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VSF STRATEGIC PLANNING 2011-2015

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APPROVED
BY THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

**VETERINARIOS
SIN FRONTERAS**



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PREFACE: VSF'S VISION, IDEOLOGY AND WORK PRINCIPLES

During the previous Strategic Planning (SP) 2006-'10, VSF took significant steps towards adapting its objectives to the Food Sovereignty context, approved by the General Assembly in 2004. The association also greatly improved its quality with the approval of a new Cooperation Policy in 2009, heralding a period of substantial institutional growth. The transformation, which began with the discussion and approval of the **Cooperation Policy** and that entails a profound change that affects the association as a whole, coincides with a period of **growth**, both in terms of funds as well as of projects and structure. These factors have made for a very complex phase that has required considerable efforts.

The Cooperation Policy has become a referential document for the organisation; this is why the main objective of this SP is to transform its intentions into a roadmap for the 2011-2015 period, defining strategic and institutional objectives. The application of this general context will take effect by completing and developing various processes that were begun in the previous period.

VISION AND MISSION

Veterinarios sin Fronteras (VSF) is a Non-Government Development Organisation (NGDO) that is associative in nature¹.

Vision: in our code of ethics it is defined as the achievement of a **fair, equitable and caring society** by means of a responsible and respectful solidarity.

Mission²: to promote a fair rural development model in favour of **Food Sovereignty** and to generate the **conscience of solidarity** within society as a means towards social transformation.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles define who we want to be, how we want to act and what we share as persons who are part of an association.

Non-profit.

Coherent VSF tries to maintain a direct relationship between its statements and its activities, using actions to demonstrate that our intentions can be put into practice.

Non-confessional and not belonging to a political party.

Independent. With sufficient institutional and decisive autonomy before any government department or other instance, with no kind of organic dependence upon public or private instances. In this way we ensure our freedom when designing policies, strategies and functions.

Democratic and transparent. We dispose of democratic and transparent for the election of the members of the Board of Directors or any other elective post; these are always held by volunteers.

Participative. The exercising of the elemental right of participation must power the ideological progress and motivate VSF's activities, which are legitimised in this way.

Durable. VSF is in favour of a cooperation model that does not create dependency and that meets the needs of the current generation without sacrificing future generations' ability to meet their own needs.

Equitable. VSF fights against discrimination by promoting and putting into practice equality in relations and in the access to opportunities regardless of gender, origins, ideology, culture or any other personal circumstance.

Inclusive. VSF appreciates diversity as an element that enriches any human development process. It therefore encourages an institutional environment that welcomes all personal, social or cultural specificities that share the bases of our ideas.

One single human team. VSF consists indiscriminately of volunteers and paid staff that, through their commitment, contribute towards achieving our objectives, benefiting from many rights and being subject to various duties towards the institution according to the regulations that guide each group.

Defending human rights. VSF believes that human rights and dignity are inalienable. Its activities, therefore, will promote the exercising of people's economic, social, political and cultural rights.

1. VSF Statutes (2004).

2. Refer to the Statutes (2004), Code of Ethics (1997 & 2003) and the Cooperation Policy (2009).

2/ CONTEXT

2.1. EXTERNAL CONTEXT MAIN GLOBAL TENDENCIES

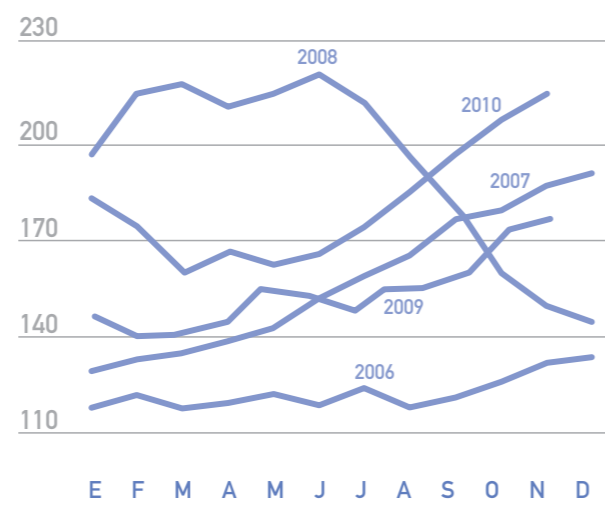
The 2011 - 2015 period will, according to all forecasts, be marked by an agenda in which **the right to food and Food Sovereignty** will play a central role.

The climbing prices of food in 2007 and 2008 that led to severe **food crises** in several developing countries are likely to be repeated since the causing factors will occur again:

- After the upwards trend of 2008, during which speculators made vast profits on food prices, we are beginning to observe the signs of a new speculative cycle focused on basic food ingredients.

