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# LED Food Security Strategy 2016 – 2022

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„We are the first generation than can end poverty,  
and the last that can end climate change.“ (Ban Ki-moon)



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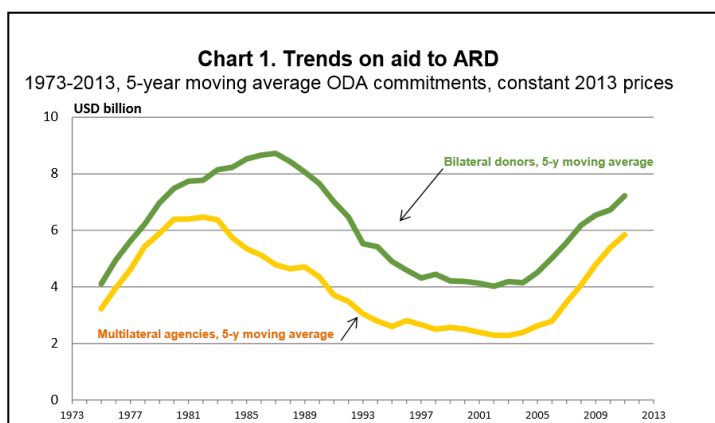


## A. Initial Situation

### Why a strategy for food security?

Since the food crisis of 2007/2008, when prices for basic foodstuffs exploded, the issues of hunger and food security have once again been increasingly on the international agenda. In the preceding years, the percentage of the world's population suffering from hunger had steadily declined. The proportion of undernourished people fell from around 33 percent in the 1970s to 16 percent in 2004.<sup>1</sup> Since 2007, however, not only the absolute number of hungry people has increased again, but also the percentage. In 2009, the number of undernourished people was estimated at over one billion for the first time. This development alarmed the international community, which subsequently refocused its attention on food security.

The causes of the food crises are complex. But the fact is that agricultural policy was severely neglected in the years before. In international cooperation, the share of funding for agriculture and rural development has been in constant decline since the 1980s. After 2008, the share increased again more strongly due to developments on the world agricultural market (see figure<sup>2</sup>).



Global efforts were stepped up to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. With Millennium Development Goal 1, the global community aimed to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and those suffering from hunger by 2015. Despite the various food crises since 2007, the goal in the fight against hunger has been achieved worldwide, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In 2014, the proportion of

hungry people was around 11 percent of the world's population<sup>3</sup>. However, the goal was not achieved in absolute terms. The number of hungry people has not been halved since 1990 (still around 800 million people). There are also major regional differences. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of hungry people has increased, not decreased. At around 20 percent, the proportion in Africa remains the highest in the world. In view of the global challenges of a growing world population, climate change and the changing economic order, agriculture in the future must feed even more people in a healthy way, impact the environment less than today and use natural resources sustainably instead of consuming them.

With a food security strategy, LED intends to strengthen efforts to fight hunger and poverty for the target population in the supported project areas within the framework of the newly defined Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs<sup>4</sup>) adopted in September 2015.

<sup>1</sup> World Food Report 2009: The state of Food Insecurity in the World. Economic Crises – impacts and lessons learnt. FAO, Rome, 2009, p.11

<sup>2</sup> Chart 1 shows the ODA trends for agriculture and rural development (ARD), Source: OECD Aid Statistics

<sup>3</sup> The number of hungry people worldwide published annually by the FAO is based on complex assumptions and projections.

In 2009, the FAO warned of over 1 billion hungry people. In 2011, the FAO revised its calculation methods. With the new assumptions, the hunger statistics show a constant downward trend. But the fact remains that the number of hungry people and those suffering from malnutrition is still alarmingly high.

<sup>4</sup> SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals (see annex 1)

## Focuses for LED

Through a food security strategy, the LED aims to take into account the universal human right to food and to contribute to the fight against hunger and poverty through its project and public relations work.

**The majority of programs with a focus on food security are concentrated in rural regions in the LED priority countries in Africa**, especially in the semi-arid and drought-prone areas of the Sahel and eastern and southern Africa. This geographic concentration does not exclude projects in other regions and programs with transregional significance.

By setting priorities, the LED contributes to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda**: The focus is on **SDG 2 (No Hunger)**. However, contributions are also made to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 6 (Clean Drinking Water), as well as SDGs 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Change Action) and 15 (Protect Life on Land).

With the revised sector strategy, the LED intends to analyze its previous commitment, develop a sharpened content and define the future direction of its project portfolio.

