

Vétérinaires  
Sans Frontières  
Dierenartsen  
Zonder Grenzen



# Activity report

VSF BELGIUM

2024

MEMBER OF VSF INTERNATIONAL



Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium is a Belgian NGO and a member of the VSF International network that supports African livestock keepers through humanitarian activities and development campaigns.

Millions of people in Africa depend on their livestock. Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium develops animal healthcare activities there in partnership with the local population, and supports agroecological livestock keeping.

We work together by providing training, equipment and medicines to keep both animals and the environment in good health, so that everyone can live their lives in dignity. The special attention we pay to the health of ecosystems also reduces the risk of diseases spreading from wild animals to humans and livestock. This way, we help to prevent pandemics such as Covid-19 and Ebola or mpox.

Cover: Denise N'Tangou, a poultry keeper in Boukoubé (Benin), now knows the tricks of the trade better than anyone. In fact, with more than 150 birds, her income has already enabled her to buy some goats.  
© Loïc Delvaux / VSF



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Marie-Rose Miburo, a poultry vaccinator, treating a neighbour's chicken on Kigufi Hill (Ngozi Province, Burundi).

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## FOREWORD

Dear donors, partners and sympathisers,

At the start of 2025, our organisation has reached an important milestone: 40 years of devoted work alongside rural communities all over Africa. This anniversary invites us to celebrate our history, but also to reflect on the future we want to build with our local partners, our national teams and the communities we work with.

Given the current international context, this reflection is all the more important. The United States terminated its financing for development aid at the beginning of 2025, and cuts were made in the same budgets at European level, creating great uncertainty in the international cooperation sector. This trend is forcing us to re-evaluate the way we plan, finance and carry out our work. Meanwhile, tensions in the region of the Great Lakes and the Sahel are emphasising the urgent need for resilient, community-based approaches that can withstand political and economic uncertainty.

In this period of transition, we are embarking upon an ambitious new chapter: the development of our strategic plan for the coming decade in the context of the Belgian Development Cooperation's next financing cycle. It is an opportunity to pause and take stock of the impact we have had so far, and to map out our course for the decade to come. Although a ten-year horizon may sound bold in these uncertain times, our experience has shown us that a long-term commitment is the only option for a sustainable transformation. Achieving genuine changes in animal health, rural livelihoods and food systems takes time – often generations.

We are not a jack of all trades, and that is exactly our strength. We specialise in animal health and our focus is specifically on the development of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. Over the years, we have broadened this experience by working to encourage local entrepreneurship, to develop value chains linked to livestock keeping, and to promote inclusivity in favour of women and young people. Animal health is not just a techni-

cal sector: it is a lever to increase people's dignity, food security, income and ability to save. And above all, as one of the pillars of our "One Health" approach, it is a lever for public health and the prevention of the next pandemic.

In the pages that follow, you will discover different facets of our expertise. These concrete illustrations are just a few examples of the wide range of activities we have organised in the countries where we intervened in 2024. We could have chosen others, like the resumption of our activities in the Comoros, where we launched our first project in the 1980s. Or, for example, our participation in the study project by Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International and the World Organisation for Animal Health on community animal health workers, whom we have been backing since the 1990s to help them finally eradicate rinderpest in South Sudan.

Our world is changing rapidly, but the commitment that has guided us since 1985 has stayed the same. Together with our partners, we are continuing to make progress alongside the communities, firmly convinced that they are the drivers of sustainable change, and that every herd, every family and every village counts.

We could never have done all this work without you – our donors, our Belgian and international partners, our institutional and multilateral funding bodies. In the name of all the communities that we work with, I would like to thank you for being at our side. In spite of the challenges, your support enables us to look forward to the next ten years with confidence and determination.

Happy reading,

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**Joep van Mierlo**  
General Director



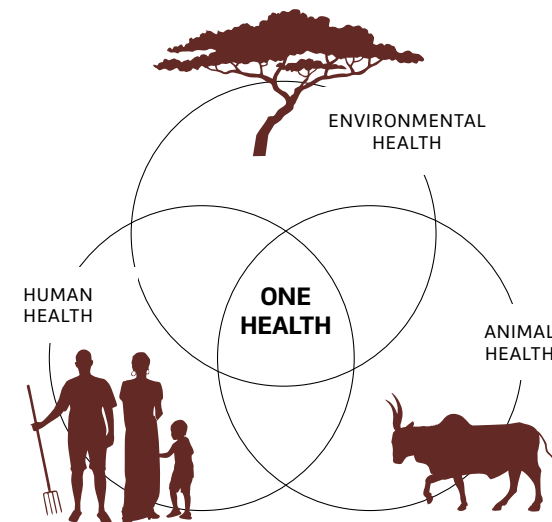
# Healthy animals, healthy people, healthy planet

## OUR MISSION

Empowering disadvantaged livestock dependent communities in the Global South to improve their well-being.



Find more information about how we apply the One Health approach on our website.



## OUR ONE HEALTH APPROACH

At Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium, we are convinced that human, animal and environmental health are intrinsically linked. This forms the basis of the “One Health” approach, a guiding principle in all our projects.

