  
t: +44 (0)7976 960739  
mark@akvo.org  
You can follow Mark on Twitter  
(@charmermark)

## TECHNICAL

Thomas Bjelkeman (Sweden)  
thomas@akvo.org  
You can follow Thomas on  
Twitter (@bjelkeman).

# akvo.org

Akvo team meeting, May 2012, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