## Embedding in the LED mission statement

The strategy complements and concretizes the objectives of the LED mission statement, in particular the focus of development work on rural areas and on the cross-cutting issues: Human rights, gender justice, social justice, and environment, climate and resource protection.

## B. Right to Food and Food Security Concepts

### Right to food

The right to food is the internationally recognized normative framework established in the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966. 164 countries<sup>5</sup> have signed the Convention (as of 2015). It is thus legally binding on them. The two concepts of food security and food sovereignty can be seen as two different approaches to implementing the right to food.<sup>6</sup>

### Food security

Food security was defined at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome as follows: Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

The FAO distinguishes four dimensions of food security:

1. **Availability**: food is available in sufficient quantity and appropriate quality.
2. **Access**: access to resources and rights is secured to guarantee food.

<sup>5</sup> Liechtenstein signed the Convention in 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Food Security, Food Sovereignty, Position paper Helvetas, 2013, p.3

3. **Utilization:** circumstances are in place that contribute to adequate nutrition and physical well-being.
4. **Stability:** access to adequate food that can withstand economic and climatic crises is guaranteed at all times.

Food security exists only when all four dimensions are met simultaneously.

### **Food security**

In German, the term food security is often used synonymously with nutrition security. However, the definition of nutrition security is somewhat broader than food security: in addition to access to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate food, it also includes access to adequate health care, including a healthy environment, safe drinking water and sanitation. The term food security refers to the path or process toward food security.<sup>7</sup>

### **Food Sovereignty**

The concept of food sovereignty was introduced (also in 1996) by the international smallholder initiative La Via Campesina. Food sovereignty is defined as the right of people and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies.

Key principles of food sovereignty include the human right to food; access to productive resources such as land, water, forests, seeds, and capital; the adoption of agro-ecological production built on local and renewable resources; and the strengthening of local markets and equitable trade relations.

The rights-based, political concept is often interpreted differently. However, because it also addresses the root causes of food insecurity compared to the more technical definition of food security, it is being used more and more by development organizations. Many organizations support the basic ideas of food sovereignty, but do not use the term as a territorial concept of nation-states.<sup>8</sup>

### **LED food security strategy**

The LED has chosen the term food security for the strategy. In this way, it defines the concept of food security somewhat more broadly and supports the process of achieving a balanced, healthy and hygienically sound diet. To this end, it includes aspects such as a healthy environment, clean drinking water and other conditions. However, this choice of term does not exclude advocacy of food sovereignty principles.

<sup>7</sup> World Food Handbook, 2011, p. 35

<sup>8</sup> Food Security, Food Sovereignty, Position paper Helvetas, 2013, p.4 and 6

## C. Context

### Global imbalance between overproduction and hunger

Global food production could feed not only the current world population of 7.4 billion, but 12 to 14 billion people in total.<sup>9</sup> Farmers have been able to steadily increase the grain harvest not only in absolute terms, but also per capita of the growing population. Despite the available quantity, around 800 million people suffer from hunger and malnutrition, according to the latest FAO estimates.<sup>10</sup> They regularly do not have enough to eat. Around two billion people also suffer from malnutrition. They are affected by nutrient deficiencies such as vitamin deficiencies. On the other hand, the number of overweight people is increasing (about 1.4 billion). Worldwide, 1 adult in 3 is overweight. The number of overweight people is also increasing in developing countries (especially in the growing middle class).

### Poverty and hunger in rural areas

More than 70 percent of all hungry people live in rural areas. As small-scale and subsistence farmers, pastoralists, fishermen, agricultural workers and landless people, they are directly dependent on local agriculture. The areas they cultivate are sometimes too small, the growing conditions difficult and the agricultural methods often too backward to meet their own needs. Access to the necessary means of production and knowledge is often too limited to enable them to farm sustainably. In addition, there is a lack of other livelihood opportunities in the countryside to generate enough income for the families. A central statement of the World Agricultural Report (IAASTD<sup>11</sup>, 2009) is therefore: Hunger is primarily a rural problem and can only be overcome sustainably on the ground. Regional self-sufficiency is the indispensable backbone of sustainable rural development.

