

E T L D*

Extra Terrestrial Life Development*

Shortening Time©

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Richard Reekers / ReConcept

etld@globalxs.nl

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Richard –

(...)

I admire your philosophy and applaud your efforts. "Dimidium facti qui coepit habet: sapere aude: Incipe --" (Horace) "To have begun is to be half done; dare to know; start!"

Sapere aude!

Dan Simmons

PREFACE

Dear Reader,

You are about to read the project description of Extra Terrestrial Life Development*. As the front page tells, this plan has existed for some time.

On 15 May 1997, the concept experienced its first kick-off. Exactly one month later, private circumstances forced me to stop working on it. The idea lived on, however, especially because all kinds of (social) developments, which had initially tempted me to take up ETLD* in the period before April 1997, became even stronger in the past few years.

I have become sadder and wiser, also as regards the concept itself. In any case, this plan now has more financial and organisational back-up than two and a half years ago. You and/or your organisation (process) offer more points of departure than my 'enthusiasm' alone can see.

I have by no means written down explicitly all aspects of this idea. In any case, this project description describes the essence of it, unless somebody comes up with even more acute ideas. Therefore I advise you to read through it at your leisure.

There is a good reason why this document is now in front of you. ETLD is something I cannot do on my own. Anyhow, ETLD will succeed. With your help as well as the help of others I think I stand a good chance of being successful.

This is my 'Masterpiece', in the meaning of the word as it was used at the time of the medieval guilds. I am offering you to share it; to make it. As an equal looking for equals. I hope you will realise what this means while you are reading. Not for my sake (well...), but especially for yourself or your organisation.

Richard Reekers
Dordrecht, early 2000

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1 MISSION

Extra Terrestrial Life Development (ETLD*) is a commercial investment company. Its aim is to generate money for research with the final result that the planet Mars is made fit for human habitation.

1.1 Short-term aim

One year after it started, ETLD* has 18 million Euro (nominal value) outstanding in regular securities/bonds and scientific research.

2 THE MARKET

ETLD* is based on three observations:

Trend 1

More and more people feel drawn towards: futurology, the development of the human race, and/or the latest insights into such fields as: particle physics and/or metaphysics, astronomy and other 'Existential Questions'.

This group will grow in time rather than diminish. The time is ripe. Take science fiction for instance. Many things that used to be regarded as 'SF' are now within reach, or will (increasingly) be because of the present digital developments.

Trend 2

Investing is past the stage of being a hype. It is a socially accepted phenomenon; this goes for: the concept itself, as well as the profits to be made out of it. There is some initial hesitation, however: 'You do not start making investments just like that'.

It is not like saving. You can take your piggy bank to the bank, shake it out and put the money into your account.

People associate 'investing' with 'commitment', formality, investment funds [in NL: 'click funds'], mortgage and other constructions. Investing - unlike saving - is individually oriented, with a relatively high deposit in order to be able to pay the costs of the intermediary.

You just don't make investments whenever the mood seizes you, which view is in keeping with the methods used to market investing. At least, until now.

Trend 3

There will come a time when people will stay on Mars for longer periods.

Anyone who believes in this assumption at all in the light of the present technological developments – ‘Yes, “some day” people may well be on Mars’ – will subsequently ask themselves how it could be made financially attractive to start research into it. And how to make this a permanent and financial attractive operation.

3 TIME

The central theme in the marketing of pension funds, saving constructions, investment projects and other private investment forms is: time. ‘We expect that your deposit will grow in time’. Then minimal securities are provided, and people are committed to the monthly payments.

In a controlled market economy, time is always a value-increasing factor. After all, commerce is equal to growth and the democratic government guarantees the preconditions under which this growth is given form and content. The overall financial value of any Western society has multiplied, also relatively, in the past 50 years. For instance.

ETLD* accepts that any such society, wholly analogous to the GNP growth of the last century, will be worth more in 50, 100, 200 years than at the beginning of 2000 .

