



# VSF-SUISSE GLOBAL STRATEGY 2025-2028



VÉTÉRINAIRES  
SANS FRONTIÈRES  
SUISSE

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# FOREWORD

It is with pride and a deep sense of responsibility that we present to you the new Global Strategy of Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse. Covering the period of 2025–2028, this strategy guides our continued mission to improve animal health, food security, and livelihoods across West and East Africa.

Our work takes us to regions where communities face immense challenges – from resource scarcity and limited access to basic services to climate change and political instability. In these contexts, where both people and animals are vulnerable, VSF-Suisse will remain steadfast in its commitment to providing sustainable solutions that benefit not only the communities we work with but also the ecosystems they depend on.

Over many months, our teams in the different Country Offices and at Head Office have worked together to craft a strategy that responds to these complex challenges while staying true to our values. This document is the result of that collective effort – a roadmap for how we will continue providing critical support in the face of adversity, empowering communities to build resilience and achieve sustainable development. In doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to the people of West and East Africa, ensuring that their voices, needs, and hopes remain at the centre of everything we do.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to this participative process. The passion and tireless efforts of our staff have made this strategy possible – and it is the commitment of all of us that will bring it to life.

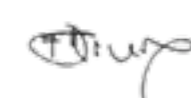
The road ahead is paved with challenges, but it is also full of hope. We are confident that we will continue to transform lives and build a more sustainable future for all, proving that through solidarity and shared purpose, lasting change is not only possible – it is inevitable.



Dr. med. vet. Hans Wyss  
President



Flurina Derungs  
Executive Director



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse (VSF-Suisse) is a politically and religiously neutral nonprofit organization with over 35 years of experience in humanitarian aid and development cooperation in Africa. Founded in 1988 by veterinary medicine students at the University of Berne, Switzerland, the organization now employs around 150 local staff across Country Offices in Ethiopia, Kenya/Somalia, South Sudan, Mali and Togo, as well as 10 staff at the Head Office in Switzerland.

The mission of VSF-Suisse is to improve the wellbeing and resilience of vulnerable populations by promoting the health and productivity of their livestock within a healthy environment. The vision is a world where healthy people derive their livelihoods from healthy livestock in a healthy environment.

**VSF-Suisse's international programme 2025–2028** is built on a theory of change that focuses on improving access to integrated animal health services, enhancing livestock production and climate resilience, and strengthening market linkages to achieve the overall goal: Sustainable livestock-based food systems ensure food and nutrition security and resilient livelihoods of marginalized communities in times of climate crisis and fragility.

## STRATEGIC GOALS:

- **Integrated animal health:** Livestock-based communities have improved their access to integrated animal health services with healthy animals providing safe, quality food.
- **Climate-resilient production:** Livestock keepers have enhanced their production and increased their climate resilience through agroecological transition.
- **Inclusive markets:** Food producers and (small-scale) market actors have improved access to knowledge, technologies, services, and market linkages for increased local food consumption and job creation.

Our strategy focuses geographically on the belt spanning from west to east across Sub-Saharan Africa. It places at its centre marginalized and vulnerable communities who rely on livestock for their livelihoods but have limited access to livestock services. The programme puts an emphasis on working with women and youth, ensuring no one is left behind.

VSF-Suisse applies systemic approaches, including One Health, the sustainable livelihoods approach, a rights-based approach, gender equality, inclusive markets, agroecology, climate-resilient ecosystem and conflict sensitivity. The humanitarian – development – peace nexus is a priority for our work in fragile contexts. Monitoring & evaluation as well as knowledge management are integral to ensure impact-orientation, accountability, and continuous learning.

The goals of VSF-Suisse can only be achieved with adequate financial and human resources. In terms of organizational development, the organization sets objectives within seven focus areas:

- 1) leveraging strategic partnerships,
- 2) investing in staff development,
- 3) ensuring financial sustainability,
- 4) fulfilling the duty of care regarding safety & security,
- 5) strengthening governance and compliance,
- 6) embracing digital transformation, and
- 7) communicating in a truthful and responsible way.

VSF-Suisse is a member of the Sufosec Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities as well as VSF International. These alliances help maximize synergies and leverage impact through joint learning, tools, synergies, and knowledge exchange.

VSF-Suisse aims to be a leading force in promoting food and nutrition security and resilient livelihoods of livestock-based communities in times of climate crisis and fragility.



# 1 VSF-SUISSE

## 1.1 WHO WE ARE – OUR MISSION AND VISION

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Suisse (VSF-Suisse) is a politically and religiously neutral nonprofit organization with over 35 years of working experience in humanitarian aid and development cooperation in Africa. The organization was founded by students of veterinary medicine at the University of Berne, Switzerland, in 1988.

Today, VSF-Suisse employs roughly 150 local staff, spread over five Country Offices in Ethiopia, Kenya/Somalia, Mali, South Sudan and Togo, as well as 10 staff at the Head Office in Switzerland. We are a trusted partner of multilateral and bilateral donors, including the UN, SDC, and the EU, as well as foundations. Our portfolio spans around 50 projects annually across ten countries in West and East Africa, with total project expenses exceeding 10 million Swiss francs.

We provide emergency aid in humanitarian crises and implement long-term development projects to improve food security and resilience of communities whose livelihoods depend on livestock. These communities are often affected by political unrest, natural disasters, climate change, marginalization, and limited access to services. Working in close collaboration with the local populations, we support communities, families, and individuals on their path to an independent future.

Driven by our **MISSION** to improve the wellbeing and resilience of vulnerable populations by promoting the health and productivity of their livestock within a healthy environment, we are constantly working towards our **VISION** of a world where healthy people derive their livelihoods from healthy livestock in a healthy environment.