### Feminization of agriculture

Women and children are particularly hard hit by poverty and food shortages. In rural areas, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, women do 60 to 80 percent of the agricultural work and provide half of their families' food needs. Globally, the number of female-headed households is increasing as a result of civil wars, migration of men in search of work, and AIDS. The World Agricultural Report refers to this development as the "feminization of agriculture".<sup>12</sup> Agricultural extension and training for women must therefore become a focus of future agriculture in order to sustainably overcome hunger and poverty in rural areas.

### Global challenges for food production

The population will continue to grow worldwide. By 2050, it is estimated that around 9 billion people will need to be fed. With current consumption patterns and trends, this will require producing about 60 percent more food. If urbanization continues at the same rate everywhere, it is estimated that 80 percent of the world's population will live in cities by 2050. This means that fewer farms than today would have to produce more food. The rising standard of living will lead to changes in consumption patterns, such as increased meat consumption and consumption of energy-rich processed food. In addition, about one-third of the food produced today is lost through harvest and post-harvest losses, in the processing of food, and in the production of food and through wasteful consumption.

<sup>9</sup>Wege aus der Hungerkrise, 2013, p.4

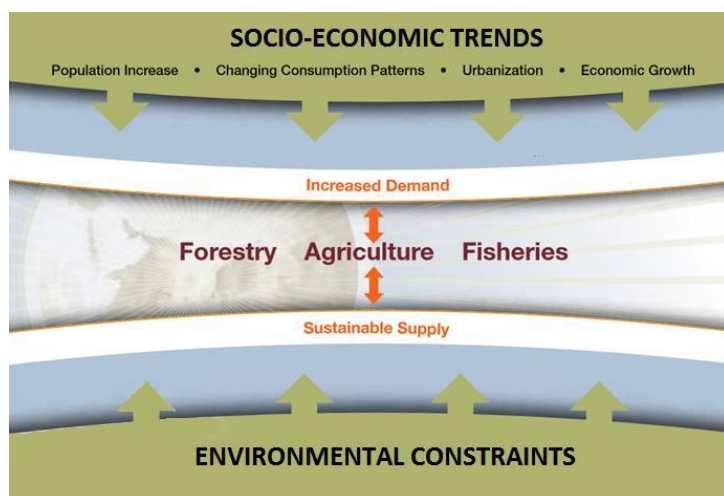
<sup>10</sup>FAO 2015, <http://de.wfp.org/welternaehrung>

<sup>11</sup>IAASTD – International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development

<sup>12</sup>Wege aus der Hungerkrise, 2013, p.24



These socio-economic trends (toward higher demand for food) are contrasted by increasingly scarce ecological resources (see figure<sup>13</sup>). The shortage of natural resources is exacerbated by climate change.



### Agriculture as a cause and victim of environmental change

In particular, the resources water, soil, fossil energy, forests and biodiversity, which are also important for agriculture and food production, are dwindling. At the same time, agriculture is one of the main causes of environmental change as well as its victims. For example, around 80 percent of deforestation is caused by agriculture, 70 percent of fresh water are consumed by agricultural cultivation.

On the other hand, the loss of soil due to declining soil fertility or desertification significantly impairs agricultural production.

In climate change, too, agriculture is both a cause and a victim. It is responsible for around 14 percent of greenhouse gases. On the other hand, agriculture is directly affected by the consequences of climate change, for example through unpredictable rainfall, droughts, floods or new plant diseases. The effects of climate change and resource scarcity are often more pronounced in many developing countries than in industrialized countries. The habitats of poor populations are disproportionately affected.

### Sustainable agriculture in the 2030 Agenda and the IAASTD World Agricultural Report

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda defined a separate goal for the fight against hunger. Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) is: **End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.**<sup>14</sup> Thus, this internationally agreed goal captured the link between food security, ending hunger and the central role of sustainability-oriented agriculture. This agreement by all UN countries can be seen as a success for the proponents of the findings of the World Agriculture Report (IAASTD). In this report, over 400 experts and 58 governments recognized the promotion of sustainable, predominantly smallholder agriculture as a central solution in the fight against hunger. The report formulates a **new paradigm of agriculture in the 21st century**:

Smallholder, labor-intensive, and diversity-based structures are the guarantors and hopefuls of a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable food supply through sufficiently resilient cropping and distribution systems. The World Agriculture Report finds investment in smallholder production to be the most urgent, secure, and promising means of addressing hunger and malnutrition while minimizing the environmental impacts of agriculture. Improved farming methods, mostly simple technologies and knowledge, appropriate seeds, and a variety of agroecological strategies hold tremendous potential for productivity and sustainability. Where smallholder farmers have sufficient land, water, money and hand tools, they produce significantly higher nutritional value per hectare than industrial agriculture, usually with significantly lower external inputs and environmental damage.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The figure shows the tension between socio-economic trends and ecological limits in which food production stands. Source: FAO, Profile for Climate Change, 2009

<sup>14</sup> See annex 1

<sup>15</sup> Wege aus der Hungerkrise, 2013, p.22f

"Business as usual is not an option" (IAASTD core message).