ETLD* extrapolates the growth of space spending from 1950 to a moment in future to be further specified.

ETLD* accepts the growing interest of space nations in the planet Mars ever since 1970, and understands that this interest is motivated by the eventual return-on-investment.

On one hand, ETLD* wants to be a financially recognisable, accessible and attractive product for the consumer; on the other hand it serves to provide the public with the opportunity to get close to a very interesting part of development of society. Even AT home (by means of the Internet).

And the consumer knows that he contributes directly to this development.

3.1 Time is money (but money is not enough)

ETLD* anticipates upon a moment in future that is still unclear yet certain, and it capitalises the intervening period. How?

By issuing shares (and by a rock-solid confidence in the future, in a common goal, in more than money as consumer satisfaction, and by means of an integral interaction between service-provider and consumer – using the latest marketing communication techniques).

3.2 Investment house

ETLD*, in January of the year 2000, can be regarded as an ‘investment house’ or a banking service, investing for its clients in current, promising funds on the one hand, and in (scientific) research on the other.

3.2.1 Promising funds

Funds that are already successful. Funds that will still be there in 20 years according to expectations (or their values at any rate, incorporated in larger concerns). Companies that are even now shaping the future.

3.2.2 Scientific research

There are good reasons for carrying out scientific research. Sooner or later results will reach society in one way or another. And people will (also) make money out of it.

Turning another planet ‘habitable’ requires research in every conceivable scientific field. While this in itself is an investment in a huge, certain financial return in the distant future, intervening results will be employed on the only planet we have so far inhabited.

4 CONFIDENCE

The concept of ETLD* is simple. We sell 'securities'. At a price of 20,00 Euro each this year and one Euro-cent more next year. ETLD* invests part of this money in (a package of) promising funds. Another part is used to finance (current) relevant scientific research.

ETLD* is not about speculation for money. At least, not at first. It is what we could call an 'emotion share'. During a certain period of time, which is to be further specified, the participants will not be able to obtain 'regular' shares. For an even longer time, they will be separated from their money used for research projects.

4.1 Living up to expectations

ETLD* does not provide profit guarantees. It 'merely' sells the confidence it has in the future. In the trends.

However, the whole ETLD* organisation and infrastructure is aimed at living up to this confidence. This is commercially attractive in view of continuity, and it is advantageous to the final mission.

4.2 Communication of results

The results are published every quarter. This concerns investment results as well as research results. As regards the latter: this is part of the agreement.

All things considered, the results are what ETLD* is all about, and that is why they are marketed.

The only medium through which the securities are available throughout the year is the Internet. They can only be ordered/bought by telephone, by giro and by letter in the period starting one week prior to publication of the results, until one month after publication. (In response to advertising campaigns on radio and television and in print.)

Interlude

An ETLD security is an A4-sized paper, on which the nominal value and a serial number are printed. It looks official, is not easily forged, is mainly red in colour and it contains the general conditions, as well as the Mars Society's inaugural statement.*

5 TARGET GROUPS

Although product positioning will come up for discussion in part B, at this point a preview at the target groups so that the income to be expected can be given some realistic basis.

ETLD* belongs to everybody, yet in marketing communications the following target groups are clearly distinguished:

- A -- Young people, 12- to 16-year-olds
- B -- Socially conscious young people < 35
- C -- People in their thirties, restless, enquiring minds
- D -- Middle-aged and old people, 55+
- E -- Companies

Sub A

ETLD* is marketed as a 'Young Researcher-organisation'; popular scientific, but modern and fast yet taking the client seriously, Internet, exhibitions, sponsoring of events etc. etc.

Occasionally lectures are given at schools, also with Mars information packages.

Sub B

ETLD* is an interesting company. You can make money with it, the organisational views upon processes are good and modern. Interesting ICT structure, development of the company etc. etc.

Sub C

One of the drives of ETLD* is that a large-scale operation such as making Mars habitable requires a hitherto unprecedented combining of powers and knowledge.