### WHAT MAKES VSF-SUISSE UNIQUE?

- Experts in One Health and animal health
- Holistic approach to health, production and market systems
- Dedicated to sustainable development and triple HDP nexus
- Focus on capacity development and community empowerment
- Local staff, trusted by local communities
- Present in remote areas
- Strong partnerships with authorities, local NGOs, and private sector
- Trusted by UN and major donors
- Innovation driven and digital
- Small, agile, and efficient

## 1.2 WHAT WE STAND FOR – OUR VALUES

Everything we do – from finances to capacity development, communication and interaction with people and partners – is guided by our values:



## 2 POSITIONING IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

### 2.1 GLOBAL CONTEXT

#### ANIMAL HEALTH AND HUMAN HEALTH

Hunger, zoonoses, and food-borne diseases still impact millions of people worldwide. Over 60% of existing and 75% of emerging human diseases are zoonotic.<sup>1</sup> As the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) highlights, the COVID-19 pandemic has strongly demonstrated the interdependencies between human health, animal health, and the environment, making the One Health approach indispensable.<sup>2</sup> Health threats such as neglected zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, food safety challenges, and antimicrobial resistance require holistic, collaborative solutions, with the animal health sector playing a vital role.

Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly vulnerable to infectious disease epidemics due to climatic and ecological conditions that favour harbouring pathogens and their vectors. Epidemics of transboundary animal diseases such as Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP), and Rift Valley Fever are widespread.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Sub-Saharan Africa has a high degree of interactions between humans and animals but lacks adequate resources for early detection, identification, and risk management of epidemics of zoonotic diseases.<sup>4</sup> Strengthening veterinary services and the One Health approach in this region are therefore key for global health security.

#### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Since 2015, hunger has been on the rise again, and the UN now predicts that the target for Sustainable Development Goal 2 – ending hunger – will not be reached if current trends persist. By 2030, around 600 million people will still be hungry.<sup>5</sup> In Africa alone, 282 million people were suffering from hunger and malnutrition in 2022.<sup>6</sup> Women are disproportionately affected by hunger in these multiple crises.

In the broad belt stretching from Mali in the west, through Niger, Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia to Somalia in the east, the livestock sector plays a crucial role in the economy and food security. Animal-source foods can substantially improve the nutrition of vulnerable people and are associated with better growth, cognitive function, activity, pregnancy outcome, and morbidity.<sup>7</sup> However, animal diseases have severe impacts on food security and safety, causing 20% of global losses in animal production.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, healthy livestock is a central pillar of food security and nutritious, diverse diets.

#### CLIMATE CRISIS AND LIVESTOCK

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the probability that global warming will pass 1.5°C between 2030 and 2035 is at 50%.<sup>9</sup> However, commonly agreed thresholds are likely to be overshoot. The climate on the African continent is projected to become hotter and drier, with more unpredictable precipitation. The pastoral systems are considered highly vulnerable to these stresses and shocks. Direct impacts include water and temperature stress on animals, which can lead to animal morbidity, mortality, distress sales by livestock owners. Indirect impacts of the climate crisis affect the availability and quality of pastures and feed for the animals.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, endemic and epidemic livestock and zoonotic diseases are re-emerging as a result of the climate crisis and changing migration patterns.

Rangelands in Sub-Saharan Africa are perceived as some of the most degraded ecosystems, making their sustainable management more important than ever. In Africa, rangelands cover 48 % of the land, feed over 55% of livestock, provide the basis for numerous animal-based and other products, and deliver various ecosystem services.<sup>11</sup> Due to their immense surface, rangelands are significant contributors to global carbon sequestration and storage,<sup>12</sup> with even more potential if properly managed. Healthy animals play an inherent part in safeguarding these ecosystems. The IPCC points at the potential for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in livestock systems. Namely through improved rangeland management with increased soil carbon stocks, better manure management, and higher-quality feed.<sup>13</sup> Thus, working within pastoral and agro-pastoral systems in Africa's rangelands means both supporting communities that need to adapt to climate change, and working on production and ecosystems with huge potential to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.



## PASTORALISM IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

The vulnerability of pastoral systems is exacerbated by non-climate factors, including conflicts, particularly in borderland areas. Transhumance is under pressure, and pastoralists' vulnerability to, as well as their involvement in, insecurity is linked to their political and social exclusion.<sup>14</sup> The conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary farmers persist in many contexts. In addition, many regions in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa are characterized by inter-community conflicts, criminality, extremism, and political violence. Africa remains the continent with the highest number of forgotten conflicts and coups d'état. Additionally, the war in Ukraine has disrupted food supply chains, impacting the prices of food, feed, fertilizer, and energy. In light of stresses and shocks caused by climate change, along with the fragility and insecurity in many regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, applying a humanitarian – development – peace nexus approach is essential.

## 2.2 OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL AGENDA

The VSF-Suisse Global Strategy addresses the changing realities globally, regionally and nationally. VSF-Suisse ensures that its initiatives are relevant and impactful by aligning with and contributing to the **UN Agenda 2030**, the **African Union: Agenda 2063** (Objectives 1, 2, 5, 7), the **IGAD Handbook 2020**, as well as the **Switzerland International Cooperation Strategy 2025–2028** (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4).

VSF-Suisse is distinguished by its unique approach to health, which is deeply rooted in understanding the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. This comprehensive perspective is a vital tool in preventing and managing zoonotic diseases, enhancing animal welfare, and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for communities reliant on livestock. By promoting One Health and One Welfare, VSF-Suisse contributes to broader efforts to improve global health security, preserve biodiversity, and support resilient ecosystems. Namely, our strategy is in line with the One Health Joint Action Plan (2022–2026) of UNEP, FAO, WHO, and WOA. It contributes to the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR (2015) and the Pan-African Programme for The Control and Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants 2017–2022.

By improving animal health, VSF-Suisse also addresses core issues of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (2017).

Livestock and agriculture are central to food and nutrition security, especially in rural areas where they serve as primary sources of income and nourishment. VSF-Suisse's focus on animal health and sustainable livestock production systems aims to increase productivity, improve market access, and ensure the sustainability and equity of food systems. In doing so, VSF-Suisse makes an important contribution to alleviating poverty, reducing hunger, and enhancing overall well-being. Our strategy aligns with the following Sustainable Development Goals: 1. No poverty; 2. Zero hunger; 3 Good health and well-being; 5. Gender equality; 13. Climate action; 15. Life on land; 16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions; and 17. Partnership for the goals. It strives towards fulfilling the right to food and the rights of peasants and pastoralists, as outlined in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security (1996), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (2018), and the African Union Regional Nutrition Strategy 2015–2025. As an innovation-driven organization, the work of VSF-Suisse is inspired by the AU Digital Agriculture Strategy (DAS) and Implementation Plan 2024–2030 and the AU Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (Lidesa) 2015–2035. Moreover, we want to contribute to agroecological transformation as understood by the Strategy 2024–2030 of the Agroecology Coalition.

