

Innovation for Climate Justice

VITA STRATEGY 2021-25



SUMMARY &
OVERVIEW

WHO WE ARE

OUR GUIDING
PRINCIPLES

CONTEXT

INNOVATION FOR
CLIMATE JUSTICE

OUR THEORY OF
CHANGE

OUR STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVES

ACCOUNTABILITY

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1. Summary



Inspired by the principle of Climate Justice, Vita's **Vision** is **Climate Smart Communities with access to services and sustainable livelihoods for all**. Rural communities in Eritrea and Ethiopia continue to suffer the effects of an accelerating climate breakdown not of their making. A fragile natural resource base and limited access to services, climate-smart technologies and economic opportunities results in livelihoods highly vulnerable to shocks and stresses. Vita stands in solidarity and support of these communities.

Our **Mission** is to **deliver innovative, scalable models of community-led rural development in Africa**. To fulfil this mission, this strategy has been informed by a comprehensive appraisal of performance over the previous strategy period (2016-2020), thorough context analyses and an evolved understanding of our distinct role and relevance as an organisation that can deliver transformational change.

Innovation will be a binding theme across the organisation's work in the years ahead; innovative service delivery approaches at community level, developed and scaled up through innovative partnerships, supported by innovative models for financing international development. The scaling of innovative models will be supported by effective organisational systems for research and learning, deepening knowledge and producing evidence of impact that influences decision makers. Vita's

core work during the 2021-25 period will focus on three areas:

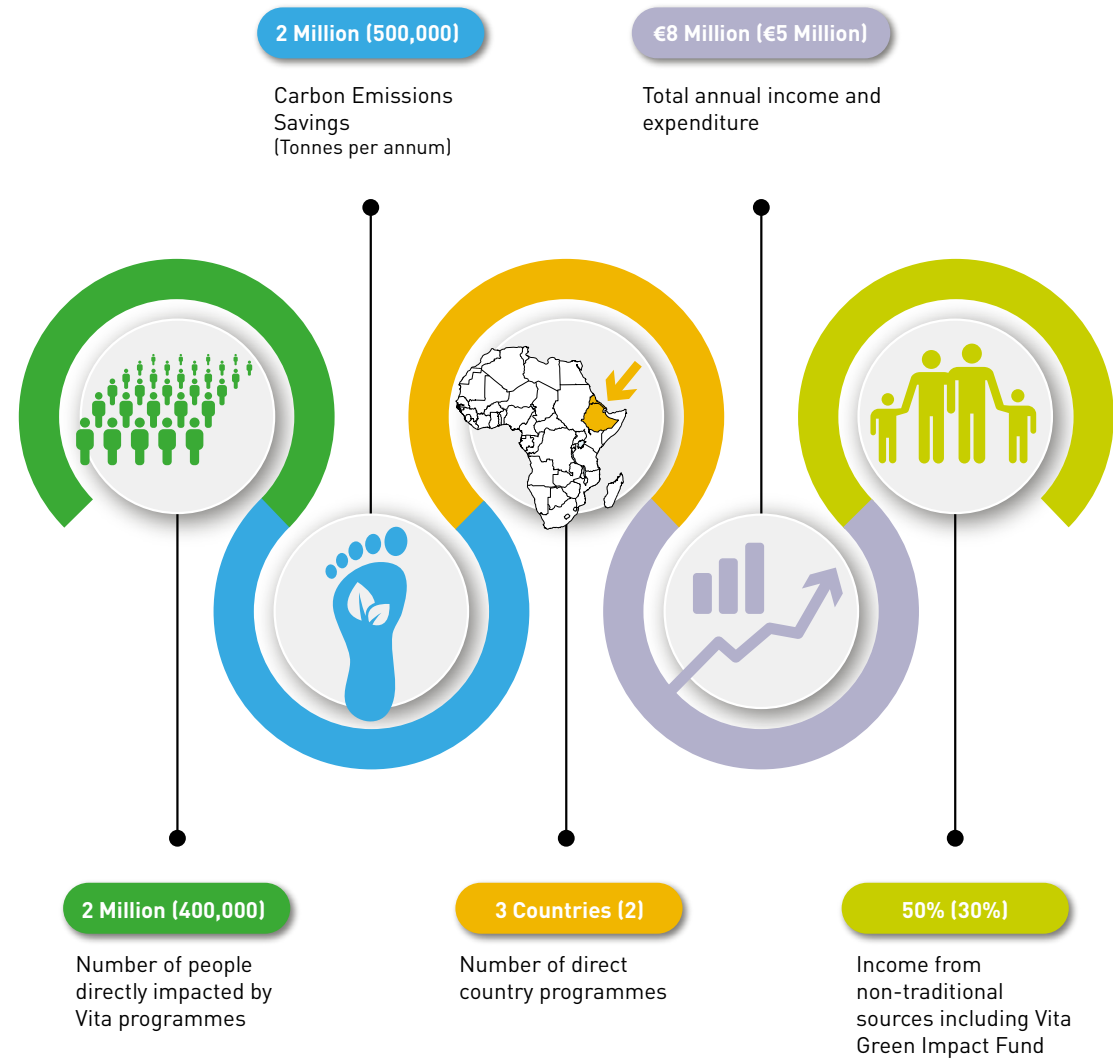
- (1) Developing and scaling innovative models for sustainable, community-managed access to cooking energy and clean water,
- (2) Promoting equitable adoption of climate-smart agricultural approaches and technologies and
- (3) Developing inclusive rural economies that provide decent livelihood opportunities for all.