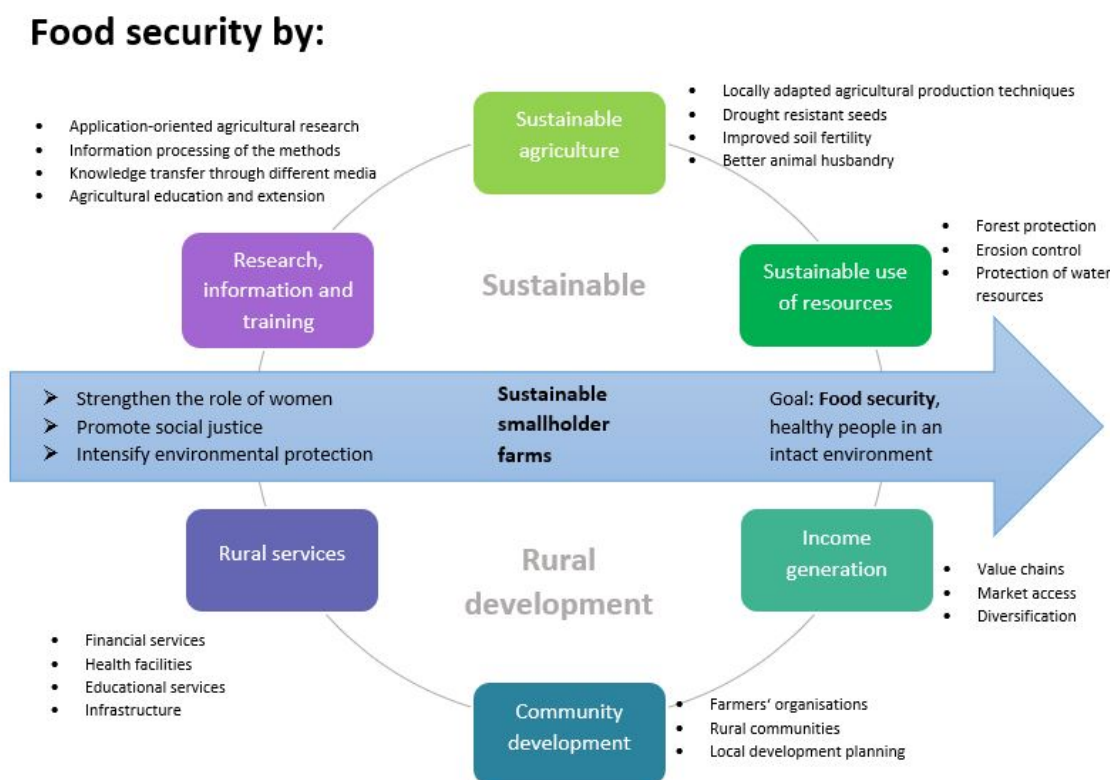




## D. Conceptual framework of the strategy

### Food security in the context of rural development

Food security is a complex challenge. It is not enough to fulfill only one of the dimensions of food security, such as sufficient production of cereals. If there is no constant access to food or if there is no nutritious, balanced and regionally adapted diet, the consequences of undernutrition and malnutrition cannot be overcome in the long term. Constant or recurrent hunger is usually closely linked to poverty. As noted in the World Agriculture Report, the majority of hungry and poverty-stricken people live in rural areas.<sup>16</sup> Food security in the longer term can therefore only be achieved within the framework of sustainable rural development in which regional food self-sufficiency functions. The following conceptual framework summarizes some key aspects of food security, which are used as a basis and starting point for the LED Food Security Strategy 2016-20.



### Sustainable smallholder farms at the center of rural development

The direct beneficiaries of the LED food security projects are smallholder families living in rural or semi-urban areas. They make their living from small to medium-scale agriculture, livestock and other income-generating activities. Women and children are given special consideration and support as particularly vulnerable target groups. Beyond the level of direct beneficiaries, the LED also supports farmers'

<sup>16</sup>Wege aus der Hungerkrise, 2013, p.4

organizations and other grassroots organizations as well as rural communities.