The widespread impacts of climate change are evident worldwide, particularly in vulnerable regions of Sub-Saharan Africa where communities heavily depend on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. VSF-Suisse's strategy incorporates climate adaptation and mitigation as integral components, empowering communities to build resilience against climate-related shocks and stresses. This includes promoting sustainable agricultural practices, advocating for climate-smart livestock management, and influencing policies that enhance climate resilience at local and national levels as outlined in the Paris Agreement (2015) of the United Nations, the African Union (AU) Green Recovery Action Plan 2021–2027, and the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032).

VSF-Suisse draws lessons from the localization debate and the Grand Bargain (2016), building on the foundation of our local staff trusted by the communities with whom and for whom we work, and our partnerships with local and national governments as well as local NGOs. We focus on conflict-prone contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa and are guided by the OECD DAC Triple Nexus recommendations (2019) in combining humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and peacebuilding. With our commitment to achieving gender equality, we align our work with the IGAD Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023–2030 and the AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment 2018–2028.

VSF-Suisse is committed to effectively allocating its financial, human, and material resources to these policy frameworks and therefore works in alliances and networks. We are maximizing synergies and leveraging impact through being member of and contributing to the programmes of the Sufosec Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities and the agenda of VSF International.

As VSF-Suisse, we are committed not only to short-term gains but to maximizing the impact of our efforts by focusing on areas where we can make a difference and contribute to enduring, sustainable change. By leveraging our unique expertise and strong partnerships, VSF-Suisse aims to be a leading force in promoting food and nutrition security and fostering resilient livelihoods for marginalized communities in times of climate crisis and fragility.

<sup>1</sup> Taylor L.H., Latham S.M. & Woolhouse M.E.J. (2001). – Risk factors for human disease emergence. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B*, 356 (1411), 983–989.

<sup>2</sup> World Organisation for Animal Health. (2023). *One Health Policy Brief*.

<sup>3</sup> Mremi et al. (2021). Twenty years of integrated disease surveillance and response in Sub-Saharan Africa: challenges and opportunities for effective management of infectious disease epidemics.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

<sup>5</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. (2023). *State of Food and Nutrition Report*.

<sup>6</sup> UN, ECA, FAO, AUC. (2023). African regional overview of food security and nutrition 2023. p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> UN, ECA, FAO, AUC. (2021). African regional overview of food security and nutrition 2020: transforming food systems for affordable health diets. p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> 3. Cui M., Shen B., Fu Z.F. & Chen H. (2022). – Animal diseases and human future.

*Anim Dis.*, 2 (1), 6, s44149-022-00041-z. doi:10.1186/s44149-022-00041-z.

<sup>9</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2023). *Sixth Assessment Report*. Chapter 5.

<sup>10</sup> Rivera-Ferre, M.G. et al., 2016b: Re-framing the climate change debate in the livestock sector: Mitigation and adaptation options. *Wiley Interdis cip. Rev. Clim. Chang.*, 7, 869–892, doi:10.1002/wcc.421.

<sup>11</sup> Liniger, HP. and Mekdaschi Studer, R. (2019). Sustainable rangeland management in Sub-Saharan Africa – Guidelines to good practice. *TerrAfrica*; World Bank, Washington D.C.; World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT); World Bank Group (WBG), Washington DC, USA and Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Berne, Switzerland.

<sup>12</sup> Conant, R.T. (2010). Challenges and Opportunities for Carbon Sequestration in Grassland Systems: A Technical Report on Grassland Management and Climate Change Mitigation. A Technical Report On Grassland Management And Climate Change Mitigation, Food And Agriculture Organization Of The United Nations. Rome. Italy. p. 1–65 pp.

<sup>13</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2023). *Sixth Assessment Report*. Chapter 5.