Our four **strategic objectives**, aligning to each critical function of the organisation, will provide an overarching framework to guide and monitor operations from 2021-2025. The delivery of each strategic objective will be tracked with SMART indicators in the rolling business plans of each unit of the organisation, cascading down into individual staff work plans.

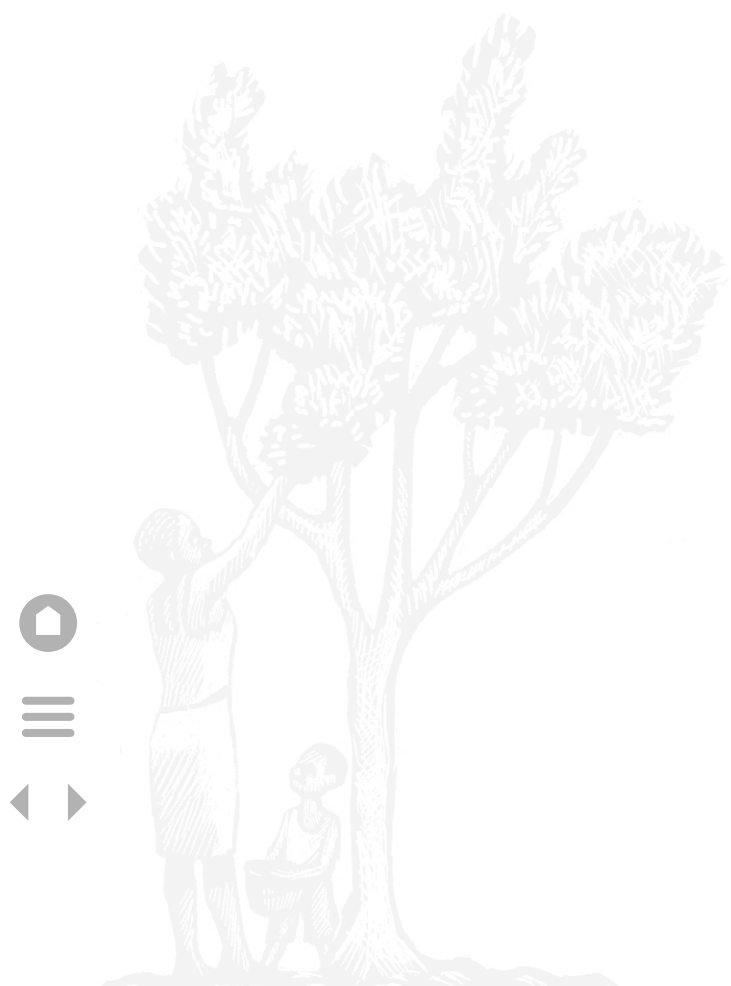
- *Vita's programmes strengthen innovation, impact and learning*
- *Vita's international presence is developed, further expanding scale and influence*
- *A strengthened Vita brand supports sustainable, diversified funding streams*
- *Effective, organisation-wide systems enable delivery of Vita's Strategic Objectives*



Vita Strategic Targets for 2025



1.1. Overview



<p>Vision</p>	<p>Climate Smart Communities with access to services and sustainable livelihoods for all</p>
<p>Organisational Strategic Targets for 2025</p>	<p>2 million people with improved livelihoods or access to water and energy security through Vita programmes</p> <p>Total carbon emissions savings of 2 million tonnes per annum</p> <p>3 direct Vita country programmes</p> <p>50% of income from non-traditional sources including Vita Green Impact Fund, within a total annual income and expenditure of €8 million</p>
<p>Mission</p>	<p>Vita delivers innovative, scalable models of community-led rural development in Africa</p>
<p>Guiding Principles</p>	<p>Community-Centred Development, Respect, Innovation, Impact and Accountability</p>