FAO INDEX FOR FOOD PRICES

2002 - 2004 = 100



- Some natural causes such as droughts in certain regions, along with protectionist measures, have meant that many grain-exporting countries have sealed their borders as a precautionary measure and there is a certain shortage of stock on international markets.

- There is constant and growing demand for grain and oil products for animal feed to nourish the industrial livestock farms in the

BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries and in Argentina, due to the "livestock revolution" in these countries caused by an expanding middle class that has become a new consumer of a more varied and meat-rich diet.

- Increased demand for biofuels means that some of the large farms are turning towards the production of biodiesel, thus reducing the amount of food production.

The calls of the 2007 Nyeleni Declaration³ will be particularly relevant in this potential food crisis context, launching **articulatory processes in favour of Food Sovereignty** at regional and local levels. We believe that some processes will take shape at macro-regional level during the 2011-'15 period, particularly in Africa, Latin America and Europe. We forecast that local processes (such as the Alliance at Spanish level) will be maintained, reaching maturity thanks to joint planning and activities by diverse groups that share similar objectives.

Over the next five years, in view of the current situation, social organisations' agendas will be determined by:

Climate change. 2011 will be an important year for the definition of a new global agreement on climate change after the Copenhagen debacle of 2009 and the uncertain Cancun summit of 2010. Links between agriculture and climate change will continue to have a strong presence in proposals.

The revision of agrarian policies. Discussions on the reform of common agricultural and fishing policies (CAP and CFP) will continue, entering a negotiation phase as the positions of all the agents are consolidated. The outlook for the CAP is not very bright where family farming production in southern countries is concerned, or for European farmers, given that aid will be substantially reduced meaning that it is probable that the farming sector will continue to be mobilised. On the other hand, it is possible that there will be progress for small-scale fishing and the effects on third-party countries in the context of the CFP.

The extension of Free Trade Agreements. European commercial policy will dispose of a new reference context that will replace the "Global Europe" foreign trade policy. The negotiation processes for the EU-Central

America, EU-Morocco, EU-Asia (ASEAN), EU-Andean Community (CAN) Free Trade Agreements (FTA) will be accelerated and there will be confirmation of whether or not there will be the negotiation of an EU-Mercosur FTA. They will all have a severe impact upon farm production in southern countries as well as upon the European family agriculture sector.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The AGRA will continue to expand throughout Africa, presenting a serious threat to Food Sovereignty. This Alliance aims to improve African agrarian production by applying the principles of the Green Revolution, which has demonstrated its inability to resolve famine or injustice in rural areas. The AGRA is an important business opportunity for private capital, which intends to continue exploiting the continent in the name of cooperation and the fight against famine.

The monopolisation of water and land. Along with the monopolisation of land, which will continue unchecked, and under cover of reforms to the Common Fisheries Policy, we will see the appearance of its water-based equivalent: the purchasing of fishing rights by foreign states, transnational companies and, above all, by investors and risk capitalists.

The private sector as a cooperation agent. There is not the slightest doubt that over the coming years we will see companies playing a more and more important role as providers of development cooperation services. The cooperation/trade combination will gain strength in Europe as well as domestically, putting the role and efficiency of NGOs under scrutiny.

The new Food Security Committee (FSC) of the United Nations Organisation for Agriculture and Food (FAO). Once the transformation process of the FAO's FSC will be completed in 2010, it will begin to be operative during the 2011-'15 period. It is hoped that this space will be a forum for the promotion of pro-Food sovereignty proposals at an international level.

The worldwide economic crisis. It broke out in 2008 and it is estimated that it will continue in the years to come, exposing the fragility of the current economic model. Once again, this crisis demonstrates that a self-regulating market is an impossibility.

3. Nyeleni is the name of a Malian peasant woman who came to symbolise Food Sovereignty due to her hard work, her innovations and for having looked after her village. Her name inspired the final Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Sélingué, Mali, in 2007.



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND FARMING ORGANISATIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE

The political objective of Food Sovereignty can be approached from various angles – consumption, the environment, culture, etc. – but it has a clearly-defined core from which all of these radiate: **farming production**. For the most part, this is due to the origins of the term, which originated in 1996 from the Via Campesina, an international network made up of small- and medium-scale farmers, livestock farmers, indigenous movements, landless workers, etc. whose common denominator is that they all work upon the **production of food**.