The aim is to achieve food security by strengthening sustainable smallholder farms, the majority of which are engaged in arable and/or livestock farming, but which also generate income from fishing, agricultural wage labor or other rural activities.

The LED considers food security in the context of rural development. Rural development involves many different aspects. Agriculture is an essential element of this - especially in many agriculture-based states in sub-Saharan Africa. The overall objective of rural development is to improve the living conditions of the population in rural regions in a sustainable and long-term manner.

The LED supports this goal and focuses on promoting sustainable smallholder farms to improve the living conditions and food security of the rural poor - while taking into account the conservation of natural resources as necessary livelihoods.

### **Six areas that are interrelated**

To achieve this goal, the LED defined six areas of action for project work in its Food Security Strategy 2011-15: Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Resource Use, Income Generation, Community Development, Rural Services, and Research, Information and Training.

In the area of **sustainable agriculture**, the aim is to promote locally adapted and sustainable agricultural production techniques. This includes agricultural activities to introduce adapted or drought-resistant seeds, diversification of products and cultivation techniques, methods to improve soil fertility and efficient water use, as well as improvements in animal and fish husbandry.

**Sustainable resource use** includes activities to protect livelihoods such as forests, soil, water and biodiversity, for example through forest conservation and reforestation, erosion control and soil reclamation, or protection of water resources from overexploitation and pollution.

**Income generation for smallholder families** can be achieved by building value chains and market access. Processing of products creates higher value added, which allows farming families to earn a better income. Activities to achieve this include analyzing markets, building value chains, and promoting the marketing of agricultural products. Through training in other rural activities, the families' income can also be diversified.

**Community development** includes the promotion of grassroots organizations and the strengthening of rural communities. Strong farmer organizations or village groups can better represent their concerns and create advantages in production, marketing and community tasks through joint action. They can also provide a social safety net to reduce risk for individual families. For local development to be sustainable, activities must also be addressed at the community level. Activities in this area include grassroots organization consultations and training, and support for rural communities in development planning.

**Rural services** are essential foundations for the activities and living environment of the rural population. These include, for example, offers of financial services or facilities in the health and education sectors. Agricultural extension services are also included. Other important areas include rural infrastructure such as roads, marketplaces, storage facilities, irrigation systems and electricity supply.

**Research, information and training** are central to the further development of agriculture. This includes the promotion of agricultural research that deals with different cultivation technologies or researches new climate-adapted seed varieties. To ensure that scientific knowledge reaches farmers and is applied, ways must be found to disseminate information and provide training.

### **The role of women and particularly vulnerable groups**

A key factor in the promotion of smallholder agriculture is the empowerment of women. Particularly in Africa and in large parts of Asia, rural women bear the main responsibility for providing for their families and account for the majority of smallholder subsistence work. The LED takes this fact into account and in its project work promotes agricultural advice and training for women and supports them in equal income generation.

In addition, under the aspect of social justice, particularly vulnerable groups suffering from food insecurity (children, AIDS-affected or landless people) are included in various project activities.

### **Self-determination and principles of food sovereignty**

The self-determination of the target population for independent and sustainable food security is an important starting point in the project work of the LED. In the consideration of the peasant living environment, it is based on the potential of the people for independent action and change.

In doing so, the LED also includes some of the principles of food sovereignty, because the right to food includes not only access to food but also to the necessary resources such as land, water, forest and seeds. For regional self-sufficiency, local markets and living incomes are to be promoted above all.

## E. Analysis of the project portfolio

The analysis of the 2015 project portfolio according to the six fields of action showed that most projects in the field of rural development had a focus on strengthening smallholder agriculture and income generation. The other areas such as sustainable resource use, community development and rural services were also part of the activities in most projects, but were not supported to the same extent as the two fields of action mentioned above.

The area of research, information and training had already been defined in advance as a smaller part of the portfolio with a few projects specifically geared to it (the share of these supraregional projects in the portfolio was around 17 percent in 2015).

An examination of activities to promote women in agriculture revealed that this area can receive even greater attention in project work.

An evaluation of the portfolio's financial share of the total budget showed an increase from 24 percent (2009) to 40 percent (2015). The budget for food security projects grew from 3.8 million Swiss francs (2009) to around 5.5 million Swiss francs (2015) and was thus significantly strengthened.