## A SOLID INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

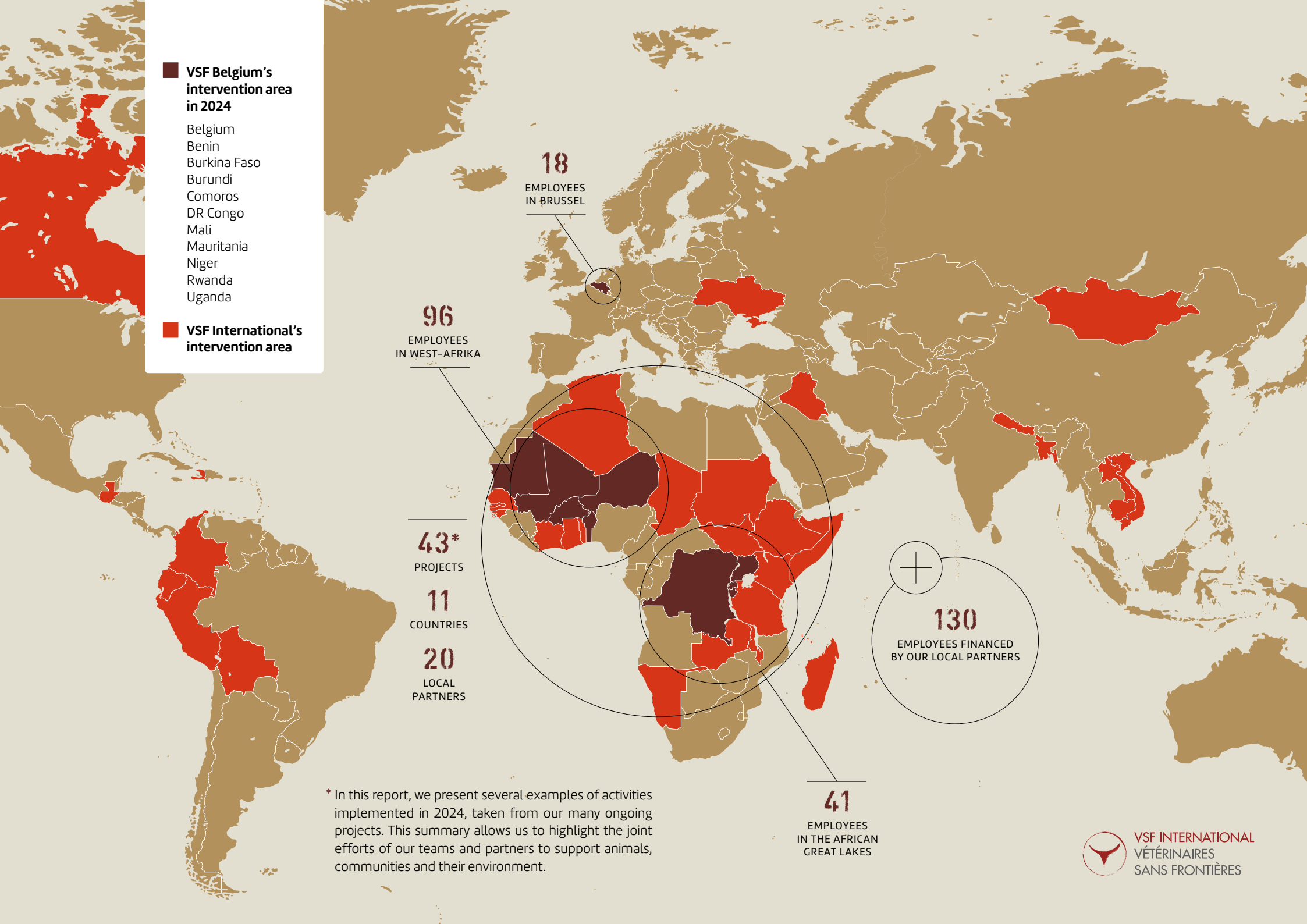
We are a member of the Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International network, made up of 12 national NGOs in Europe and Canada. Together we work in 40 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, serving the most vulnerable rural populations. Our aim is to support family-run livestock keeping and farming. We believe in the importance of a healthy relationship between humans, animals and their environment. Through our veterinary services and our work with local populations, we help to improve food security and food sovereignty around the world.

The network enables us to better co-ordinate the location of our work and makes it possible to pool our resources. It also encourages members to share their experiences and their expertise; this helps to develop our skills and those of our partners.

**VSF Belgium's  
intervention area  
in 2024**

Belgium  
Benin  
Burkina Faso  
Burundi  
Comoros  
DR Congo  
Mali  
Mauritania  
Niger  
Rwanda  
Uganda

**VSF International's  
intervention area**



\* In this report, we present several examples of activities implemented in 2024, taken from our many ongoing projects. This summary allows us to highlight the joint efforts of our teams and partners to support animals, communities and their environment.



**VSF INTERNATIONAL**  
VÉTÉRINAIRES  
SANS FRONTIÈRES





Along with our partners Humundi and Eclasio,  
we bring around 450 students together every year  
for a day devoted to food sovereignty.  
© Eclasio



# Belgium

## DIALOGUE AND ACTION SHOW THE WAY TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

During our annual agro-ecology inspiration day, multidisciplinary teams of students from Ghent University and HOGENT work together to shape the future of our food system.