GOVERNANCE AND POLICIES

The concept and proposal of Food Sovereignty is linked to that of the **governance** of the agro-food system. Indeed, year after year this aspect has gained great strength in all domains. In an analysis published some time ago by *La Vía Campesina*, the agribusiness or agro-industries⁴ were identified as the core of the system. For *La Vía Campesina* and its main allies (*Marcha Mundial de Mujeres*, *Movimiento Ambientalista*, etc.) the fight against agribusiness is essential and gives rise to a series of critical mobilisation and influence initiatives. All of this explains the need for a regulatory framework that is adapted to Food Sovereignty's political objectives. This aspect will be a key element to make the agro-food model that we defend become a reality, whilst respecting at all times the particularities of each region or country.



2.2. INTERNAL CONTEXT

This five-year period will be marked by:

Fulfilling the implementation of the Cooperation Policy. The Cooperation Policy has entailed a change of direction in the strategy that has affected and reoriented the various interventions carried out by the association. Its approval was accompanied by a readjustment of the projects, which were revised to respond to the new approach, as well as the processes. This policy also had repercussions in VSF's relations with its allies and even in their definition.

Integrating the gender-based approach. Within VSF's transformation process one finds the **introduction of the gender-based approach** in all levels and activities of the association. At VSF we are aware that organisations themselves create and reproduce inequalities. Therefore the first step that we have taken along this path is to carry out an internal diagnosis (focusing on policy, structure and culture) that will be used to evaluate how VSF also causes inequality between women and men, identifying causes and actions in order to correct this trend. On the basis of this diagnosis, the challenge is to apply the gender-based approach internally by means of specific policies and action plans. Externally, moreover, we will underline the importance of rural women in their reproductive, productive and community roles. All of this should come about over the next five years, within a new VSF culture that we must use to turn the organisation itself into a gender equality-oriented social transformation agent.

Deploying the potential of the new organisational structure. The intentions derived from the application of the Cooperation Policy showed the need for a change in the organisational structure that would respond to the new role that the association wishes to play. To this effect VSF acquired a new flow chart that was in keeping with the Cooperation Policy and that would attend to the needs derived from the institution's growth in itself. The new structure, based on a territorial and decentralised approach, is aimed at **promoting the strategic and polit-**

ical capacities of the organisation, whilst not renouncing to the problems of growth and the challenge of an orderly management. The restructuring has been accompanied by an improvement of the management systems and also by the improvement of the capacities of our human team that enables us to address the challenges to come in a participative and constructive environment.

We become a stronger association. During this five-year period we will have to work towards the reinforcement of VSF's associative structure, which supports the organisation and is the objective of the present political intention. We will continue to work upon **participative processes to continue the activation of our social base**, with the aim of answering its wishes for direct collaboration and to turn it into an individual and collective critical element of social transformation.

Disposing of more own funds to have more independence. All our intentions require backing with our own funds, which are vital to ensure a certain degree of independence in the actions undertaken and to give ethical justification to our condition as a non-government organisation. An important part of our action must therefore be aimed at **obtaining donations and associates** in order to increase the volume and percentage of private contributions in the total of our economic resources.

4. There are various accepted terms to describe the corporations that control the agro-industrial systems.

3/ STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



The contextual analysis shows four key problems that VSF intends to address, joining the collective efforts of other agents:

- Rural livelihoods in crisis.
- Farmers without political strength or the capacity for influence.
- Agrarian and commercial policies that do not respond to farmers' interests.
- The unequal power of the agribusiness.

The objectives are described below, arranged according to the importance and volume of economic and human resources that the association will devote to them to obtain them. For the first two we will continue to consolidate the work done in these classic domains, whilst for the third and fourth the intention is to further develop both objectives.

PROBLEM 1: RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN CRISIS.

Strategic Objective 1: Organised small- and medium-scale farmers will have access to an ecological agriculture production system that will allow them to live decently.

How will this change occur?

Small- and medium-scale farmers, and particularly women, will have access to and control of the following resources according to requirements:

- Financial resources
- Technical resources
- Natural and productive resources
- Resources for transformation and local sales

Access to and control of some of these resources will, in some measures, translate into the recovery of traditional practices that are compatible with the ecological agriculture productive system.

A responsible proximity consumption model, which is indispensable for the viability of rural livelihoods, will be promoted.

PROBLEM 2: FARMERS WITHOUT POLITICAL STRENGTH OR THE CAPACITY FOR INFLUENCE.

Strategic Objective 2: Farmers' organisations will have increased their capacity for analysis, claiming and proposal, with regard to their own problem.

How will this change occur?

- Progress will be made in their organisational reinforcement by addressing – amongst other things – the generational renewal.
- Farmers' organisations will increase their capacity for articulation. The creation of alliances and their contents will vary depending upon each organisation and each territory, and it will be up to them to determine this.
- The balance of power between women and men within farmers' organisations will be transformed, highlighting the role and contribution of women to their demands.

