



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **FOR A THEMATIC EVALUATION OF THE VSF-B SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS APPROACH**

As part of the mid-term evaluation of the programme "The One Health approach for the sustainable well-being of communities dependent on family livestock farming (2022-2026)"

Funding: Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) and Vétérinaires sans Frontières – Belgique (VSF-B)

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## 1. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

### 1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VSF-B

Founded in 1985, Vétérinaires Sans Frontières-Belgique (VSF-B) is a non-profit association under Belgian law serving livestock farming and farmers in the South. The organisation uses livestock farming as a lever for development to improve well-being, food security and increase the income of small-scale producers. The association aims to improve animal health and production in the South in order to optimise nutrition, health and income in a balanced manner and in close collaboration with the target communities. This is done in accordance with the principles of One Health, which stipulate that animal health and production must be balanced with animal welfare, human health and the integrity of the environment and its biodiversity.

Its activities focus on the populations most affected by climate hazards and/or conflicts, for whom livestock farming is the main means of subsistence. More specifically, these are (i) pastoral communities whose survival strategies are linked to livestock, (ii) agro-pastoralists living in precarious conditions, and (iii) urban or peri-urban livestock keepers who have opted to own animals. More generally, VSF-B targets communities that depend on family livestock farming for their livelihoods, socio-economic development and integration into value chains.

VSF-B carries out activities in ten countries in Africa and Belgium with an annual budget of approximately €13-14 million. In Africa, VSF-B operates in West Africa in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin and Mauritania. In the Great Lakes region, it works in Burundi, DR Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and the Comoros.

For more information: <https://veterinaire.sansfrontieres.be/>

### 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is part of the mid-term evaluation of the five-year programme 2022-2026 subsidised by the Belgian Cooperation (DGD) entitled "**The One Health approach for the sustainable well-being of communities dependent on family livestock farming**". This programme started on 1 January 2022 for a period of five years and will end on 31 December 2026. It covers eight countries in the two African regions mentioned above, with a total operational budget of €13,346,097. This programme is part of a series of programmes subsidised by Belgian cooperation, previously triennial (2008-10, 11-13, 14-16) and currently quinquennial (2017-2021, 2022-2026). This programme will in principle be followed by a third five-year programme (2027-2031), to be submitted in July 2026.

VSF-B has decided to commission an external **thematic evaluation** of its "**Approach to Supporting Vulnerable Households**", which is at the heart of our DGD-funded programming, but also of many other projects.

The analysis and evaluation of the approach will focus on two countries of intervention, **Uganda** and **Burundi**.

The analysis and evaluation will cover beneficiaries of the last two five-year programmes (2017-2021, 2022-2026) with the aim of analysing how the range of support provided by VSF-B and its

partners to vulnerable households contributes to improving livelihoods during and after these interventions.

The evaluation report will be used by VSF-B and its implementing partners not only to adjust current interventions but also to prepare the next grant application for the period 2027-2031.

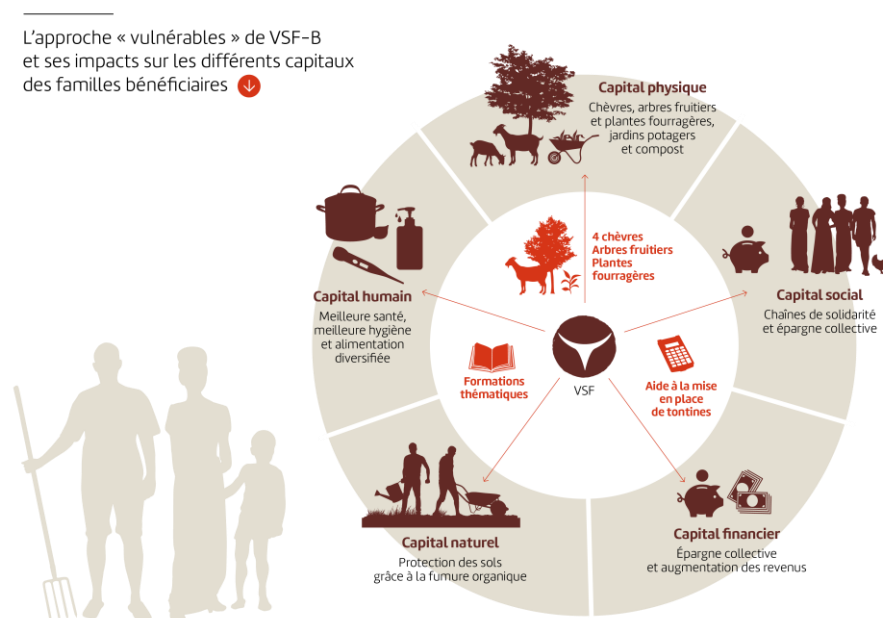
The final report will be made available to the general public and all stakeholders (including the donor) via publication on the VSF-B website.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES, RESULTS, TYPE OF EVALUATION