© Laura Detremmerie / VSF



### KEY FIGURES FOR 2024



**3,932**

PARTICIPANTS  
IN OUR ACTIVITIES

**54%**

OF WHOM  
ARE STUDENTS

**1,534**

OF WHOM PARTICIPATED  
IN ACTIVITIES ORGANISED  
BY MOBILISED STUDENTS,  
CITIZENS OR PROFESSIONALS

**80%**

OF OUR ACTIVITIES  
IN WHICH BENEFICIARY  
LIVESTOCK KEEPERS IN THE SOUTH  
HAD A VOICE

**In Belgium, 2024 was marked by growing social tensions around agriculture, with farmers' protests in Belgium and Europe as a clear symptom of a deeper crisis. Our food system is under pressure and clearly hitting its limits, both ecologically and socially. The farmers aren't the only ones calling attention to the failing policy that does not offer them a fair income or future perspectives. The urgent climate and biodiversity crisis is also making the problem increasingly clear. The mpox outbreak in 2024 reminds us again how closely our health is intertwined with the way we treat our environment.**

In this polarised atmosphere, Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium has made the conscious decision to create space for dialogue and understanding. We believe that change begins with dialogue and the willingness to listen to each other. We can only build a sustainable future if we do it together. That's why we're continuing our commitment to connect agriculture, biodiversity and public health. Our work is based on the belief that agriculture and nature can work together in a way that is socially just.

So the focus this year was placed on in-depth conversations between young scientists, students and professionals working on the food system of the future, both here and in the South. By exchanging knowledge, insights and experiences, we are working towards mutual understanding and offering a nuanced framework for thinking about alternative food systems such as agro-ecology.

We are also continuing to inspire people with stories and films, followed by debates, to encourage discussion of the complex global issues surrounding food. This creates space for critical reflection and debate on the underlying causes of today's environmental and health issues, as well as possible solutions.

All of this has led to action. Inspired citizens have organised film screenings and talks, to engage in conversation about food issues with the people in their own social circles. University students have travelled with us to our project countries to exchange knowledge and conduct research in partnership with our local teams. These are ways in which we have worked with citizens and scientists on fair, sustainable food strategies for the future.

There are alternatives. A transition is not just necessary, it is also possible – if we have the courage to look ahead together and start taking action.









# Healthy animals

In all the regions where we are active, the animal health challenges are enormous. However, that is the reason for our very existence: the conviction that it is necessary to offer high-quality animal healthcare to the most deprived communities, even in the remotest regions. Because animal health is the basis of the health of the communities we support.

That is why we have been developing Local Private Veterinary Services all over sub-Saharan Africa for the past 40 years. And as successful as their track record has been, we are not resting on our laurels. Determined to improve constantly, we also believe in modernising and reinvigorating the profession. We keep fighting for more equality between men and women, promoting digitalisation, and giving health professionals a broader reach, based on our One Health perspective. Every day we strive to make animal health more effective.



KEY FIGURES  
FOR 2024



100

VETS AND

101

PARA-VETERINARY WORKERS  
ASSISTED

1,556

COMMUNITY  
ANIMAL HEALTH WORKERS  
SUPPORTED

10.4 million

ANIMALS TREATED  
AND VACCINATED

193,569

FAMILIES  
BENEFITING FROM  
ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICES

# DR Congo

## AN EPIDEMIO-SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM TO FIGHT ZOONOSES COLLECTIVELY IN SOUTH KIVU

Dr Safi Ngomora, whose practice is in Katana, is one of the private vets involved in our epidemio-surveillance system in South Kivu.  
© Thomas Cytrynowicz / VSF – MDM



HEALTHY ANIMALS

↓  
**OUR CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE EPIDEMIO-  
SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM  
IN 2024**



**6**  
VETS AND  
**182**  
COMMUNITY  
ANIMAL HEALTH WORKERS  
TRAINED

**512**  
SUSPECTED CASES  
REPORTED,  
OF WHICH  
**42 %**  
WERE CONFIRMED

**12**  
OUTBREAK SITES  
WERE IDENTIFIED  
AND CONTAINED

**In recent years, the population of South Kivu has suffered an increasing number of epidemics. Brucellosis, Rift Valley fever, mpox ... all these diseases have something in common besides their contagious nature: they can be transmitted from animals to humans and vice versa. If they are not detected in time, they can be fatal and cause disastrous animal, human and economic losses. This is a threat that hangs like the sword of Damocles above a region that has already been weakened by conflicts and poverty.**

Since zoonoses are at the intersection between human, animal and environmental health, detecting and fighting them requires a comprehensive response. And that is exactly where the epidemio-surveillance system comes in, which we have set up in South Kivu with our colleagues at Médecins du Monde and Action pour le Développement des Milieux Ruraux. This community-based solution involves the mobilisation of local players in the three forms of healthcare, and specifically those who are closest to the local populations: vets and community animal health workers, community structures for human health, environmental officers and eco-guards. Each group has a crucial role in preventing, detecting and managing health risks at their particular level.

In this collective struggle, Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium takes its role very seriously, especially because most of these epidemics originate in animals. That means animal health professionals are the first line of defence when it comes to

avoiding the transmission of diseases to humans. In 2024, six private vets and 182 community animal health workers took our epidemio-surveillance training courses. Together, they are responsible for monitoring zoonotic diseases within their respective communities, sounding alerts and collecting data, which is then sent to the provincial level. They also play a crucial role in disease prevention.

In 2024, our epidemio-surveillance system recorded more than 500 alerts issued by animal health professionals. More than 2 out of 3 suspected cases had to do with the mpox virus, while others concerned haemorrhagic fever, brucellosis or rabies. In total, 42% of the alerts turned out to be justified, most of them for cases of mpox. Several animal health workers were involved in 12 multidisciplinary missions to monitor affected patients following contact with an infected animal. They also organised multiple information sessions in the communities at risk, in order to inform people about protective measures against the most common zoonoses.