PROBLEM 3: AGRARIAN AND COMMERCIAL POLICIES THAT DO NOT RESPOND TO

Strategic Objective 3: Farmers, and particularly women farmers, will improve their social and economic standing by means of a legislative context that favours agricultural production, transformation and sales.

How will this change occur?

- Farmers will be able to generate alternative proposals and promote changes in local, regional and state public legislation that would make agricultural production, transformation and sales viable.

- VSF will support them with studies, research, legal proposals and other technical and political elements that back their arguments.

- Also, whenever possible, VSF may undertake direct influence activities as a political agent in alliance with farmers, and without supplanting the voice of the producers' organisations themselves.

PROBLEM 4: THE UNEQUAL POWER OF AGRIBUSINESS.

Strategic Objective 4: The power of agribusiness upon the world food market will be reduced thanks to a greater presence of a critical current of public opinion in defence of responsible consumption, the debunking of their practices and legal changes that halt their abusive actions.

How will this change occur?

- Changes will be made to agrarian and commercial policies that will favour and protect family farming and restrict the power of agribusiness.
- Consumers will become aware of the abusive practices of the agribusiness and will mobilise against it. This will be done mainly by means of development education and communication activities.
- Farmers' organisations and movements will use the studies that have been undertaken as a tool for political influence activities.

4/ ACTION CONTEXT

4.1. GEOGRAPHIC

VSF currently operates in the following territories belonging to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Spain:

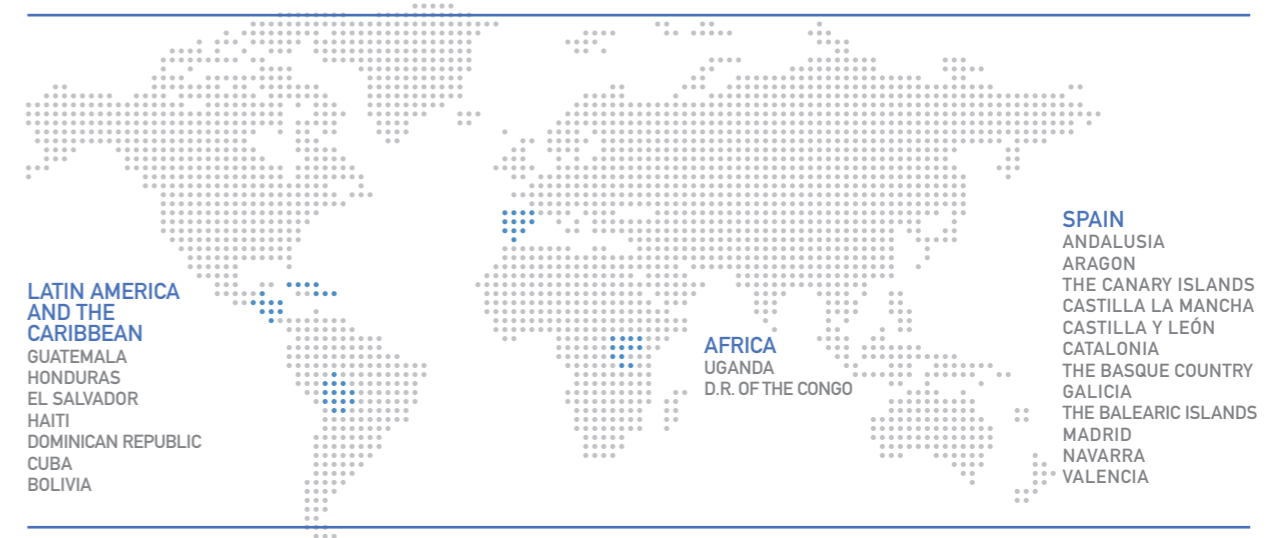
Due to the association's rapid growth in recent years and taking into account the organisations decision for practically no growth for reasons of durable stability and the economic crisis context of this period, **VSF does not envisage expansion strategies**, but instead prefers consolidating the operations in the territories where we are already present, both in the north as well as in the south. The opening of new Regional Coordinations or Delegations, therefore, is not forecast.

Nonetheless, it is true that **we must continue to analyse the context and our capacities** in view of disposing of the decision-making elements that will enable us to define new areas of growth if it were to be decided, for the next strategic plan, to expand our operations to other areas. In the South, taking into account the traditional commitment to Africa, it is envisaged that at the end of this SP we will have to conduct an analysis based upon potential alliances, synergies with VSF's objectives and the possibilities for financing in other countries on this continent. In the north, along with the reinforcement of the existing Delegations, there will only be an active response to local initiatives that may arise and that may entail an expansion and/or mobilisation of the organisation's social base.