#### 1.3.1 Objectives and expected results

VSF-B has developed a theory of change based on four pathways for change: (1) Promote and support efficient and sustainable smallholder livestock farming practices and raise awareness of sustainable food systems, (2) Integrate smallholder livestock farmers into market economies and support these value chains, (3) Strengthen the capacities of livestock farming communities and their stakeholders, enabling them all to fully assume their mission and sustainably achieve their own objectives in support of sustainable food systems, (4) Diversify the livelihoods of disadvantaged communities dependent on livestock farming and improve their access to food.

In our Theory of Change, the (holistic) approach to supporting vulnerable households and its package of activities is expected to lift households out of vulnerability and enable them to achieve food security and resilience, with a level of production that allows for the sale of surpluses, by acting on the five capitals illustrated below.



The direct target group of the evaluation consists of a diverse range of beneficiary households dependent on livestock farming (agro-pastoralists in northern Uganda and agro-pastoralists in Burundi) who have benefited from VSF-B support during the implementation of successive DGD programmes since 2017. The evaluation will analyse a sample based on the different types of support received over time.

Annex 1 provides a description of the different types of support offered to the targeted beneficiaries (Annex 1).

**The main objective** of this evaluation is to draw lessons from the outcomes recorded in the supported households and to analyse the factors that have contributed and continue to contribute to the changes observed.

The mission will examine, in particular, the theories of change developed for the programme implemented in northern Uganda and the programme implemented in Burundi, and will therefore focus particularly on the main changes brought about at beneficiary level. It will draw on available data and any additional data it deems necessary to collect. It will take into account planned effects and unexpected positive and negative effects. It will analyse and compare the changes between households that benefited from support measures under the previous 2017-2021 programme and those under the 2022-2026 programme, and between the two contexts (small scale farmers in Burundi and agropastoralists in northern Uganda).

In addition to this target group, there are other beneficiaries (intermediate and indirect) and other stakeholders. These include: local partners, private veterinary services and/or the network of community animal health workers, decentralised technical services, local authorities, microcredit institutions, producer organisations, value chain actors (collectors, retailers, etc.).

The **main results** expected from this final evaluation are:

1. An objective assessment of the level of achievement of the theoretical changes expected from the implementation of the approach to support vulnerable households and the contributions of the programme's actions and actors to the achievement of these changes: have vulnerable households been able to escape vulnerability thanks to VSF-B's interventions?
2. Answers to the main specific questions asked in these Terms of Reference;
3. The formulation of conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of changes and the factors contributing to these changes. Particular attention will be paid to the measures and actions to be implemented in a potential future five-year programme for 2027-2031 and to recommendations for improving our Theories of Change. The recommendations made must be consistent with the programme and its philosophy, as well as with the limited budgets available.

### **1.3.2 Specific questions**

Key questions have been formulated to raise the main concerns to be investigated and to help focus and formulate the conclusions and recommendations.

#### **Key questions**

- What are the most significant changes observed at the overall level of the households supported?
- What are the most significant changes observed at the level of each type of capital (social, human, physical, financial, natural)?
- What circumstances and contextual factors have contributed/are contributing to these changes? In what way?
- Which actors have contributed/are contributing to these changes? In what way?
- What activities carried out by households have contributed/are contributing to these changes?
- What activities implemented by VSF-B and its local partners have contributed/are contributing to these changes?

- Which of the assumptions and suppositions underlying the pathways of change have been verified? How, with what effects and what impact?
- Which of the assumptions and hypotheses underlying the pathways to change have not been verified? Why, with what effects and impact?

#### **Conclusions and recommendations:**

- What types of interventions on different types of capital (human, physical, social, financial, natural) are perceived by beneficiaries as having contributed most to improving their well-being, and why?
- What markers of progress enable 'better' monitoring of developments along the paths of change?

### **1.3.3 Specific questions on cross-cutting themes**

VSF-B has identified a number of questions related to its own cross-cutting themes and some of the programme's specific objectives.

#### **(1) Gender**

- How can the programme's contribution to reducing gender inequalities be assessed?
- What assessment can be made of the changes achieved in terms of contributing to the reduction of gender inequalities?