**Find out more about  
the mpox outbreak  
in the summer of 2024**



**SCAN ME**



# Niger

## FEMINISING ANIMAL HEALTH, A CRUCIAL CHALLENGE TO INCREASE OUR IMPACT



### OUR ANIMAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES IN 2024



39

LOCAL PRIVATE  
VETERINARY SERVICES  
ACTIVE,

17

OF WHICH  
ARE NEW

81

NEW COMMUNITY  
ANIMAL HEALTH WORKERS,

42

OF WHOM  
ARE WOMEN

8.5

MILLION ANIMALS  
TREATED



Fatchima Ibrahim has taken our training and now works as a Community Animal Health Worker in the village of Ibohamane (Tahoua region).  
© VSF

Niger is one of the countries where we have been working the longest. There's a good reason for that: as one of the largest countries in Africa, with an estimated livestock population of 42 million animals, Niger faces many animal health challenges. From the outset it was clear to us that there were not nearly enough vets in the country, so we opted to train community animal health workers. Selected among the local population, they provide basic healthcare for the livestock, under the supervision of a vet. This tandem system forms the basis of what we call "Local Private Veterinary Services".

After two decades of efforts, we are proud to see that our strategy has paid off. Spread across six of the country's eight regions, no fewer than 39 Local Private Veterinary Services are active today. In 2024, these structures cared for more than 8.5 million animals, or roughly one in five animals in the country. As well as preserving animal health, their presence also strengthens the livelihoods and food security of livestock keepers.

As herds keep growing, so does the need for veterinary care, so ensuring continuity remains a major challenge to perpetuate this success. That is why we train new animal health workers every year, in order to extend the network and provide better access to animal health services in remote areas. To improve the animal health workers' ability to face new challenges, our

training covers subjects such as emerging diseases, resistance to antibiotics and the effects of climate change on animal health.

In 2024, 42 women took our animal health worker training, compared to 39 men. This move towards gender balance genuinely adds value on several levels. Firstly, by training women, we contribute to their inclusion in a sector where they are often underrepresented in Niger. But beyond their personal emancipation, their work also strengthens the position of all women in rural areas. Traditionally responsible for milking, feeding and caring for animals, female livestock keepers interact more easily with other women than with men. So thanks to the female community animal health workers, we can reach a wider audience and increase the spread of good health practices.

© Tim Dirven



## TESTIMONIAL

## Adelin Minani

42 YEARS OLD,  
COMMUNITY ANIMAL HEALTH WORKER  
IN BURUNDI



On Kigufi Hill in northern Burundi, Adelin Minani has been part of our animal health network since 2018. Over the years, his client base has grown, as has his income. Today, he has around 200 clients and earns five times what he did to begin with. And that isn't the only thing that has changed:

*“People often call me for preventative treatment, deworming for example. When I started, there was a lot of disease, especially in pigs: tapeworms, cysticercosis and so on. Today, this is much less common because the animals receive preventative treatment.”*

When asked what aspect of the support he received really changed things for him, Adelin doesn't miss a beat:

*“The training I received has changed everything. I can't wait to take more training, to learn about emerging diseases and how to treat them.”*

© Loïc Delvaux / VSF





# Uganda

## DIGITALISATION OF LIVESTOCK TAGGING: A WINNING SOLUTION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH AND SECURITY IN KARAMOJA



In Karamoja, traditional livestock branding is completely unofficial and does not help prevent thefts or epidemics.  
© Tim Dirven / VSF



In the semi-arid region of Karamoja in north-eastern Uganda, most people rely on agro-pastoralism for a living. As an essential source of income, livestock keeping is first and foremost a social safety net and a form of protection from climate shocks. Since 2006, we have been developing an animal health network in the region, serving communities of local livestock keepers. Today, this system is run by more than 200 community animal health workers across four districts. In 2024, they treated more than 315,000 cattle, goats, sheep and poultry, and administered more than 247,000 doses of vaccines.

Despite our successful efforts to protect livestock, however, livestock keeping in Karamoja is under pressure. In the last ten years, the thefts and cattle raids that were already commonplace have gained a commercial dimension. Exacerbated by the rising price of meat linked to growing urbanisation, this practice has led to many human and animal losses. In 2022, the situation took a tragic turn: following a particularly difficult dry season, the harvests failed. Thousands of families whose livestock had been stolen were plunged into famine.

Fortunately, the situation has stabilised since then, but the risk of backsliding remains real. One reason for the prevalence of livestock theft in Karamoja is that there is no reliable livestock identification system. Traditionally, livestock keepers distinguished their animals by branding them with symbols, but this system is entirely unofficial. For this reason, we took the first steps towards a digital livestock identification system in 2024, in which the community animal health

workers will play a key role. In time, this system will make it possible to link an animal to its owner with a unique identification code entered in a digital register that includes all the relevant data.

Besides improving the security of livestock and livestock keeping, this system offers major benefits for animal health. Veterinary services are currently faced with a lack of reliable data about the herds. Furthermore, livestock regularly fall victim to epidemics: in 2024, the community animal health workers tackled six outbreaks of potentially epidemic diseases such as contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, ovine rinderpest and goat pox. The digitalisation of livestock identification registers will enable animal health professionals to signal these diseases in good time, thus greatly limiting livestock losses. The system will also help them to estimate the size of these epidemics better and to identify the measures needed to control them quickly (number of vaccines to be ordered, quarantine measures, etc.).