4.2. ALLIANCES AND NETWORKS

Our association's Cooperation Policy points to a general context with regard to alliances that must be established and the networks in which we must participate. VSF will consider solid strategic alliances with ideologically similar with which we share the drive for Food Sovereignty although we may also participate in smaller networks with other groups with which we share sectorial objectives.

WHERE DOES VSF WORK?



The institutions that are the objects of our alliances are: farmers' organisations, associations, social movements and NGOs whose aim is to contribute to Food Sovereignty, paying particular attention to the coherence between vision and practice in Gender Equality. During this five-year period we will pay particular attention to the positions and evolution of the social movements that integrate the Food Sovereignty/Gender combination.

In this sense, VSF will prioritise local, regional, national and international alliances and networks that envisage the greatest number of these criteria:

- Working towards Food Sovereignty.
- Disposing of an active presence of farmers organisations.
- Coinciding with our organisation's objectives and axes.

At the moment, the farmers' movement that carries this engagement for Food Sovereignty at worldwide level is *La Vía Campesina* (LVC). This movement should continue to be a fundamental reference when establishing relations with farmers' organisations in the south as well as in the north. But we should not forget the socio-political context in the countries and regions in which we operate and in which LVC is not present; with a wider outlook, we could establish alliances with organisations

and networks that comply with a maximum amount of the aforementioned criteria.

The aim of the alliances is to design and apply joint strategies for the promotion of Food Sovereignty. More and more demands are made of the farmers' organisations (analyses, proposals, fights, presence, articulation with other agents, dialogue with administrations, etc.) and with a higher level of intensity. It will be difficult to overcome these challenges unless there is strong external support from VSF. It is therefore crucial to guide farmers' organisations in all these aspects.

These relations should be based upon the necessary role of farmers, horizontality, trust, transparency, balance and respect, thus envisaging cooperation as a team effort towards a shared vision and common objectives.

Our association will promote networking with other associations, social movements, training spaces, groups and other like-minded agents as an agglomeration of efforts to obtain the social transformation that we are aiming for. This work is envisaged because although they are not necessarily involved in the defence of our political intention, they encourage thought, a critical conscience, political pressure and incidence, and influence the decision-making bodies in order to continue working towards Food Sovereignty.

5/ INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To be able to respond to the identified Strategic Objectives and to the institution's internal challenges, the following Institutional Objectives are envisaged:

Institutional Objective 1: VSF will introduce the gender-based approach across the board, covering the political, structural and cultural levels of the organisation, from the core outwards to its external domains.

How will this objective be achieved?

- Informing, communicating, training and working with the whole association with regard to the results of the internal diagnosis on gender.
- Evaluating the feasibility of the changes and analysing the organisation's specific conditions once the internal diagnosis on gender is complete.
- Defining the institution's position in order to establish a Gender Policy that clarifies the approach and defines its terms.
- Establishing a joint-financing strategy to ensure the economic viability of this institutional process.
- Creating a Gender Unit that will be present in the flow chart with specific importance and budgetary assignation, which can guide the work derived from the gender policy by means of a plan of action, until all the sections assume their on responsibility to establish the gender-based approach across the board.
- Implementing a plan of action that prioritises and links areas of action; defines activities, persons in charge, deadlines, budgetary requirements and assessment markers; and that evaluates all the activities to be carried out.

Institutional Objective 2: Financing levels will be kept stable, similarly to those of previous years, with an annual growth of 3%. The quota of free own resources will rise from 3% to 6.5% and the funds from a single joint-financier will not represent more than 50% of the joint-financed total.

How will this be achieved?

- A multi-annual financing strategy will be defined and revised yearly, taking into account:
 - The investment requirements and capacities of countries and territories.
 - The differentiation of free own resources and private resources subjected to joint-financing.
 - A strategy for obtaining own funds, including investing in the resource-raising strategies themselves.
 - The definition of priorities for fundraising per joint-financier and for influence actions regarding the contents of the joint-financiers' directive plans or other strategic tools, analysing the probabilities and consequences of the loss of joint-financing opportunities derived from VSF's political intentions.
 - The prioritisation of strategic objectives.
- Budgets will automatically be established per Department/Unit, Regional Coordinations and Delegations, depending upon the requirements and tools available to facilitate the management of the budgets.
- More integrated and creative fundraising will be promoted.

Institutional Objective 3: VSF will increase and diversify its social base, opening up to other groups.

How will this objective be achieved?

- There will be an analysis of the segments of the population that might be potentially interested and a monitoring plan.
- Arguments will be defined on the basis of the Cooperation Policy.
- A process for a change of name will gradually be put into place.