We will gradually find answers to questions that have remained unanswered until now. For example: is there life (or has there ever been life) elsewhere? The ethical question is not avoided either. Are we allowed to go there? etc. (This aspect is further discussed in the "Obstacles" chapter.)

Sub D

A different marketing approach is used for people over 55. On one hand, these are the grandparents of the (future) young people who will probably experience it. ('Here you are dear, a "contribution for your holiday cottage on Mars"...')

On the other hand, this group includes the babyboomers, the (see B-) youngsters from the days of Flower Power, the most dynamic people in the time of the Apollo program. ('One small step for me, one giant...')

Sub E

As a result of the digital (r)evolution and the latest views on processes, there are fewer opportunities for companies to distinguish themselves on the basis of: quality, place, personnel and price. What we are now seeing, in reaction to this development, is that companies are increasingly presenting themselves as personalities.

In their turn, companies e.o. will want to identify with ETLD*. At first in the form of practical jokes, gifts, tours; later as part of Christmas boxes, bonuses, personnel funds etc. etc.

N.B.: we develop separate securities for companies for research purposes only.

6 PRICE

One ETLD* security costs 20,00 Euro. This is not an insignificant amount for a private individual, yet it is certainly not too high for a semi-impulsive decision to buy (order by mobile phone).

Current share funds require monthly deposits/payments of at least NLG 50.--. If ETLD* fulfils its promise, as regards results, as well as communication about these results, the private individual will arrive at a much lower figure on an annual basis. The financial experts will have to decide about the emissions rates after a certain period.

The part outstanding in shares, however, should show a similar growth (and this should be clear fairly soon). But then that is why ETLD* needs top brokers or top bankers.

Furthermore, the initial amounts will increase by 1 Euro-cent each year. A nice detail from a communicative point of view is that these amounts keep in step with the years of issue. (20.00, 20.01, 20.02 ...)

7 PROCESS OF DISTRIBUTION/SALES

The only medium through which the ETLD* securities are available throughout the year is the Internet.

Through other media they are available from one week prior to publication of the results until one month after publication. The idea behind this is that we focus on the action value and consequently the total communicative range time and time again. This so-called 'peaking' is motivating for the client and for anyone working for and (also) on behalf of ETLD*.

All personnel required for the sales and distribution process, apart from the Internet, is employed on a contract basis. This is possible because of the high degree of automation and because there are standard procedures for everything.

7.1 Internet

During the non-communicative period online orders can only be placed if payments are made online (by credit card). This procedure is fully automated by means of automatic reply mailings. The client does receive a real security, however. (See 'Ratification', 7.4.)

7.2 Call Centre – orders by phone

The central point of communications during the month following the 'day of results' is a 0900-phone number. (from NLG 0.40 to max. NLG 0.60 per minute.)

For this purpose a call centre is called in, which takes down the orders by means of standard procedures. The throughput time is short; as many people as possible have to be helped.

ETLD* seeks a partnership with a telecommunication company which is based on settling the costs of ordering by phone on mutual terms. (We: the advertisements/clients, they: the personnel costs.)

7.3 Other forms of ordering

Securities can also be ordered by mail. But, more importantly, there are (at least) two national store chains where clients can buy the securities directly.

In the store, the client is handed a form and ETLD pen, and fills in the required data (name, address, code word – see 'ratification'). The form is handed in at the cash desk and, after payment, the cashier sticks one of the two identical serial number stickers on the security issued and the

other on the form. The forms are subsequently handled according to the regular ETLD* administrative process.

The two chain stores match ETLD* as regards profile and mutual client groups. Their handling costs are offset by the advertising costs, which are paid by ETLD*.

7.4 Mailing / ratification of securities

After receipt of payment the ETLD security is mailed. However, it concerns a document of value. This will only be valid later on after the person who ordered it has signed it and is able to produce the own code word.

This code word is to be stated with every order (regardless of the manner of ordering) and it corresponds to the serial number in the ETLD* administration.