In 2025, the project will enter the test phase: 5,000 livestock keepers and 20,000 animals are expected to benefit in the district of Moroto.



Find out more about  
our digital livestock  
branding system



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# Healthy people

In rural Africa, the benefits of livestock keeping for food security and nutrition have been well and truly proven.

Eggs, milk and meat supply essential nutrients, and manure improves crop yields, increasing the quantities of vitamins and minerals available.

When agro-pastoralists are able to sell some of these products, they can meet other essential family needs.

As well as feeding themselves, their revenue gives them access to healthcare and allows them to send their children to school. In summary, livestock keeping enables them to live in dignity.

However, in the regions where we are active, livestock keeping often barely covers the families' own needs. Due to a lack of knowledge and resources invested, the sector cannot develop its full potential. At Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium, we are convinced that people can do far more through livestock keeping than just surviving. If we provide the means, it can be genuinely profitable and form the basis of prosperous small businesses. That is why every year, we support thousands of small producers on their way to self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship.



KEY FIGURES  
FOR 2024



**65,777**

BENEFITING FAMILIES,

**41%**

OF WHOM  
BENEFITED THROUGH  
OUR HUMANITARIAN  
ACTIVITIES

**20,573**

ANIMALS  
DISTRIBUTED

# Burundi

## ESCAPING POVERTY THANKS TO LIVESTOCK CREDIT

Thanks to a livestock-keeping loan, Claude Nduwimana and his family now have a shop, two houses, livestock and several plots of land on Mugomera Hill (Ngozi Province).  
© Loïc Delvaux / VSF



ONZE  
KERNCIJFERS



500

BENEFICIARIES OF LOANS  
SINCE 2016

64

LOANS GRANTED  
IN 2024,  
FOR € 12,500

400

FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS  
SELECTED

In Burundi, nine out of ten inhabitants, amounting to approximately 12 million people, make a living from agriculture and livestock keeping. Unfortunately, their profession prevents them from accessing loans. This is because Burundian banks consider livestock keeping as an area of investment that is too risky, so they refuse all loans to small livestock businesses. So how can people escape poverty, let alone climb the social ladder, if they are born in a rural, underprivileged area?

Since we started work in the country in 2014, we have been committed to changing the situation, along with our local partner UCODE-AMR. In the provinces of Ngozi and Kanyanza, we started supporting groups of farmers, training them in management and livestock keeping, nutrition, reproduction and veterinary care. Since each of the members acted as a guarantor for the group, we were able to convince local microfinancing organisations to grant them loans.

Since 2016, more than 500 of them have benefited from our “livestock credit” system, borrowing 100 to 300 euros. These amounts, two to six times higher than the average monthly salary, are usually

invested in the purchase of poultry, rabbits, goats or pigs. In 2024 alone, 64 loans were granted for a total amount of € 12,500.

For the producers we have been supporting for a few years, the impact is undeniable: the income they make from livestock keeping has increased fourfold since 2021, and the diversity of their diet has almost doubled. Whereas only one in two managed to save or invest in 2021, 99% were able to in 2024. Their money has been used to buy agricultural land, animals, or means of transport, to send their children to school, or to renovate their homes.

Bolstered by these successes, we have decided to encourage young people and women in the provinces of Makamba and Rutana, in the south

of the country, to embark on livestock keeping as well. In 2024, we selected 400 livestock keepers and 312 community animal health workers and animal technicians. From 2025 onwards, they will benefit in turn from training and loans in partnership with local banks.



Find out about Claude  
and Donatien's journey,  
after they each received  
livestock credit



SCAN ME



# Mauritania

## STIMULATING MILK PRODUCTION TO STRENGTHEN FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Every year, food insecurity and malnutrition affect many Mauritians. This situation is all the more regrettable because livestock keeping has enormous potential in this vast country. Despite an estimated herd size of more than 30 million livestock for fewer than 5 million inhabitants, there is only a limited market for the products of livestock keeping. This even applies to milk, although Mauritians consume it in large quantities.

Several factors explain this paradox. In the vast majority of cases, the livestock keepers are unaware of ways to improve their milk production, since they have not had any formal training. Moreover, they have few opportunities for storage and processing, which rules out any form of marketing on a large scale. So milk is traditionally consumed as it is, shortly after milking, within the household. And when the herds embark on their seasonal grazing journey, the women and children are left without their daily source of protein.

To promote the development of this promising sector in the south-east of the country, we started working with livestock keepers in the Hodh El Gharby region in the autumn of 2021. We invited them to organise professionally in order to improve their production. Then we set up an advice

↓  
**OUR ACTIVITIES  
TO STRUCTURE  
THE DAIRY SECTOR  
IN FIGURES**



**65**  
FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS  
SUPPORTED

**120,000**  
EUROS IN SUBSIDIES  
GRANTED TO

**43**  
FARMERS'  
ASSOCIATIONS

**30**  
TECHNICAL ADVISERS  
TRAINED

**29,618**  
DIRECT AND INDIRECT  
BENEFICIARIES

and orientation structure, as well as financial support to launch their activities. In four years, we have supported 65 farmers' associations.

To strengthen their skills, we set up field schools and trained 30 technical advisers. As well as learning about animal health and livestock keeping in the strict sense, the livestock keepers are also taught to manage fodder crops to guarantee self-sufficiency for their herds. With good management and adequate storage, they are able to feed their animals throughout the year and sell surplus fodder. Their stock also enables them to keep a few animals in the village during seasonal grazing, to meet their family's needs.