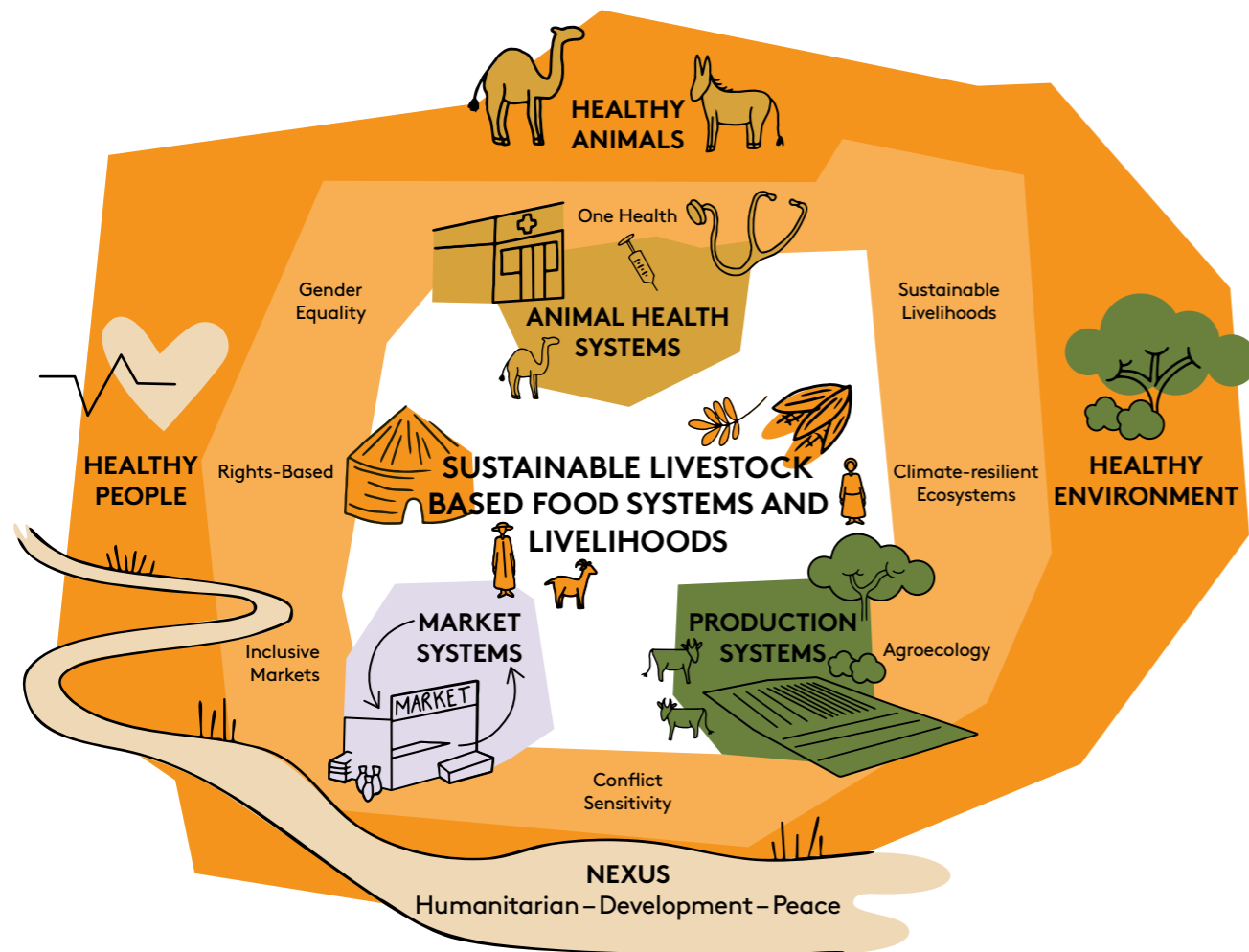
<sup>14</sup> Conciliation Resources and the Institute of Development Studies. (2024). *Peace and security for pastoralist communities in African borderlands, Accord Insight 5*.

# 3 INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

## 3.1 OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

IF livestock-based communities in Sub-Saharan Africa improve access to integrated animal health services (**HEALTHY ANIMALS**), enhance livestock production and climate resilience through agroecological transition (**HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**), and strengthen local markets by improving access to knowledge, technologies, services, and market linkages to boost local food consumption and job creation, THEN sustainable livestock-based food systems will ensure food and nutrition security and resilient livelihoods of marginalized communities (**HEALTHY PEOPLE**) in times of climate crisis and fragility, moving us towards our vision of a world where healthy people derive their livelihoods from healthy livestock in a healthy environment.

VSF-Suisse commits to applying systemic working approaches (i.e., One Health, sustainable livelihoods approach, rights-based approach, inclusive market systems) to increase the sustainability of its actions. The geographical focus on fragile contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa, which are strongly affected by shocks and stresses from climate change, makes nexus thinking between humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and peacebuilding a priority for our work. We deliver humanitarian aid where needed, but only when necessary.



## 3.2 WHERE WE WORK – COUNTRIES OF OPERATION

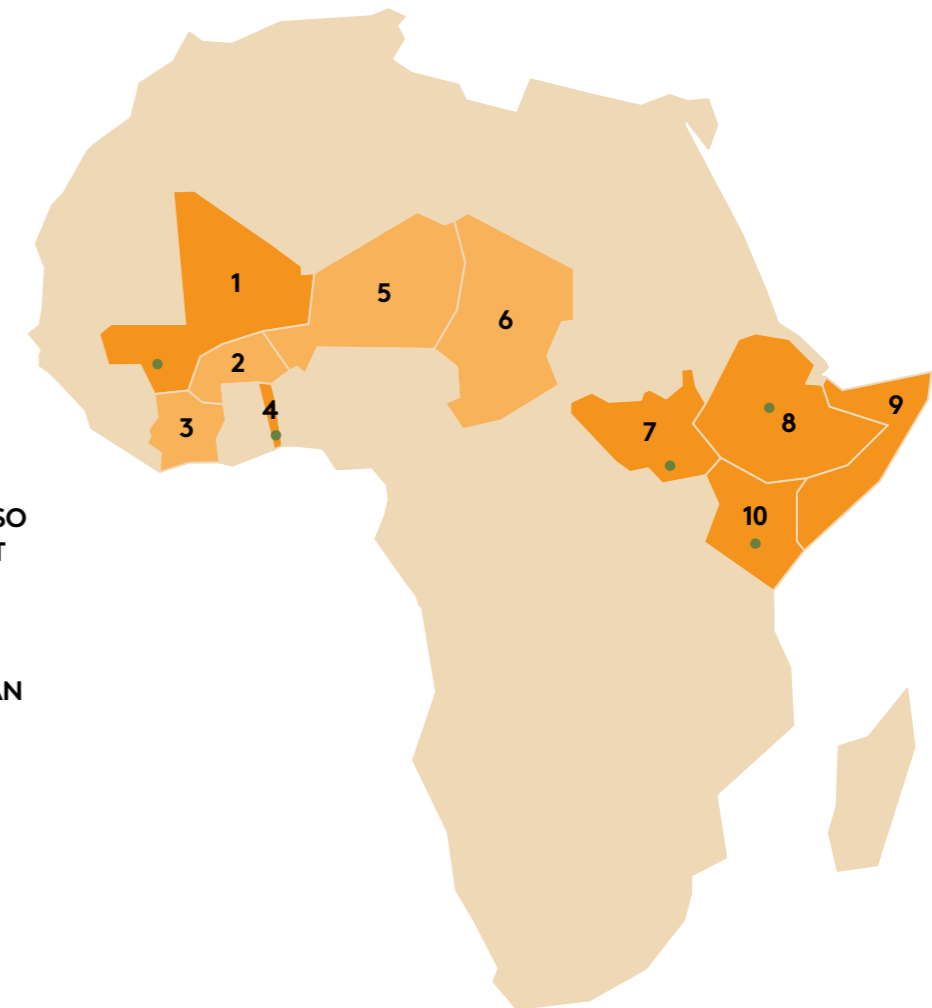
The geographical focus of our strategy is on the belt stretching from west to east across Sub-Saharan Africa. This region is home to pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities, whose livelihoods heavily depend on animal health and production. This is where the work of VSF-Suisse can have its greatest impact.