- A communication plan that increases VSF's presence in spaces where it can reach out to new audiences, and that promotes the use of new technology, will be defined.

- There will be regular monitoring of the results obtained and that will analyse the balance of the amount of members.

- A mechanism will be defined that will enable associating with VSF from outside Spain.

- The concept of the "social base" will be clarified.

Institutional objective 4: VSF's human team (contract staff and volunteers) will develop the necessary capacities to respond to the Strategic Objectives.

How will this objective be achieved?

- The profiles of the work posts will be defined for all the staff members – both contracted staff and volunteers – detecting essential skills.
- There will be an analysis of charges and possible solutions will be proposed for posts for which it is determined that there is an imbalance between assigned tasks and means.
- Training plans will be developed for posts that direct human teams, given that this is a critical shortcoming within the institution. This training will be provided internally and will concentrate upon guaranteeing team management, planning and assessment, and financial management. These training plans will be added to the specific training courses for each post, which will still be available. Furthermore, the strategic training requirements of some posts will be revised.
- The culture of accountability will be promoted within the organisation.



Institutional Objective 5: VSF will commit itself to a participative, decentralised, motivated by and oriented to people, strengthening teamwork.

How will this objective be achieved?

- By developing a strategy for the reinforcement of the associative fabric that envisages its diagnosis in order to revitalise it, making it more dynamic and integrating training and exchange elements.
- Continuing the participative and agreed decision-making processes.
- The better definition of the participation spaces and processes to obtain greater clarity and comprehension.
- Encouraging team spirit at territorial and associative levels by means of coordination amongst sections in order to generate synergies, applying methodologies that create group dynamics and encouraging inter-territorial, interdepartmental and associative meetings.
- Improving communication and feedback at internal level in the institutional languages by means of the development of a communication strategy that promotes two-way exchanges amongst the instances and that is also a loudspeaker for VSF's successes, presenting and sharing progress and news.

Institutional Objective 6: VSF will improve in quality, disposing of an assessment, evaluation and learning system that enables it to be more aware of the extent of its work and to socialise it.

How will this objective be achieved?

- By consolidating the use of planning tools such as Strategic Plans (SP) and Annual Operational Plans (AOP) for all instances, as well as their evaluation.
- Defining what we wish to evaluate and why; markers in the SPs and the POAs.
- Choosing at least two institutional systemisation and learning issues during the 2011-'15 period.

- Defining shared assessment, evaluation and learning tools.

- Applying the institutional procedures designed to achieve a more horizontal management.

- The SP's evaluation system will be done by means of the AOPs, equipped with qualitative and quantitative markers that will enable the visualisation of progress and feedback during this five-year period. It is envisaged that, if VSF has made progress in resources and capacities after the intermediate evaluation of the SP, a more sophisticated evaluation system will be designed for implementation during the 2016-2020 period.

PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES



6/ FINANCING CONTEXT

VSF believes that it is necessary for the economic structure and the financing context to be coherent with the established strategic objectives: the consolidation of the new Cooperation Policy, the decentralisation process and the improvement of the quality of the management and the interventions undertaken by the organisation.

Nevertheless, the current economic crisis situation and changes in financiers' and collaborators' trends have provoked a drastic reduction in the funds that are available to international cooperation. This reduction will affect public funds (with greater repercussions for decentralised cooperation and the funds aimed at awareness and development education) as well as private funds. Another of the key elements that configure the financial context is the appearance of treasury issues derived from the greater delays of payments aimed at international cooperation. These negative effects will also affect the quality of cooperation, which will tend towards the concentration and uniformity of official development aid and will hasten its commercialisation.

This forecast obliges us to exchange our intense growth of recent years for an objective of **durable stability** that aims at the improvement of our interventions and provides us with an optimal financial structure.

To do this, during this period priority will be given to **developing the loyalty** of our current members, donors and collaborators, above all those who enable the consolidation of our international cooperation model. The **diversification of the current financing sources** will also increase with the aim of encouraging our independence as an association, reducing our vulnerability to situational changes and improving our forecasting capacity and the stability of our programmes and actions.

Lastly, VSF considers it necessary to **increase our social base and the contribution of private funds** during this period, due to their specific importance not only from a financial point of view, but also because of the need to increase our long-term independence and to be coherent with the defined strategic objectives.

7/ GLOSSARY

What follows is a list of the key terminology that we have used to draft this Strategic Plan. These definitions exclusively reflect VSF's interpretation of the terminology used here, without undermining other significations that third parties may give to them and accepting that, given the changing nature of all things, these terms may be subject to revision.