### Proportion of project budget for food security in the total budget (2009 and 2015)

Year	Total budget major projects	Project budget food security	Proportion in %
2009	15'770'076	3'815'137	24
2015	13'934'986	5'541'733	40

## F. Strategy direction 2016 - 2022

### Concentration on three fields of action

Through the evaluation of the project portfolio and the implementation of the 2011-15 strategy, various starting points for the 2016 to 2022 strategy emerged. In rural areas, agriculture with smallholder structures will be more strongly oriented toward sustainability in the project work. In this context, the findings of the IAASTD World Agricultural Report will form the basis for the agricultural approaches.

In general, environmental and climate protection and the sustainable use of resources are given greater weight in project support. In addition, the principles of food sovereignty are given greater emphasis and consideration in the approaches to food security.

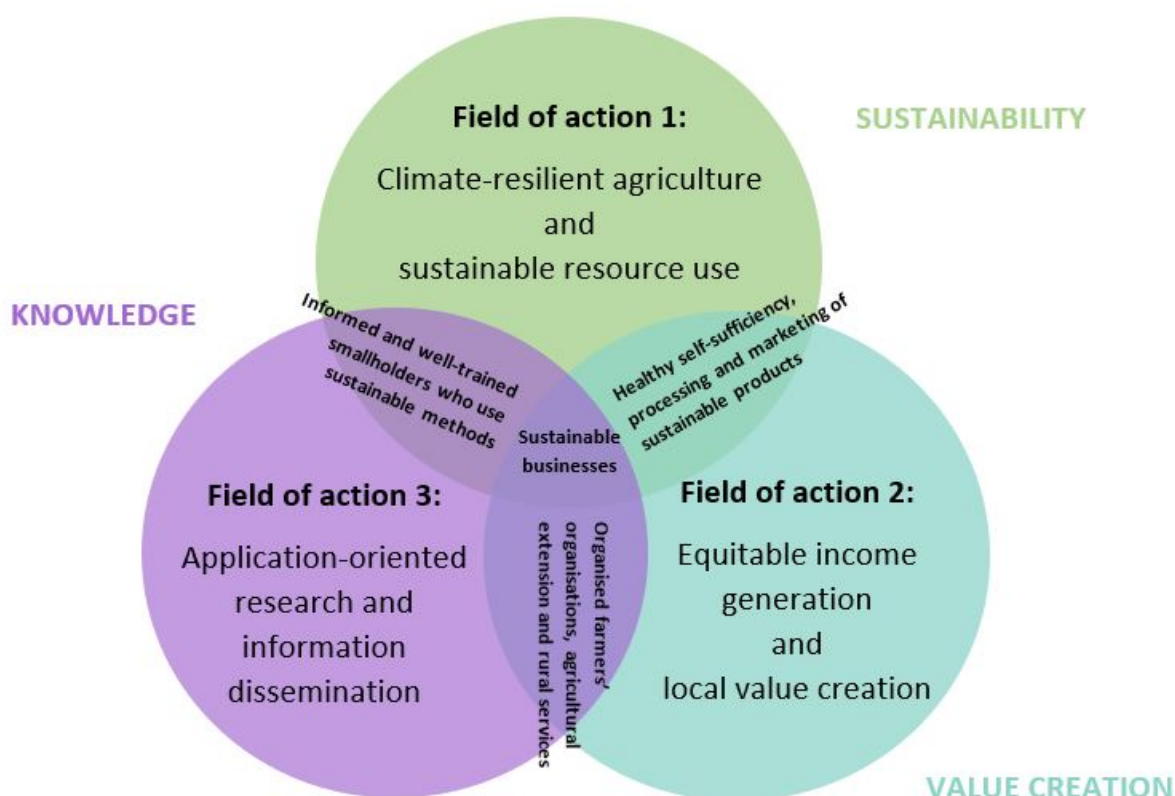
The proportion of projects in the area of research and information dissemination is to be maintained at approximately the same level. At the intervention and impact level, the LED's projects in the area of food security focus on concrete improvements for individuals and families, but also for communities, districts and regions.



Food security in the context of rural development is to experience a greater concentration of fields of action in project implementation.