This identification of the security is otherwise passive. In other words: the owner is to contact the ETLD* administration himself in case of loss. The serial number in question is then added to a blacklist. This makes the security worthless for the time being.

In case of emmission the serial number as well as the code word are to be stated, whereupon the serial number is checked automatically with the blacklist. If these numbers match, the personal data of the presenter are passed on to the police and the original owner is notified. If he/she can still produce the code word, the security with its corresponding value falls to him/her after all.

8 SALES OBJECTIVE

Sales processes, marketing communications, this concept of accounting for results, and the liaisons are all aimed at inducing 250,000 people to buy at least one security.

This is a realistic number in view of the potential of interested people among the target groups. The ETLD* organisation itself, the communication about it and the product accessibility will have to make sure that this is actually realised.

This way, sales will amount to 20 million Euro in the first year.

9 COST

Marketing communications is the largest cost item. Even though we can count on a great deal of free publicity, certainly during the first year, the communication planning has been also developed for this purpose, the aim of ETLD* is to reserve the usual 15 percent of the intended sales for marketing communication.

9.1 Marketing communication

The budget for marketing communication is set at 750,000 Euro per quarter.

As accountability is central to the ETLD* marketing communications, this amount includes the costs of controlling authorities like the independent firm of auditors and the Recommending and Supervisory Board ETLD* (the R&SBE, see hereafter -- in Dutch: CATE).

9.2 Overheads

ETLD*, the organisation, has got a coordinating-administrative and highly automated character for a constant process. Similar organisations/departments employ 5 to 12 persons, and have annual overheads for automation and housing which do not exceed 500,000 Euro.

9.3 Commission

At this stage, ETLD* does not have any knowledge or idea of the costs involved in the investment activities.

9.4 Walk the Talk

ETLD* is an organisation with extreme self-awareness, with a huge sense of responsibility for its own objectives. Accounting to the public for its actions is one of the objectives of ETLD* and a Unique Selling Point, which makes it essential to the continuity of this initiative.

Each employee, each relevant supplier/liaison, and each research project that is to be financed must be judged in the light of this business objective.

10 MERCHANDISING

According to the Walk the Talk-principle, a third pillar of the ETLD* organisation generates money by means of: merchandising. These activities are carried out by means of franchise constructions.

All kinds of things may qualify, they can be offered for assessment and, after approval, be included in the central communication of the project. (For instance, the initiator has a small and secret wish to publish the Belgian magazine EOS in the Netherlands under the name of Soil -- EOS is a popular-scientific monthly.)

The proceeds of the merchandising activities are directly channelled to research financing. And this is also communicated directly and openly.

11 EPILOGUE

ETLD* operates according to modern, commercial principles. However, the organisation is not in a hurry. Time is its most important ally. While this in itself is a comforting thought, working to achieve the objective will increasingly become a 'sympathetic cause' and in a way that is different from any other cause. As time goes by, many people will want to identify (more and more) with ETLD*.

11.1 Image = Identity

In terms of public relations, this project stands a good chance of being able to bring its true identity into line with its public image entirely without (socially desirable) disruptions. In other words: identity and image are the same. The feasibility of ETLD* strongly depends on its credibility and ability to inspire confidence. How could ETLD* achieve credibility?

- By being real (by believing in it for 100 percent)
- By preserving its integrity, in all things
- By seeking support from, and cooperating, with people and organisations that have already proven to be credible
- And by incorporating these aspects into its marketing communications.

As yet, few companies have identities like ETLD*. Few companies become successful just by following the company concept. There are no companies where identity and image are one and the same...

1 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organisation of ETLD* should be set up right from the start in such a way that:

- It is prepared for an increasing number of knowledge banks and forms of cooperation and
- It can operate entirely according to its corporate identity and
- It helps to set up the conditions under which management and staff are continuously made aware that they are directly responsible for the company's right to exist. At any time.

1.1 Company profile

ETLD* is nothing more than a motivating marketing organisation. It participates in existing companies and in current research.