Since the herd's diet has become richer and, above all, more stable, their milk production has increased and continues through the seasons.

As a result, the livestock keepers can sell some of it. Furthermore, we have refitted a milk processing unit and distributed churns to the livestock keepers so they can transport or store their milk. All in all, 43 farmers' organisations have received a total of 120,000 euros in credit to develop their activities.

Almost 30,000 people have benefited directly or indirectly from our activities aimed at structuring the dairy sector in the region. By increasing the quantity and quality of milk available, we are improving the resilience of vulnerable populations in the face of nutrition and food insecurity.

Chighali Elbou collects milk from his cows, some of which he will sell at the market in Tintane. As the president of a farmers' association, he is one of the technical advisers trained by our team. © Karai / VSF



## TESTIMONIAL

## Minata Bamogo

55 YEARS OLD,  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON  
IN BURKINA FASO



A few years ago, Minata was forced to leave her home. From one day to the next, her family joined the mass of thousands of displaced persons in Burkina Faso. She remembers arriving in Kaya after walking for hours in fear:

*“Everyone managed the best they could to survive. Old women did the washing, and the rest of us went to the edge of the dam to help plant vegetables. We earned 500 francs<sup>1</sup> a day. We also gathered grass and sold it to livestock keepers to feed their animals. My arms are still scarred from that work.”*

After a year of uncertainty, Minata took training and received four nanny goats, a billy goat and animal feed. It was a unique opportunity to offer more stability to the nine children she is raising alone.

*“Everything has changed since then. I’ve taken care of my animals as well as I take care of myself. Now I have 17 goats and 15 sheep. Selling some of my animals has enabled me to rebuild a house, buy food for the herd and for my children, and pay their school fees.”*

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 0.75 euros



© Semfilms / VSF



# Burkina Faso

## A MARKET GARDEN TO GUARANTEE NUTRITIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Koulogo vegetable garden was restored in the summer of 2024. It feeds many displaced people and members of the host population. About a hundred of them have received training, equipment and seeds to grow.

© Semfilms / VSF



↓  
KOULOGO  
MARKET GARDEN  
IN FIGURES

1.5 ha  
OF MARKET GARDEN  
RESTORED

1  
BOREHOLE  
CREATED TO BENEFIT  
600  
PEOPLE

100  
PRODUCERS TRAINED  
IN AGRO-ECOLOGICAL  
PRACTICES,  
77  
OF WHOM ARE WOMEN

Since 2015, insecurity and conflicts have caused the mass displacement of thousands of Burkinabé people. The country is undergoing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in several regions. For both the displaced people and the communities that host them, meeting their needs is a daily struggle.

Our teams intervene in different areas of the country to support the most vulnerable people. In the Centre-Nord and Sahel regions, we have implemented humanitarian activities for the displaced and host populations. Our main goal is to protect them, but also to strengthen their resilience and help them find a way towards self-sufficiency. This is done specifically by ensuring their basic needs are met, with nutrition as the number one priority.

In the summer of 2024, for example, we restored a market garden in the village of Koulogo. Located close to Kaya, more than a thousand displaced persons had taken refuge there. With a new borehole to ensure regular watering, the garden's mission is to guarantee local people agricultural production all year round. We selected 100 people to receive a plot of land inside the market garden, as well as training in agro-ecological techniques. The group included a mixture of displaced people and hosts, and the majority were women. We also provided them with everything they needed to look after their plots and cultivate them, from agricultural equipment to seed, as well as organic fertiliser and pesticides.

The garden both strengthens social cohesion and helps to improve food and nutrition security among the local population. In just a few months, the inhabitants of Koulogo produced more than 21 tonnes of vegetables! They grew 6,000 kg of onions, 4,200 kg of cabbages, 4,000 kg of sorrel, almost 4,000 kg of aubergines and 3,150 kg of peppers. This is a colossal harvest compared to normal yields, and only 30% of it was used to feed more than 600 people. The rest was sold, increasing the harvesting families' financial autonomy and enabling them, among other things, to diversify their diets even more.

Thanks to the vegetables, local people were able to meet a significant proportion of their calorie requirements and reduce their deficiencies in vitamin A and C and iron. These nutrients are essential for the body to work properly and to prevent many diseases. Furthermore, the vitamins and minerals in these vegetables strengthen the immune system and contribute to preventing chronic illnesses.



Find out more about  
our humanitarian protection  
programme, also set up  
in three other countries



SCAN ME









# Healthy planet

With every passing year, it becomes more clear: the communities we support and their livestock are only as healthy as their environment. And this balance is becoming increasingly unstable. Harsher droughts, repeated flooding, massive deforestation, soil erosion, emerging diseases ... When we neglect nature, it turns on us, and the weakest suffer first.

Small agro-pastoralists and their herds are among the first targets.

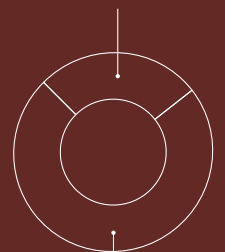
Rather than giving in to despair, we would like to believe it is still possible to reverse the trend. To mitigate the effects of climate change where they are felt most. Alongside livestock-keeping communities, we dare to bet on the side of optimism. That is why we are developing more and more projects focused on beekeeping, reforestation, soil preservation and water conservation, and promoting green energy sources and agro-ecology. Another way to contribute to our mission is to help livestock-keeping communities to live in dignity.