VSF-Suisse has a direct presence through offices in Ethiopia, Kenya/Somalia, South Sudan, Mali, and Togo, as well as an indirect presence through partnerships with local organizations in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso.

## 3.3 WITH WHOM WE WORK – PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Our project participants are marginalized and vulnerable communities who rely on livestock for their livelihoods but have limited access to livestock services. They may be pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, smallholders in mixed systems, urban and peri-urban livestock keepers, or other stakeholders involved in livestock-based food systems.

We place a particular emphasis on working with women and youth. In most cases, our project participants are affected by the polycrisis related to global hunger and malnutrition, limited access to healthcare, climate change impacts, fragility, and conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. They may also require humanitarian assistance at times. VSF-Suisse is therefore committed to leaving no one behind (LNOB).



1. MALI
2. BURKINA FASO
3. IVORY COAST
4. TOGO
5. NIGER
6. CHAD
7. SOUTH SUDAN
8. ETHIOPIA
9. SOMALIA
10. KENYA

### 3.4 WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE – STRATEGIC GOALS

## OVERALL GOAL: SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS ENSURE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CRISIS AND FRAGILITY

VSF-Suisse aims to create sustainable impact at the level of food systems, livestock-based production systems, and livelihoods. We highlight the fundamental role animal health plays in rendering livestock-based production systems more sustainable. By leveraging our unique expertise, we maximize our impact on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To achieve this goal, we build upon three strategic outcomes:

#### OUTCOME 1: LIVESTOCK-BASED COMMUNITIES HAVE IMPROVED THEIR ACCESS TO INTEGRATED ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICES WITH HEALTHY ANIMALS PROVIDING SAFE, QUALITY FOOD

The core competence of VSF-Suisse lies in enhancing preventive and curative veterinary services, particularly in rural and remote areas where access is limited. By supporting decentralized and community-based animal health services and targeted capacity development of One Health stakeholders, in collaboration with both the private and the public sector (PPP approach), we empower marginalized pastoral and agro-pastoral communities to improve the health and welfare of their livestock and strengthen their livelihoods. We aim to enhance the capacities of existing animal health services, improve their quality, and develop localized solutions (including mobile options, where relevant and sustainable).

As a champion of One Health, we promote the integration of animal, human, and environmental health services to address interconnected health challenges. In combination with a nutrition-sensitive approach, this contributes to healthy animals providing safe, quality food at all times, particularly in communities affected by endemic zoonotic diseases.

To achieve this outcome, VSF-Suisse focuses on three outputs:

- 1.1. equipping veterinary service providers to deliver needs-based animal and integrated/intersectoral health services, whereby we work with public, private, and community-based actors to ensure that underserved communities have reliable access to acceptable, adequate quality, gender-responsive services;
- 1.2. contributing to national and international efforts against major animal diseases, whereby we position ourselves as a key player in combatting trans-boundary animal diseases (such as PPR) and endemic zoonotic diseases e.g. along major livestock migration corridors, including through proactive measures such as vaccination campaigns, surveillance, and biosecurity practices;
- 1.3. developing capacities for improved One Health outcomes, whereby we support food and health system actors in communicating, coordinating, and collaborating to address zoonotic diseases, ensure food safety, and combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

#### OUTCOME 2: LIVESTOCK KEEPERS HAVE IMPROVED THEIR PRODUCTION AND INCREASED THEIR CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

Smallholder, agro-pastoralist, and pastoralist livestock keepers have adapted their production systems to suit the different agroecological zones. VSF-Suisse supports these communities by strengthening their capacities to leverage opportunities such as transitioning to agroecology, improving access to productive assets, and mitigating the impact of conflicts and climate change.





Income diversification at community level and disaster risk management in collaboration with authorities, including by streamlining the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) across the nexus continuum, are elements of our resilience approach. We also assist communities in sustainable natural resource management, using rangeland and landscape approaches, to improve food and nutrition security as well as incomes from livestock rearing.

To achieve this outcome, VSF-Suisse focuses on three outputs:

- 2.1. improving livestock keepers' technical, organizational, and financial capacities, whereby we promote agroecological and climate-smart agricultural practices, foster equitable access to feed, water and land, support social organization (such as pastoral field schools or cooperatives), and encourage rural financial inclusion;
- 2.2. supporting livestock keepers in diversifying their livelihoods, whereby we work with communities to adapt to changing contexts (in times of climate change, biodiversity crisis, and conflicts) and advance commercialization and value addition in agriculture, using green and clean energy sources;
- 2.3. paving the way for agroecology, the use of non-timber forest products, and sustainable natural resource management in fodder and feed production, whereby we contribute to ecosystem preservation and enhance the role of grasslands as carbon sinks.

**OUTCOME 3: FOOD PRODUCERS AND (SMALL-SCALE) MARKET ACTORS HAVE IMPROVED ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, TECHNOLOGIES, SERVICES, AND MARKET LINKAGES FOR INCREASED LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION AND JOB CREATION**

VSF-Suisse focuses on the commercialization of livestock products from smallholder, pastoralist, and agro-pastoralist communities and strengthens local markets and their connectivity. Local milk and produce are increasingly in demand by an urban middle class and have proven resilient during multiple shocks, benefiting communities who face food insecurity. VSF-Suisse invests into enhancing the visibility and competitiveness of local markets, including for overlooked products like camel milk. Thereby, we recognize barriers to equitable market access, e.g.

insufficient policies, and support inclusive growth of local markets. This fosters economic opportunities for small-scale food producers and market actors, especially women and youth.

To achieve this outcome, VSF-Suisse focuses on three outputs:

- 3.1. creating market linkages to increase food system connectedness, whereby we facilitate the organization and interaction of food producers, processors, marketers, and service providers (such as financial institutions, including livestock insurance pilots) within and across different market segments;
- 3.2. advancing innovative value addition and food marketing solutions, whereby we work to enhance the quality, value, and availability of local products through improved, eco-friendly processing and marketing strategies, including certifications;
- 3.3. making local products and markets more competitive and fostering income growth and job creation, whereby we advocate for pro-local regulatory frameworks and support initiatives that encourage investments to enhance economic opportunities within the local economy and promote the inclusion of women and youth.