It is a coordinating body, a booster, between society as a whole on the one hand, and companies and research institutions that, in one way or another, contribute to the mission on the other hand.

1.2 Organisation of ETLD*

The ETLD* organisation contains at least the following three business units that are filled in by people with the required know-how:

- Marketing communication
- Shares
- Research

The business process of Marketing Communication is carried by three spokespersons (m/f), each one of them more or less 'cast' for the defined client groups.

Furthermore, there is the necessary administrative and ICT know-how/support. Mind you, one person may perform various functions! In addition, some activities are contracted out (see part A).

The process of ETLD* is based on the Sociotechnique. This means, simply put, that each is responsible for the total business unit. Another keyword in this respect is that ETLD* is a self-controlling organisation. This is possible because of the extremely short communication lines and the simple, motivating process.

1.3 Recommending and Supervisory Board ETLD* (R&SBE)

The R&SBE is the 'supervisory authority' of the ETLD* organisation. This relationship may be regarded as that of management and shareholders. Or rather: management/board.

The R&SBE judges all decisions made by ETLD* in the light of the corporate objectives and corporate identity. Should this deviate too much according to the Board, adjustments are made or the recommendation is publicly withdrawn.

The idea behind the interpretation of the R&SBE involves more than this description of its objective. During the initial stage, the synergy of identities as a result of the composition of R&SBE is exactly as ETLD* intends it to be: mixed, expert, outspoken in this expertise, and forming people's opinions regarding the own field. The whole radiates the added value. All the more since the R&SBE-members would perhaps not seek each other out for any other purpose. The combination in itself indicates: 'We believe in this project'.

1.4 Firm of accountants

From the start, all financial activities of ETLD*, not just the Investments section, are audited by a registered firm of accountants every quarter.

2 MARKETING POSITIONINGS

Which current demands from the market are satisfied by ETLD*? The best way to answer this question is to define the various positionings for this single product here.

2.1 In or near the initial stage

Buying an ETLD security means contributing to an organisation that combines the current technologies and views for one purpose: making it possible for people to live outside the planet Earth.*

2.2 Alternative positionings

Those who buy one or more securities at an early stage may also identify themselves with the following.

ETLD is a company using existing business standards and values to achieve a goal in the distant future. Along the way, the progress is tested on this planet. By joining in, people indicate that they feel life on Earth should also be made more pleasant.*

But also:

By buying one or more ETLD securities, you more or less endorse the ETLD* philosophy. This means: putting value on people and their capacities and doing something with it, and having faith and confidence in something 'bigger than life'.*

And/or:

By buying one or more securities you also indicate, cautiously and realistically, that you are not overly enthusiastic about the commercialisation of Western society and that you would prefer if other aims were pursued besides just making money.

And/or:

By buying a security you indicate that you are willing to help think about the quality of life on Earth in the broadest - i.e. complete: a whole new world will have to be built - sense of the word.

And/or:

With an ETLD security, you also invest in other, existing, companies. A security is therefore twice as stable and shows great promise for the ETLD* flotation.*

3 OBSTACLES / FAQ

Finally some frequently asked questions. This section was written in 1997, in cooperation with two journalists.

How can you live on Mars? Such a utopia!

Ever since the seventies, manned laboratories have been revolving around the Earth. In 1997, people were planning the assembly of the huge, permanently manned International Space Station (ISS). Space is a much more inhospitable place to live in for an extended period of time than, for instance, Mars. To question the colonisation of Mars in a hundred (two hundred?) years, is to question developments taking place right in front of our eyes at this very moment.

OK, let's assume Mars will be colonised. What would be the point of buying these securities now?

You could think of many reasons for doing so. My reason is this: Tens of thousands of SF lovers will believe in the feasibility of this plan. Especially in the initial phase, they are willing to spend 20 Euro to be part of the first group. If the developments of the first three months show that it is working, they will regularly buy securities as a token of their confidence. Then there are those who can see now already that the concept, the capital development programme, is viable.