#### **(2) Environment**

- Taking into account the environmental impacts of livestock farming, to what extent has the programme contributed to reducing negative externalities and optimising positive externalities?

## **1.4 DELIVERABLES**

The mission will produce the following documents:

- A Methodological Note, which will be based on the methodological proposal set out in the technical proposal, adapted to the context and realities of the programme in Uganda and Burundi following preparatory discussions with the Steering Committee and the two country directors. It will include a detailed schedule for the mission and an indicative budget for local costs (workshops, surveys and all other miscellaneous expenses) to be borne by VSF-B, and will specify the responsibilities of the consultant and the VSF-B country teams during the field missions.
- Two aide-mémoires (one in English for Uganda and one in French for Burundi) summarising the main conclusions and recommendations made by the mission. This document, which will form the basis for the feedback workshops, will be presented and submitted in electronic format to the Main Local Partners (MLPs) and VSF-B at the end of the field mission.
- The interim report will be sent to VSF-B headquarters in electronic format no later than 14 days after the field mission. VSF-B will have 14 days to collate comments and forward them to the consultant.

- The final report will be drafted by the consultant, ensuring that the comments on the interim report submitted by VSF-B are incorporated. This report will be submitted in electronic format to VSF-B within a maximum of 8 days after the feedback on the interim report has been sent.
- Minutes of the briefing and debriefing/feedback sessions.

#### **1.4.1 Content and structure of the report**

In their service proposal, bidders must provide an outline of the evaluation report. The following elements must be included: table of contents, list of abbreviations, a two-page executive summary, methodology, survey and sampling techniques, sources of information, evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Given the main recipients (VSF-B and its local partners, the DGD) targeted by this evaluation, the number of pages excluding appendices should be around 30 maximum.

The appendices to the evaluation report shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Terms of reference for the evaluation;
- Team member profiles;
- List of documentation analysed;
- List of stakeholders and institutions interviewed by the evaluation team.

The cover page of the final report must bear the logos of VSF-B and DGD, indicate the date and authors, and include the following information:

- "Thematic evaluation report – The VSF-B approach to supporting vulnerable households – final version".
- "The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the experts responsible for the evaluation and do not necessarily reflect those of the client."

#### **1.4.2 Roles of stakeholders in the evaluation**

##### **VSF-B**

As the sponsor of this evaluation, VSF-B is responsible for the overall organisation of the evaluation, from its programming (during programme formulation and current planning) to the development of its managerial response and the dissemination of results. For the actual fieldwork, VSF-B ensures that adequate logistics are provided. VSF-B will conduct a security briefing at each stage of the fieldwork.

VSF-B also ensures the neutrality of the evaluator and the effective implementation of the proposed methodology.

More specific roles are described by the steering committee (see below).

##### **Main local partners**

In accordance with the memoranda of understanding and agreements established with local partners, the latter are involved in various stages of this assessment.

The main roles of local partners are therefore to:

- Contribute to the development of these ToRs;
- Assist with the collection of the required data and the mission's field visits;
- Participate in key moments of the mission (briefing, debriefing, etc.)
- Contribute to the analysis of evaluation results
- Contribute to the development of the managerial response and its implementation

### **Beneficiaries**

In line with the participatory approach, beneficiaries (in all their diversity and across all categories) essentially have an advisory role. To this end, during the various data collection sessions, they provide the data and information needed to analyse and assess achievements and changes. In addition, on these same occasions, they express their views and give their opinions, both in a structured and open manner, on the content and approaches of the programme.

### **The Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that this final evaluation is carried out smoothly and has been set up to guarantee the independence and impartiality of the evaluation. This committee is composed of the two regional directors, the institutional partnerships officer and the Director of Operations, who is responsible for leading the committee's work. The names and contact details of the members will be communicated to the successful bidder for the assignment upon signing the contract.

The steering committee contributes to the evaluation and dissemination of the results.

Focused on decision-making, the roles of the Steering Committee are:

- Developing/validating the Terms of Reference
- Selecting the consultant(s)/evaluator(s) (including the proposed methodology)
- Monitoring and validating the work of the evaluation mission (mission plan, mission report, preliminary report)
- Reviewing and approving evaluation products, including the final report
- Developing the management response

### **DGD**

The DGD, through the application of laws, royal decrees and ministerial decrees, imposes the legal framework for evaluations. As such, the organisation of a mid-term evaluation is a legal requirement. Informed of the content of these ToRs, it may ask VSF-B to include additional evaluation questions. The DGD is the recipient of the evaluation report.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES**

The methodology must be participatory, with strong interaction with stakeholders, beneficiaries and local partners, and may be based on evaluation approaches such as impact assessment, beneficiary evaluation, most significant change, contribution analysis and participatory narrative.