Based on this analysis, the direction of the 2016 to 2022 strategy can be presented as follows:

### Food security by promoting smallholder agriculture:



#### Field of action 1: Climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable resource use

Agriculture plays a key role in both food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation. For this reason, the fields of agriculture and resource use are more closely linked in this field of action. The projects supported by the LED promote agro-ecological approaches in agriculture, which include organic farming methods as well as other resource-conserving and sustainable farming methods (low-external input sustainable agriculture/LEISA). Natural resources should not be overexploited in all agricultural activities in the project areas, but rather a balance between land use and nature should be established as far as possible. This includes water-conserving use, erosion and forest protection, soil conservation techniques, agroforestry and reforestation, use of climate-adapted seeds and regional livestock, and other sustainable methods, which may include, for example, reducing post-harvest losses.



In addition, the diversity of agricultural products is to be promoted, which on the one hand can ensure a balanced diet for the local population and on the other hand minimize crop failures or other risks.

The goal is sustainable regional self-sufficiency with nutritious products in an intact environment. A special focus in the project work will also be placed on access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities. Drinking water and sanitation are fundamental elements of a balanced and healthy diet.

### **Field of action 2: Equitable income generation and local value creation**

Food insecurity is not always a problem of insufficient production, but often also a consequence of a lack of access to food due to a lack of income and inefficient distribution systems. Therefore, income generation is also an important element in the fight against hunger and poverty in rural areas. On the one hand, income can be achieved by adding more value to agricultural products and marketing them; on the other hand, income can be diversified and increased through other rural activities. Value creation can be achieved by processing and trading products. In this context, the project work primarily aims to promote access to the local market. Compared to the international market, transport costs can be reduced and post-harvest losses minimized in the local market. They also promote local economic growth. The equal inclusion of women is just as important in income generation as in agricultural production.

Networking in farmers' organizations or other grassroots organizations is an essential factor for farming societies, for example, to facilitate market access and better represent their interests. Promoting rural communities in coordination and development planning contributes to local economic development. The LED therefore supports approaches that promote market access for smallholder farmers, build value chains, and pay attention to income diversification. Activities should go hand in hand with the promotion of grassroots organizations and rural communities.

### **Field of action 3: Application-oriented research and information dissemination**

Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (AKST) is critical to the advancement of sustainable agriculture. Important research results led to the high increases in global production over the last 50 years. Today, in the face of ecological limits and global challenges, appropriate scientific knowledge is needed. On the one hand, agricultural research needs to be supported; on the other hand, scientific knowledge needs to reach farmers.

For the LED, the development and transfer of agricultural knowledge is an important element of its commitment. For this reason, the LED supports several projects in application-oriented research, information dissemination and training in the field of sustainable agriculture. In the dissemination of information, the LED relies on proven and on innovative methods, such as the use of traditional communication channels (such as newspapers, radio, courses) and new media (such as the Internet and mobile communications). Due to their relevance, these projects can also be located in the international area.

## G. Implemenation and future portfolio

To implement the strategy, the following guidelines and benchmarks are established for project work and budget allocation:

### **Alignment of the project work**

- Strengthen project work in the three fields of action.
- Expand the program with the southern partners with regard to food security and strengthen the area of sustainable agriculture.
- Focus the program with the northern partners in the area of rural development/food security more strongly on the three fields of action.
- Pursue the cross-regional area of application-oriented research, information dissemination and training and ensure the implementation of knowledge.
- Promote knowledge networking and exchange of experience in all projects.

### **Outlook for budget allocation**

For 2016-22, the budget targets are as follows:

- The share of rural development/food security projects in the total budget is around 45 percent.
- For the distribution within the "Food Security" portfolio, the "distribution key 15-25-60" is aimed at: 15 percent for "Research and Information", 25 percent for the "Implementation Programs South Partners" and 60 percent for the "Implementation Programs North Partners".

LED Food Security Strategy 2016-22, approved by the LED Board on October 22, 2016

## Annexes

### ANNEX 1 – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030

### ANNEX 2 – References

### ANNEX 1 – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030



## 17 goals for sustainable development:

1. End poverty in all its forms and everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives for all people of all ages and promote their well-being.
4. Ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equity and empowerment for all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and timely energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and between states.
11. Make cities and settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, halt and reverse soil degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Link to the 169 subgoals of the SDGs: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/en/home/agenda-2030/die-17-ziele-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-entwicklung.html>

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Photo front page: Farmers in Mozambique (Copyright: Andreas Urban for Hilfswerk Austria International)

Photo p. 8: Members of a garden group in Zimbabwe (Copyright: Ute Mayer, LED project visit, 2010)