But surely you can't take something like this seriously?!

Well, space travel and space technology are playing a more important part in (mainly) Western economy than many people would think. We would not have mobile phones, for instance, without it. And Goretex windbreakers, to name another example, have their origins in space suits.

One tenth of the American GNP, i.e. the US value, is connected in one way or another with space technology.

This is a project which can bring the dream closer for many people. It is organised according to the spirit of the age to such an extent that it maintains itself and will/must maintain itself.

Can this be done without America? What about NASA?

ETLD* is not a space ship, but an initiator of research into the feasibility of earthly life on Mars.

Eventually a whole world will be built, with everything that goes with it. Of course space travel plays a part in it, but there is so much more: agriculture, mining, forms of society, politics, and so on. An immense enterprise such as this requires several forms of cooperation. Naturally, as soon as the ETLD* idea has developed enough both in strength and in scale, the most logical way is to involve NASA and JPL and the Russians etc. Furthermore, it is to be expected that headquarters Mars Society America, will make sure that an US-version of ETLD* is established.

You do not often mention your Formula 1-principle in this document. Why is it not emphasised at an earlier stage?

In short, the Formula 1-principle implies that results from research financed by ETLD* will return in daily practice. And will consequently return to the pockets of the (then) former security buyers in the form of profits.

Initially, the concept development of ETLD* was aimed at proving the feasibility of the plan. In other words, the feasibility of the simple idea behind it. The Formula 1-principle is inspired and too unreal, especially during the initial phase, for many people who still need to be convinced. Therefore it does not play any part in the business plans, the business part of it.

From the start, all people involved in ETLD* have operated independently. Isn't that too idealistic?

When the time has come, in fifty, a hundred or two hundred years, then the organisation that has publicly taken the initiative - ETLD* - should not reappear in the eventual society/-ies on Mars. This would be giving too much power to one group. Therefore this separation of responsibilities as soon as this; self-confidently treading one's own professional field. That is why an organisational set-up based on sociotechnical principles was chosen.

Speaking of power, aren't you a little megalomaniac?

The 'Mars idea' came up when nanofossils were found in that Mars meteorite, back in 1996. I remember the 'thrill' it gave me. Bill Clinton even devoted a press conference to it! Fantastic lunacy, binding sensation!

Personally, I am extremely interested in subjects that are a sensation 'even in their dry appearance' (cosmos, origin of man, etc.). ETLD* is a product of the combination of work and interests.

When it is running, I'll be the first to get out of the start-up management. I will then start making commercials, for when we can no longer rely on free publicity. And think along of course, about ethical issues for instance. Are we even allowed to colonise Mars? Is there life still/already there? Immensely interesting issues. Laying a foundation together with immensely interesting people; I can hardly wait!

Do you really think ETLD* will be able to claim Mars in x years?

Our experience with colonisation until now has shown that this was always initiated by authorities (of tribes, cities, nations). Which country would have to take the lead in the race to Mars? Preferably not just one country, for because of the prestige and the eventual return on investment there will always be a second. Then we will have two countries -- both prosperous and powerful or else they could not be involved in the first place -- entering into a race over another, habitable, planet ... No thank you!

Should the United Nations, as an institute, then take the initiative? If they receive sufficient funds and influence. But also within the UN the interests of individual members play an important part. The intervention policy since the Gulf War is proof of that. Moreover, large projects coordinated by UN officials do not always (seem to) run very efficiently. This is caused by lack of finances and communication (determined by culture) on the one hand, and (indeed necessary) bureaucratic hairsplitting on the other. Therefore this should also be done by ETLD*, the company. The more so because the organisation will not claim the planet, but the people working for it and investing in it: the public.

Assuming that Mars will one day be made habitable for people, it appears that we are lacking a coordinating body already. Furthermore, it is obvious that not a single organisation is (so) involved in it, while millions of people are open to such futuristic thoughts.

Richard Reekers

Dordrecht, May 1997 – January 2000

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