**3.5 HOW WE WORK – WORKING APPROACHES**

In pursuing our strategic outcomes, VSF-Suisse is committed to applying systemic working approaches to increase the sustainability of our actions, depending on the context and possibilities.

- VSF-Suisse embraces the **One Health** approach, linking human, animal, and environmental health. This integrated approach enhances communication, collaboration, coordination, and capacity development (4 Cs) between sectors, leading to earlier detection of health events and better responses to the needs of rural communities.
- VSF-Suisse continues to implement the **sustainable livelihoods** approach, focusing on strengthening interrelated capabilities such as economic, human, political, socio-cultural, and protective capabilities. We follow the capacity development butterfly model, which interconnects the individual, network, organization, and system levels. This includes, for example, the coordination of trainings of livestock keepers with the simultaneous strengthening of agricultural organizations and cooperatives.
- VSF-Suisse promotes a **rights-based approach**, aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the pledge to leave no one behind of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We focus on rights linked to land access, tenure, water, and basic services. Our understanding of rights-based programming emphasizes advocacy for peasant rights and engagement in networks like VSF International and the Sufosec Alliance.
- VSF-Suisse promotes **gender equality and social inclusion** by enhancing access to and control over resources and ensuring participation in decision-making processes for marginalized groups, including women and youth. We also empower young people by encouraging them to participate in agricultural development initiatives and by creating jobs in rural and peri-urban areas.
- VSF-Suisse promotes **agroecology**, leveraging our expertise in livestock to implement relevant practices tailored to different contexts, such as rangeland

management in pastoral areas, or crop rotation in agro-pastoral settings. We aim to drive food systems towards agroecological transformation. Agrobiodiversity as a component of agroecology looks at preserving the diversity of production systems (e.g. indigenous breeds in healthy, diversified rangelands) with the double aim of maintaining the systems' resilience and of offering communities more diverse diets.

- VSF-Suisse contributes to enhancing the **climate resilience of ecosystems**, recognizing the interconnectedness of drylands and water resources. The principles of integrated natural resource management guide our approach to understanding resource access and land tenure systems, exemplified by our work in participatory rangeland management.
- VSF-Suisse promotes more **inclusive markets** by empowering marginalized actors within the core functions of market systems, strengthening supporting services, and advocating for equitable policies. We collaborate with farmers' organizations and systemic partners in various sectors, focusing on access to climate-smart technologies, green and clean energy solutions, equitable irrigation, financial inclusion, and digital solutions.
- VSF-Suisse is committed to **conflict sensitivity**, recognizing the potential impacts of our interventions in conflict-affected contexts. We aim to institutionalize conflict-sensitive programming, avoiding tensions and contributing to reducing them where possible.

From the Greater Horn of Africa to the Sahel countries in West Africa, VSF-Suisse operates in regions affected by protracted conflicts and recurrent natural disasters. We therefore give high priority to fostering synergies and the **humanitarian - development - peace nexus**.

### 3.6 HOW WE MEASURE IMPACT – MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEARNING

Monitoring and reporting are crucial elements in our global strategy, underpinning results-based management, transparency, and accountability. Guided by a comprehensive monitoring guide, we ensure systematic data collection to monitor the indicators of our results framework at a) project, b) country, and c) global levels. This helps us as a learning organization to identify challenges and make informed steering decisions to enhance the impact of our programme. Carefully examining our gender-disaggregated data also allows us to identify gaps in access, participation, and outcomes, and helps to design interventions that promote gender equality.

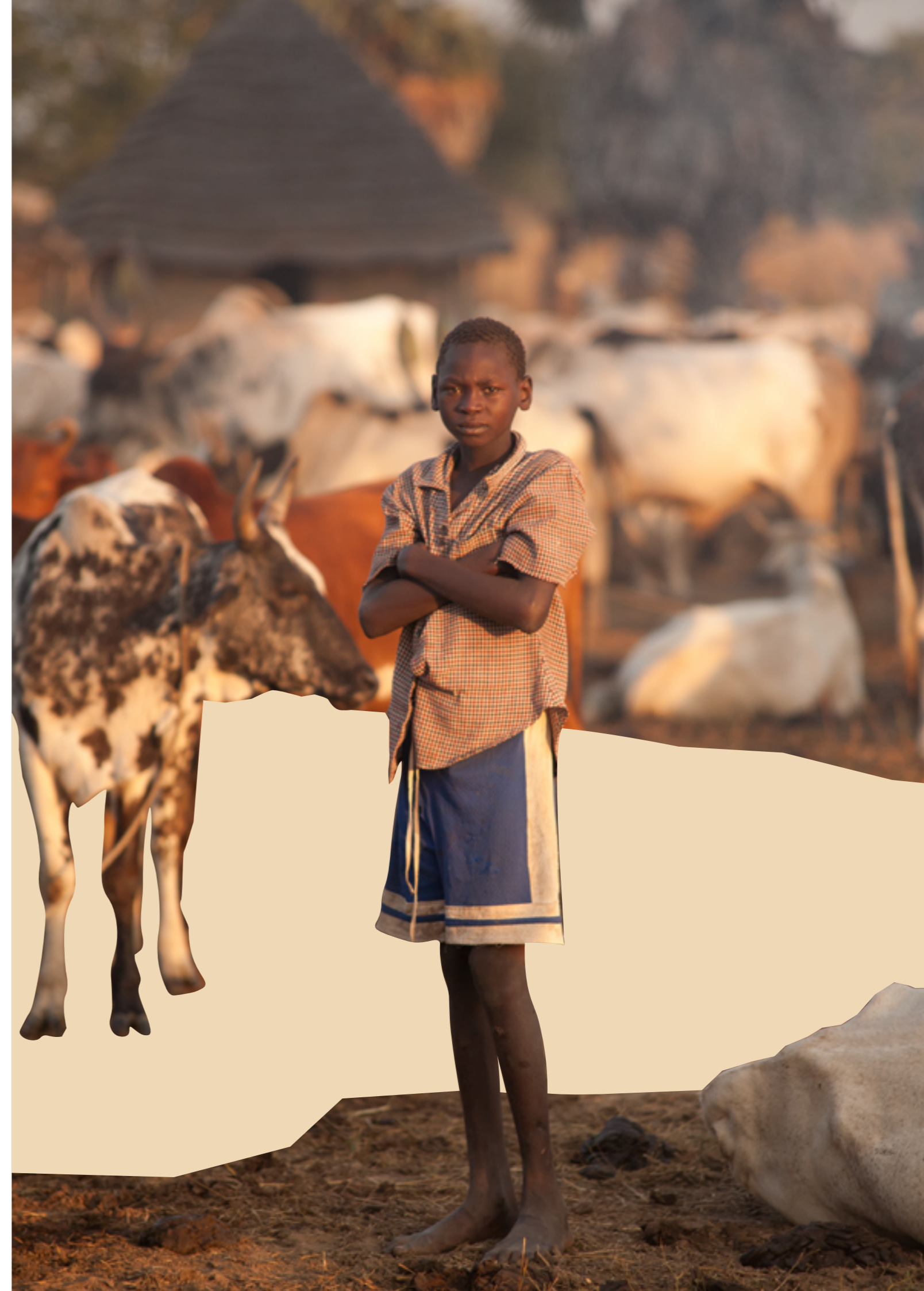
Internal and external evaluations, mid-term and peer reviews are used at the project level as a key information source to continually refine and improve our programming in key moments.