KEY FIGURES  
FOR 2024

**25,675**  
HECTARES  
PROTECTED

**27%**  
PASTURES



**73%**  
AGRICULTURAL  
LAND



# Mali

## SUPPORTING AGRO-PASTORALISTS TO REVERSE THE SOIL DEGRADATION TREND

Like in Mauritania (photo), we are setting up soil restoration activities in Mali, specifically the installation of stone barriers.  
© Karai / VSF



### RESULTS OF OUR SOIL RESTORATION ACTIVITIES



**33 ha**

OF AGRICULTURAL LAND  
AND COMMON GROUND  
RESTORED

ALMOST

**3 km**

OF STONE BARRIERS  
INSTALLED

**+184%**

AGRICULTURAL YIELD  
PER HECTARE  
BETWEEN 2022 AND 2024

**750**

LOCAL INHABITANTS  
TRAINED IN RESTORATION  
TECHNIQUES

**As a landlocked country in the Sahel with an arid climate, Mali is facing a multitude of security, socio-economic and environmental challenges. The agro-pastoral community of Koulikoro, near Bamako, is no exception.**

As victims of climate change, the agro-pastoralists there are taken by surprise increasingly often by unusually intense, unpredictable rains. Periods of drought are becoming more intense, followed by heavy rainfall that sweeps away everything in its path. The first thing to go is the arable soil, gradually turning fields into bare, infertile wasteland. Over the years, crop yields fall, which increasingly threatens the livelihoods of the local population.

Fortunately though, solutions do exist to fight this environmental and socio-economic disaster. In 2023, we started restoration work in 18 villages. Along with the communities, we selected 50 agricultural plots and common areas among the most damaged sites. In order to involve the local population as much as possible and create jobs, we entrusted vulnerable people in the region with the work. A team of 15 people got to work on each of the identified sites.

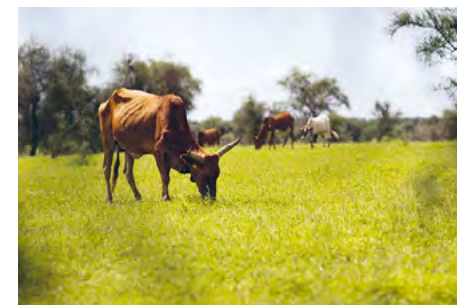
The inhabitants of Koulikoro used different techniques to restore bare soil, protect the fields against run-off water and fight erosion:

- Planting living hedges that act as fences between the parcels of agricultural land, while protecting them from erosion. Besides being a source of wood and fodder, these hedges also have the benefit of protecting the crops from animals.

- Creating half moons on eroded land: dug in a semicircle, these basins are used to intercept run-off water. Then agricultural seeds are planted in them, which use the retained water to grow, for maximum yields.
- Constructing stone barriers, which are very popular in these communities because they are simple to build and cost nothing. All the people have to do is collect stones and place them in a line around their plots of land. Imitating a natural terracing process, they are used to trap sediments. This increases the fertility of the soil and helps the vegetation to regenerate.

2024 marked the end of the restoration of the 50 sites, covering a total of 33 hectares. On the plots restored in 2023, the results are already astonishing: agricultural yield per hectare has increased from 241 kg to 684 kg in two years, which is an average increase of 184%. That's proof that these adaptations have genuine added value for both the environment and the population.

© Karai / VSF



# Rwanda

## BEEKEEPING, THE ALLY OF BIODIVERSITY

Thanks to our support, Patrick Uwingabire has professionalised his activity and is currently the president of a group of beekeepers whose sales amounted to 7 tonnes of honey in 2024.  
© Thibault Flament / VSF



### KEY FIGURES FOR 2024



84

BEEKEEPERS  
TRAINED AND

1,225

PEOPLE  
MADE AWARE  
OF NATURAL RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

30 ha

OF FOREST  
PLANTED

4,922

COLONIES OF BEES  
COUNTED,  
COMPARED TO 2,196  
IN 2022

In Rwanda, we have been working since 2014 with our local partner ARDI, which specialises in beekeeping. In 2022, we embarked upon activities to support beekeepers located around Nyungwe and Akagera National Parks. United in cooperatives, all of them speak of the same obstacles: a lack of financial capital, modern equipment and adequate knowledge and skills, which results in low honey production. They are also noticing a drop in the bee population due to a lack of space and nectar-producing plants.

On the basis of our collective experience in other regions of Rwanda, we started by setting up demonstration hives to teach local beekeepers about more modern practices. Then we put the beekeeping cooperatives in touch with microfinancing institutions to give them access to loans to develop their activities. Two years later, 28 cooperatives with a total of 1,225 beekeepers run about 7,000 hives in the two regions, producing more than 50,000 kg of honey each year. In 2024, the average honey production per beekeeper rose to 42.2 kg per year, almost three times as much as when the project started.

But for their beekeeping activities to flourish, the preservation of biodiversity is absolutely crucial.

Scientists are unanimous: bees are directly threatened by climate change and biodiversity loss. Without bees, a large proportion of our food chain is at risk. This is why we also distributed nectar-producing plants and coordinated their planting.

In 2024, we created 30 hectares of forest. This way, we are fighting both deforestation and the decline in biodiversity. And it's working: the number of bee colonies in the target areas increased from around 2,200 to almost 5,000 between 2022 and 2024. Our newly planted areas also increase the availability of pollen and nectar, which benefits honey production for our beekeepers and agricultural yields in general.