Agrarian policies

Measures promoted by public administrations at various levels to organise and encourage agriculture, livestock and forestry in rural communities. Their direction and approach will have an influence on deciding which groups will be encouraged, promoting or limiting, by action, limitation or prohibition, certain social and economic activities.

Agrarian unions

A union is an organisation consisting of workers who defend and promote their social, economic and professional interests relating to their professional activity. It is therefore a professional agrarian organisation and is made up of people who are professional farmers. The legal signification and the requirements of this professionalism depend upon the legislation of each region.

Agribusiness/Agro-industry

The concept of agribusiness is often used to refer to the process of industrialising agriculture and food, and that of agro-industry to refer to the main agents that govern this process. Agribusiness can be simply defined as the branch of industry that is involved in the large-scale sales of agricultural, livestock, forestry and fishery products, directly or after their industrial processing. "Agro-industry" used to define the companies that control and dominate the industrial food chain.

Agroecological production models/ Farming production systems

The concept of farming production systems has similar significance to that of agroecological production systems and indeed, throughout recent history both concepts have become more and more closely intertwined. The agroecological qualification has often been used to put more emphasis on the purely productive or technical and productive aspects, whereas the farming qualification puts a greater emphasis on its social dimension and, specifically upon social class.

Agroecology/Rural agriculture

Agroecology or rural agriculture may be defined as being the ecological handling of natural resources by means of forms of collective social action. Its strategy is systemic in nature, considering that the estate, community organisation and other

relational contexts of rural society that are articulated around the local aspect, as a single element. Agroecology integrates knowledge systems (local, rural and/or indigenous) that convey endogenous potential that enables the promotion of ecological and sociocultural biodiversity.

Development education

This is a continuous, educational and participative process that is generated in formal, non-formal and informal areas, and that aims to make society become active and caring, with a critical and constructive conscience, for the integrated transformation of society in view of durable human development.

To achieve this it provides critical tools (strategies, procedures and sources from which to acquire alternative information) and generates networks of people and/or groups with the same concerns in order to establish strategic alliances. It also takes into account the gender-based approach, paying attention to the different needs of women and men and the balance of power that is established between them. It is based upon an economic and social analysis of reality, acknowledging poverty as a key element, and also on a cultural analysis, aware that some of our daily habits generate inequality and, therefore, sustain an unfair worldwide system.

Farmers

The concept of farmers (whether individual or generic) must be understood from the viewpoint of a social category and, more specifically as a social subject. In other words, it responds to their situation within the social system and their position with regard to economic, political, cultural, power or subordination aspects, amongst others.

According to the definition given by the "Declaration of Farmers' Rights", a farmer is a woman or a man who has a direct and special relationships with the land and with nature by means of the production of food and/or other agricultural products. Farmers work the land for themselves; they depend upon the work of the entire family and on other organised forms of work on a small scale. Farmers are traditionally integrated into their local communities and take care of the local natural environment and agroecological

systems. The term can be applied to anybody who is involved in agriculture, livestock, transhumance, crafts related to agriculture or other similar organisations, including indigenous persons who work the land or persons without land.

Farmers' movements

These are the basic farmers' social movements that take on the form of classic or new social movements.

Farmers' organisation

At VSF we consider that a farmers' organisation should present at least the following characteristics:

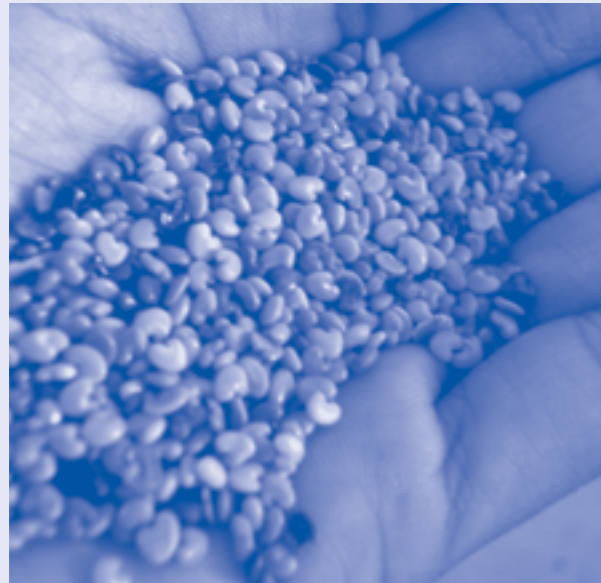
- That they acknowledge themselves as farmers (see the definition in this glossary).
- That they have an organisational structure.
- That they have their own mission, vision, objectives and strategy, with an extensive ideological and social component (a vision of the social, food and rural model) that goes beyond their particular and corporative interests.