Reporting on the indicators of our results framework maintains transparency and accountability with our stakeholders, highlighting our achievements and areas for improvement. Additionally, we contribute valuable insights to our networks, notably VSF International and the Sufosec Alliance, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing global challenges and enhancing our collective impact.

### 3.7 HOW WE LEARN – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

As a learning organization, knowledge management is part of our strategy development, implementation, and evaluation process. Knowledge management is understood as a «conscious process of defining, structuring, retaining, and sharing the knowledge and experience of employees within an organization»<sup>15</sup>. Knowledge is shared within the organization via an internal platform (Microsoft SharePoint), collaboration is facilitated through context-based communication channels (on Microsoft Teams), and positioning of our knowledge happens within our networks and by prioritizing the production of policy briefs.

The potential for VSF-Suisse lies in bridging knowledge between our contexts in the Horn of Africa and West Africa, between animal health systems evolving in different policy contexts, and between different languages in the project contexts and across our network ranging from local partners and governments to academia (thereby using our Swissness as a multi-lingual organization).



<sup>15</sup> Andreev I. (2022; updated in 2024). Knowledge Management. Published by valamis. Knowledge Management: Importance, Benefits, Examples [2024] (valamis.com) (accessed on 14 Oct. 2024).

## 4 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The strategic goals of the international programme can only be achieved on the basis of a sound organizational foundation with adequate financial and human resources. VSF-Suisse therefore sets organizational objectives within the following seven focus areas:

### LEVERAGE THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

With an annual turnover of 9–12.5 million CHF in recent years and as a recipient of the SDC core contribution, VSF-Suisse has become an increasingly relevant player in the NGO community both in Switzerland and in its countries of operation. Focused on animal health and livestock-based food systems, VSF-Suisse occupies a unique niche and is well-positioned to implement humanitarian aid and development projects funded by major bilateral donors (e.g. SDC, EU, USAID/BHA, GIZ, ADA) and multilateral agencies (e.g. FAO, UN OCHA, WFP, WOA). VSF-Suisse also seeks mutually beneficial partnerships with the private sector.

By selecting and collaborating with strategic partners, VSF-Suisse aims to achieve greater leverage. At local and regional levels, this involves mapping and selecting strategic partners, developing a partnership policy, conducting thorough partner risk assessments, and investing in capacity development of local partners.

VSF-Suisse continues the successful partnerships with the Sufosec Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities and with VSF International focusing on joint learning, synergies, and knowledge exchange.

### VSF-CULTURE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The most valuable resource for VSF-Suisse is our staff. Employees at Head Office and all Country Offices demonstrate a strong identification with and outstanding commitment to the organization, along with high satisfaction and retention rates. Regular face-to-face and online meetings as well as effective internal communication promote connectivity and a sense of family.

To nurture this precious VSF-culture and address specific challenges, VSF-Suisse invests significantly in staff development through assessments, goal setting, appraisals, training opportunities, and internal exchanges. We will jointly define an action plan with measures at all levels to increase the representation of female staff in managerial positions and sub-teams. We will improve administrative processes, continue

to promote internal communication, and invest in attractive working conditions.

Living our values and acknowledging our ecological footprint, we commit to our environmental protection policy and implement measures to enhance our environmental performance through behavioral change and 'green programming'.

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

VSF-Suisse receives earmarked and non-earmarked funding from a wide spectrum of institutional and private donors. In recent years, project volume and organizational capital have increased, but significantly more investment is needed to achieve financial sustainability.

To consistently attain a positive ordinary operating result and build organizational capital – continuing the trend – VSF-Suisse invests in (a) public fundraising to increase non-earmarked funding; (b) strategic resource mobilization and institutional fundraising with foundations and the public sector to increase earmarked funding, and (c) improving financial and liquidity management.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY

VSF-Suisse operates in high-risk contexts and is committed to fulfilling its duty of care to safeguard employees by ensuring that appropriate security risk management measures are implemented. The security policy, adopted in 2024 and now being put in practice, provides clear guidance and defines principles, risk attitude and approaches, governance, and accountability. The policy further includes the security management system and tools for operations and programmes, travel management and support, awareness and capacity building, incident monitoring, crisis management, and security collaboration and networks.

### GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

VSF-Suisse has adopted relevant organizational and compliance policies (such as PSEAH, anti-fraud, and gender) and manuals (such as finance, PCM, operations handbook). Our governance structures are based on the separation of powers and local ownership. A robust governance and organizational structure ensures a culture of integrity and compliance with the requirements of donors and standard-setting bodies.