In addition, we are working to raise awareness: 84 beekeepers (both male and female) were trained in natural resource management in 2024. In turn, they raised awareness among the members of their cooperatives. Along with local communities, we have also identified other species of nectar-producing plants adapted to the area. This participative process strengthens the beekeepers' commitment to the sustainable management of their environment while optimising their beekeeping revenue.



## TESTIMONIAL

## Martine Ouyata

45 YEARS OLD,  
AGRO-PASTORALIST  
AND SHEA PRODUCER  
IN BENIN



Since 2008, Martine has been the secretary of a shea processing cooperative in the department of Atacora. With other Beninese women, this mother works hard to earn her living by making shea butter. Unfortunately, their activity has an adverse effect on the environment.

*“Shea processing requires a lot of wood.  
When we cut it down, we don’t replace it.  
We also buy wood and charcoal,  
which are getting increasingly expensive.  
We use four to six bags a month” she explains.*

But there is hope: the cooperative has recently been equipped with a biodigester. This new source of energy will soon enable the shea producers to reduce their wood consumption while making their work easier. They have also taken several training courses, including reforestation training:

*“Now we know how to sow and graft trees.”*

This is proof that it’s possible to generate income while reducing the negative impact on nature!



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# Benin

## AGRO-ECOLOGY AND GREEN ENERGY AS ALTERNATIVES TO ENVIRONMENTALLY HARMFUL PRACTICES

In the department of Atacora in north-west Benin, the environment is under threat. Deforestation, desertification, erosion ... without realising it, rural populations have been putting nature under immense strain with their traditional practices. To cook their meals, they use wood and charcoal every day, thus contributing to deforestation. Many people also practise slash-and-burn farming, which threatens local ecosystems and reduces soil fertility.

In the communities of Boukoumbé, Coby and Natitingou, we have been encouraging people to adopt agro-ecological practices and use green energy since 2024. With our local partner CERD, we raise awareness among agro-pastoralists of the causes and impacts of climate change, while offering solutions adapted to their needs and the environment they live in.

To preserve local ecosystems and regenerate soils, we have trained 25 women, all members of cooperatives, in assisted natural regeneration. This approach consists of protecting new regrowth of trees, especially the shea tree. These fragile shoots can easily be destroyed by animals, agricultural work or fires. So the women identify shoots



OUR ACTIVITIES  
TO PROMOTE  
AGRO-ECOLOGY  
AND GREEN ENERGY  
IN 2024



10

CRAFTSPEOPLE TRAINED  
IN THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF BIODIGESTERS

1,121

PEOPLE MADE AWARE  
OF CLIMATE ISSUES  
AND SUSTAINABLE  
ALTERNATIVES

5,000

SEEDLINGS OF SHEA,  
AFRICAN LOCUST BEAN  
AND MORINGA TREES PRODUCED  
FOR REFORESTATION

As the beneficiaries of the first biodigester made in Boukoumbé, workers at a shea butter processing cooperative are helping to fill it up for the last time before it is activated.

© Loïc Delvaux / VSF

with good potential and clear the surrounding area to help them develop. They prune the young plants regularly to strengthen the main trunk, limiting grazing on the plot of land to protect them while they are growing.

We also participate in reforestation efforts, supporting the sustainable production of shea, African locust bean and moringa trees. These species belong to local flora and are highly sought-after for their economic value: they can be used to make shea butter, mustard or medicines. They enable local cooperatives to generate income while preserving biodiversity.

In addition, we encourage agro-pastoralists to use organic fertiliser. Manure is provided for free by their animals and replaces chemical fertiliser to improve agricultural yields with no harmful effect on biodiversity. We have also trained a dozen local craftspeople to produce and maintain biodigesters. These systems, which turn animal droppings into gas, are an alternative form of sustainable energy to replace the wood used in cooking stoves. In 2025, 20 biodigesters were installed in shea and soya processing cooperatives. Provided they chip in for 50 % of the costs, 25 agro-pastoralists can also request a biodigester of their own to reduce their ecological footprint.







## FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Would you like to know more  
about where our funds come from  
and how we manage our expenses?  
Our financial report is available  
on our website:  
[www.vsf-belgium.org](http://www.vsf-belgium.org)  
and can be obtained on request from:  
[info@vsf-belgium.org](mailto:info@vsf-belgium.org) or  
+32 (0)2 539 09 89.



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Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium  
subscribes to the ethical code  
of the AERF/VEF. You have  
a right to information. This implies  
that donors, partners and staff  
are informed at least once a year  
of the use of funds received.



## OUR DONORS

We carried out our activities in 2024 with the support of many donors. In particular, we worked with:

- DGD – Belgian development cooperation
- Enabel
- European Union (DG INTPA / DG ECHO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Fondation NIF
- Flemish Government
- French Cooperation (SCAC from Mauritania)
- German Cooperation (GIZ)
- G-Stick
- Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement Durable (OIF/Québec)
- International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)
- International Institute of Tropical Agriculture / USAID
- International Organization for Migration
- Province of East Flanders
- Swiss Cooperation
- UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- Wallonie-Bruxelles International
- World Bank
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Research Triangle Institute / USAID

## OUR TECHNICAL PARTNERS

- African Union – Inter-African Bureau on Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
- Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed)
- International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI/CGIAR)
- Livestock Emergency Guidelines & Standards (LEGS)
- World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)
- Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence (PREZODE)
- Programme Régional d'Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel (PRAPS)

## OUR NETWORKS

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- CELEP
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- RE-EF.be
- Testament.Be
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