Food Sovereignty

Food Sovereignty is the people's right to have access to healthy and culturally adequate food produced by means of durable methods, as well as their right to define their own agricultural and food systems. It deploys a durable farming production model that supports communities and their environment. It places the aspirations, needs and ways of life of those who produce, distribute and consume the food at the heart of the food systems and policies, before the demands of markets and companies.

Food Sovereignty gives priority to the local production and consumption of food. It provides a country with the right to protect its local producers from cheap imports and the right to control production. It guarantees that the rights to the use of land, territories, water, seeds, livestock and biodiversity reside in the hands of the people who produce the food rather than in those of the corporate sector.

For all of these reasons, the implementation of a true agrarian reform constitutes one of the farmers' movement's top priorities.



Industrial Agriculture

We can define this as the manner of handling the natural resources that generates a process that artificialises ecosystems in which capital carries out partial and successive appropriations of the various farming processes in order to subsequently incorporate them as industrially artificialised production factors, or as commercialised means of production. The predominant logic behind industrial agriculture is the accumulation of capital.

Agriculture's adoption of industrial parameters began with industrial development in the 19th century. In some cases, the use of hybrid seeds and agrochemicals as the defining trait of industrial agriculture and because of this, therefore, industrial agriculture is also known as chemical agriculture.

Intensive, semi-extensive and extensive agriculture

Although this concept varies according to the territory, a first observation of the definition tells us that classifying agriculture and livestock farming into intensive/extensive (semi-extensive would be somewhere between these extremes) is based upon the amount of energy and materials that are used per farm or estate or, more specifically, per hectare or animal. Therefore, in fact, we are talking about intensive estates or farms according to their greater demand for energy and materials, contrary to extensive ones, whose needs for energy and supplies is smaller.

Justice

A societal harmony based upon collective relationships that aim for the common good and, therefore, for the enjoyment in equal conditions of various resources (health, food, educational, productive, cultural...) whose absence or restricted access are the cause of inequality.

The concept goes beyond the basic idea of the set of regulations that establish an adequate context for relationships between persons and institutions, permitting or prohibiting specific activities in social life. It refers to the ideal state experienced by a society in which all the universally accepted basic rights are guaranteed, without differences for any reasons (gender, religion, ideology, age...) and under the vigilance of society itself to ensure that these rights are respected, preventing any violation of them.

Responsible consumption

This is consumption that is conducted with knowledge of the social, environmental and ethical consequences that are created during the production, processing and distribution of goods. Persons who practice this kind of consumption do not only appreciate personal aspects such as the quality or the price of the acquired good, but also collective aspects such as environmental durability and the right to social justice of the producers of food and goods. Society has the ability to turn its consumption into a means of pressure by choosing goods or services that comply with a series of social, labour and environmental guarantees.

Rural development

This is the set of long-term actions aimed at ensuring that the rural population enjoys optimal quality of life, fixing human groups in the territory, ensuring the generational renewal thanks to a productive activity based upon the durable handling of natural resources, and observing the initiatives and priorities of the communities involved.

Contrary to the recent European concept that envisages rural development as the diversification of economic activities as an alternative to agrarian production (rural tourism, nature activities, the transformation of local products...), at VSF we consider that the basic pillar of rural development must be agroecology as a means of handling ecosystems that is socially accepted, environmentally durable and economically viable. As a complement to productive activities, rural development requires the presence of infrastructures and basic services that enable and favour a decent life: health, education, communications, cultural activities, etc.

Social movement

The set of collective actions, with basic participation, that establishes their demands and strategies dynamically, finding means of action to express them and constituting collective subjects, acknowledged as a social group or category. As social change structures, social movements appear as ways of organising groups within a more or less specific political aspect. Examples of these movements are the feminist movement, the ecological movement, the pacifist or

anti-militarist movement or, more recently, the Okupa (squatters') movement and the anti-globalisation movement.

The gender-based approach

This is the systematic consideration of the differences between the respective conditions, situations and needs of women and men in the planning, execution and evaluation phases of all policies, programmes, projects and actions that we will deploy. It is a tool that can be used to promote fairer and more equitable social relationships.

The participative model or system

This is a form of organising work that attempts to encourage creative contributions by people who do so in order to improve results. Participation affects both the final success of the task in question and the participants themselves, who feel appreciated for their opinions and skills. The model requires the creation of organised channels so that the participation can be operative, and requires promotion at all levels to overcome the reticence of the various associative structures, which are used to the ease and rapidity of making decisions without prior consultation.

VSF staff or HR

A group of persons who work for VSF voluntarily or as paid staff, coordinating with the association's various teams in order to achieve the ends proposed in the various valid policies.