We invest in maintaining a framework of up-to-date compliance policies, with adequate reporting mechanisms accessible to all staff and project participants, responsible and timely case management as well as regular training of focal points in compliance issues. We also assess policies and practices and implement an action plan with the goal of meeting the Core Humanitarian Standards.

Our new organizational structure, adopted in 2024, will be effectively implemented by clearly defining the competences, roles, and responsibilities for all bodies and updating relevant documentation. We also conduct regular risk assessments and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are in place.

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

As a decentralized organization with around 150 staff members across several countries, digital transformation is crucial for VSF-Suisse. We fully embrace digital transformation to enhance productivity and efficiency through systems and tools (migration to the cloud, use of tools such as project portfolios, dashboards or planners, and creating collaborative business processes). We train local IT focal points at the Head Office and in the Country Offices and include IT in onboarding and regular training. Finally, we foster a culture of digital transformation with a collaborative and inclusive work culture and digitally empowered employees.

### COMMUNICATION

Through its communication efforts, VSF-Suisse generates interest and support among important stakeholders by providing truthful and meaningful information about its work and the realities of the people in its countries of operation. While raising brand awareness and growing our audience, we seek to develop our communications department by progressively localizing communication structures.

# ABBREVIATIONS

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| ADA       | Austrian Development Agency  |
| AU        | African Union  |
| CBPP      | Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia  |
| CCPP      | Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia   |
| DAS       | Digital Agriculture Strategy   |
| EU        | European Union   |
| FAO       | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations                                  |
| GIZ       | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit                                  |
| HDP       | Humanitarian – Development – Peace   |
| IGAD      | Intergovernmental Authority on Development   |
| IPCC      | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  |
| LEGS      | Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards   |
| LNOB      | Leave No One Behind  |
| MEAL      | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning                                      |
| NGO       | Non-Governmental Organization  |
| OECD DAC  | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development: Development Assistance Committee |
| PCM       | Project Cycle Management   |
| PPP       | Public Private Partnership   |
| PPR       | Peste des Petits Ruminants   |
| PSEAH     | Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment                                 |
| SDC       | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation   |
| SDGs      | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| Sufosec   | Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities                          |
| UN        | United Nations   |
| UNEP      | United Nations Environment Programme   |
| UNICEF    | United Nations Children’s Fund   |
| UN OCHA   | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs                       |
| USAID/BHA | United States Agency for International Development/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance    |
| VSF       | Vétérinaires Sans Frontières   |
| WHO       | World Health Organization  |
| WOAH      | World Organization for Animal Health   |

# ANNEX: RESULTS FRAMEWORK

## OVERALL GOAL: SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS ENSURE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CRISIS AND FRAGILITY

- 0.1 No. of households directly engaged in advancing shared goals
- 0.2 No. of people newly reached with humanitarian assistance in emergency situations
- 0.3 Prevalence of households with moderate or severe food insecurity
- 0.4 Proportion of women with a diverse diet
- 0.5 Proportion of women and youth who report increased decision-making power on livestock-related matters

## OUTCOME 1: LIVESTOCK-BASED COMMUNITIES HAVE IMPROVED THEIR ACCESS TO INTEGRATED ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICES WITH HEALTHY ANIMALS PROVIDING SAFE, QUALITY FOOD

- 1.1 No. households who report improved availability of animal-based food products
- 1.2 No. of people who gained access to quality animal health services
- Output 1.1 Equipping veterinary service providers to deliver needs-based animal and integrated/intersectoral health services
  - 1.1.1 No. of animal health professionals and community-based actors supported
- Output 1.2 Contributing to national and international efforts against major animal diseases
  - 1.2.1 No. of animals vaccinated/treated
- Output 1.3 Developing capacities for improved one health outcomes
  - 1.3.1 No. of people trained in One Health competencies (zoonotic diseases, food safety, AMR, ...)

## OUTCOME 2: LIVESTOCK KEEPERS HAVE IMPROVED THEIR PRODUCTION AND INCREASED THEIR CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

- 2.1 Area being managed in a sustainable manner
- 2.2 No. of people actively engaged in multi-stakeholder networks or dialogues promoting sustainable livestock production and agroecological transition
- Output 2.1 Improving livestock keepers’ technical, organizational, and financial capacities
  - 2.1.1 No. of livestock keepers adopting improved technical, organizational, or financial practices in their production systems
    - a) applying agroecological farming practices;
    - b) participating in farmer organizations (FFS/PFS, cooperatives, ...);
    - c) accessing credits, insurance, etc.
- Output 2.2 Supporting livestock keepers in diversifying their livelihoods
  - 2.2.1 No. of people supported in diversifying their livelihoods
- Output 2.3 Paving the way for agroecology, the use of non-timber forest products, and sustainable natural resource management
  - 2.3.1 No. of people trained in sustainable natural resource management

## OUTCOME 3: FOOD PRODUCERS AND (SMALL-SCALE) MARKET ACTORS HAVE IMPROVED ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGIES, SERVICES, AND MARKET LINKAGES FOR INCREASED LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION AND JOB CREATION

- 3.1 No. of (full-time equivalent) jobs created
- 3.2 No. of people who report increased incomes from local markets
- Output 3.1 Creating market linkages to increase food system connectedness
  - 3.1.1 No. of food system actors who report improved up- and/or downstream linkages across the market
- Output 3.2 Advancing innovative value addition and food marketing solutions
  - 3.2.1 No. of people trained in food processing and marketing innovations
- Output 3.3 Making local products and markets more competitive and fostering income growth and job creation
  - 3.3.1 Examples of pro-local regulation changes in favour of small-scale market actors

# IMPRINT

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# CONTACT

VSF-Suisse, Mühlenplatz 15,  
PO Box 343, 3000 Berne 13,  
[info@vsf-suisse.org](mailto:info@vsf-suisse.org), [www.vsf-suisse.org](http://www.vsf-suisse.org)  
IBAN CH78 0900 0000 3002 4633 4



VÉTÉRINAIRES  
SANS FRONTIÈRES  
SUISSE