In their proposal, evaluators must explain their **understanding of the ToR** through a **commented analysis** that will form an integral part of their technical proposal. The methodology to be used must be described in the evaluator's technical proposal, but will be discussed and validated between the evaluator and the Steering Committee if adaptation to the context and available budget proves necessary.

The methodological note shall also include the methods for collecting and processing additional data, in order to ensure both the reliability and confidentiality of the information. VSF-B shall ensure that all relevant information necessary for the evaluation is made available. The methodology shall set out and justify the chronology of visits to projects, stakeholders and villages.

The evaluator will organise, with the support of local partners, working sessions and interviews with project staff, partners, stakeholders involved in the implementation of actions (farmers' organisations, local or international NGOs, authorities, decentralised technical services, etc.) and beneficiaries. He/she will visit the project intervention areas and talk to the target populations (direct beneficiaries) and intermediate beneficiaries. One or more participatory evaluation workshops will be organised with representatives of the beneficiaries.

Taking into account the organisational structure of VSF-B, the evaluator will meet with the various levels: headquarters, regional and national directorates.

The evaluation may draw on programme documents available at the two regional offices (West Africa and Great Lakes) and in the various projects (technical and financial documents, annual reports, monitoring reports, previous evaluation reports and management responses).

## **2.2 EVALUATION PROCESS**

At the outset, the mission will organise an initial briefing session with the evaluation steering committee to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the ToR, the issues at stake, the content and the terms of reference of the mission. The session will provide an opportunity to finalise and approve the timetable and organisational arrangements, provide information on security conditions and explain the methodology.

If, for security reasons, one or more projects/countries cannot be visited in person, the methodology and modalities for the analysis will be reviewed.

Each of the countries/projects/teams visited will begin with a briefing session. Similarly, at the end of each visit, the mission will organise feedback sessions with the various stakeholders. These feedback sessions should (i) enable the sharing and understanding of the evaluators' observations and perceptions and contribute to learning for all parties and the development of future commitments. The conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation will lead to commitments on the part of VSF-B and its partners.

The regions/areas of intervention in the countries are as follows:

Burundi: Province of N'Gozi; Communes of Busiga, Gashikanwa, Mwumba, Ngozi

Uganda: Karamoja region; Moroto and Kaabong districts

During each field mission, one or more participatory evaluation workshops will be organised with representatives of the beneficiaries.

The client will facilitate the organisation of the evaluation by providing available information and contacts with resource persons.

The consultation work will be carried out in the language of the country visited by the consultant and the final report will be provided in French or English. It will be written by the consultant in

accordance with VSF-B's quality standards. A summary of the consultation report will be available in French and English. The consultant will submit the final evaluation report to VSF-B in digital format.

### **2.3 RULES OF NEUTRALITY, IMPARTIALITY AND RELIABILITY**

In accordance with the fundamental values and quality criteria of the evaluation, the consultant is required to be objective, independent and impartial in their analyses and in relation to the different opinions expressed by stakeholders and beneficiaries during their mandate.

The tenderer shall explain how they intend to ensure objectivity (independence, impartiality) and rigour in their judgement throughout the process. The tenderer shall also explain how they intend to guarantee ethical principles, in particular those relating to respect for privacy, as well as those of probity and professional integrity.

### **2.4 DURATION AND PERIOD OF THE EVALUATION**

The consultation is scheduled to last approximately 60 days during the second half of 2025. The selection of the bid and the signing of the contract are scheduled for early September 2025. Fieldwork is scheduled for September/October/November, with reporting in November/December. The details of the schedule will be finalised by the consultant with the final evaluation steering committee.

### **2.5 TIMETABLE AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES**

Although the final evaluation mission is **estimated to last approximately 60 days**, it may be spread over a period of up to four months, covering the document review, briefing and debriefing, data and information collection and analysis in the field, and the reporting phase. The duration and locations of the field missions will be proposed with a view to optimising travel while ensuring that sufficient time is available for discussions with the various stakeholders (including beneficiaries, local partners and other Belgian partners) and taking security aspects into account. In addition to the field visits, the schedule will include a reporting schedule.

The consultant is required to clearly describe the different stages of their mission in their technical proposal and to propose a detailed schedule that takes into account the context and will serve as a basis for discussion with the evaluation steering committee.

### **2.6 AVAILABLE DATA**

The information currently available is listed below and is available to evaluators. These documents and sources of information are as follows:

- Technical and Financial Document (TFD) for the programme (including logical frameworks).
- Common Contextual Analyses (CCA) and Common Strategic Frameworks (CSF) by country.
- The laws and Royal Decrees regulating the framework for development cooperation.
- The mid-term and final evaluations of the DGD 2017-2021 programme.
- The annual reports for each objective.
- The monitoring matrices and/or reports on the specific objectives of previous years, depending on availability.
- Training/dissemination materials and capitalisation documents produced by the teams (in particular factsheets).

Documentation relating to this programme will be compiled and made available to the evaluator at the start of their assignment. For the tender preparation stage, it may be requested upon explicit request.

### **3. PROFILE AND SELECTION OF EVALUATOR(S)**

It is recommended that the evaluation mission be composed of one or more consultants with proven experience in project/programme evaluation (with a focus on approaches such as Outcome Harvesting) and with expertise in the programme's areas of intervention, as well as knowledge of the contexts. The evaluation team must be fluent in French and English.

The selection process for evaluators will be based on submissions comprising a technical and financial proposal.

**The technical proposal** must include the following:

1. An understanding of the scope of the evaluation, the key issues and the terms of reference for the consultation.
2. A proposed methodological approach (tools, approach/methodology, etc.)
3. A proposed timetable
4. A list of the documents required.
5. Detailed CVs of the proposed human resources, including those for possible support from headquarters.
6. A summary table of each expert's experience and skills

**The financial proposal** shall be presented in euros and shall include fees, per diem allowances and travel expenses (Bujumbura, Kampala) and accommodation costs.

Transport costs within the country and workshop organisation costs are covered by VSF-B and should therefore not be included in the financial proposal. VSF-B's local teams and partners are available to assist the consultant(s) with mobilisation, translation and investigation tasks as required.

The selection of evaluators will be made by the Steering Committee based on the experience of the proposed experts and the quality of the proposal. Technical and financial offers will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Adequacy and quality of the proposal in relation to the issues to be analysed: understanding of the context, the programme, the stakeholders, the role of the evaluators, the purpose of the evaluation and the proposed methodology;
- Cost/benefit ratio;
- Composition of the evaluation team and suitability for the profile sought.

### **4. LOGISTICAL AND SECURITY CONDITIONS**

The logistics of the mission will be provided by the programme, specifically for each project. They will be put in place in accordance with the agreed schedule. The project managers will provide the contractor with the small equipment necessary for the smooth running of the

mission. To this end, a detailed list of the equipment required must be included in the technical proposal (tablets/smartphones, projectors, etc.).

At the start of each mission in a country, a security briefing will be organised under the supervision of the Country Director and VSF-B's security expert. VSF-B's security plans and standard operating procedures will apply during the mission. However, VSF-B cannot guarantee the safety of the consultant(s) and cannot be held responsible if any security incident occurs during the mission. It is the consultant's responsibility to take the necessary measures for their own safety and to have appropriate insurance.

## **5. PAYMENT TERMS**

Payment for the service will be made in euros on the basis of invoices issued according to the following breakdown:

- ✓ 1st instalment: advance payment of 30% upon commencement
- ✓ 2nd instalment: 30% upon delivery of the interim report
- ✓ 3rd instalment: 40% upon final acceptance of the report

The tenderer is required to comply with the law on withholding tax on fees in accordance with the specific provisions of each country visited.

## **6. SUBMISSION AND COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES**

The deadline for submitting technical and financial bids is **31 August 2025 at 6 p.m.** (Belgian time), as evidenced by the date of dispatch. Any bids submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

Applications may be submitted by email to the following address: [p.vanderjagt@vsf-belgium.org](mailto:p.vanderjagt@vsf-belgium.org), with the subject line "bid for thematic evaluation of the DGD programme".

For all communication with the client regarding the organisation and progress of the assignment, evaluators should contact Peter van der Jagt, Director of Operations, at the same email address or at the following address:

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières – Belgium  
Avenue des Arts, 7 – 8  
1210 Brussels  
T +32 (0) 539 09 89

## **7. APPENDICES**

Annex 1a. Theory of Change document , DGD programme 2022-2026 for Burundi

Annex 1b. Theory of Change Document for the 2022-2026 DGD programme for Uganda

Technical and Financial Document for the programme (including logical frameworks) and comprehensive lists of key documents (on request)