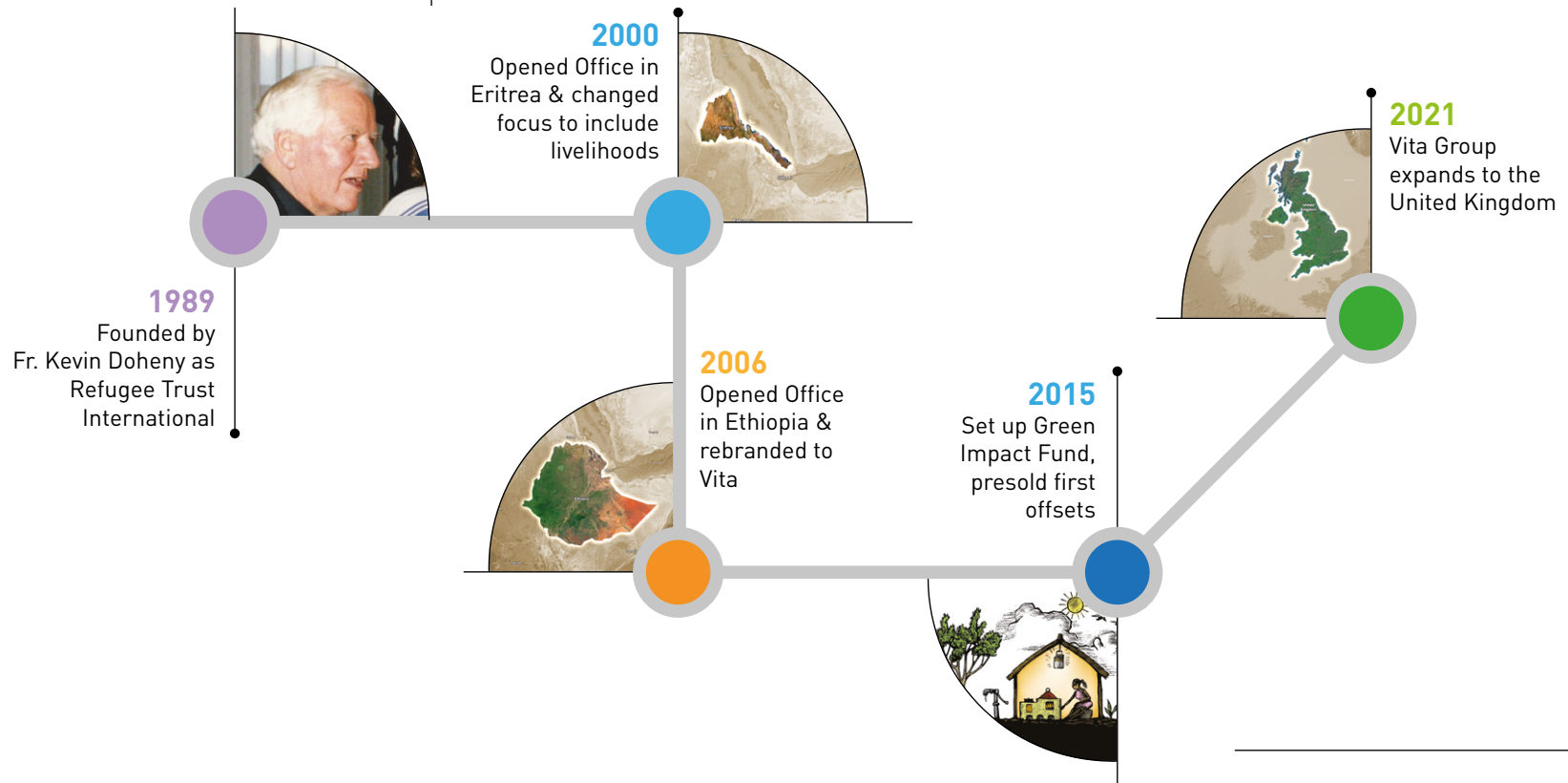
1.1. Overview contd/.

Core Function	Programmes	New Business Development	Fundraising & Communications	Finance, Administration and Governance
Strategic Objective	<i>Vita's programmes strengthen innovation, impact and learning</i>	<i>Vita's international presence is developed, further expanding scale and influence</i>	<i>A strengthened Vita brand supports sustainable, diversified funding streams</i>	<i>Organisation-wide systems enable delivery of Vita's Strategic Objectives</i>
Sub-Objectives	<p>Community-Led Total Cookstove Approach is adopted at scale by diverse partners and institutions</p> <p>Innovative rural service delivery models and climate-smart agricultural approaches are adopted and mainstreamed by government institutions and development actors in Ethiopia and Eritrea</p> <p>Strengthened evidence of Impact across Vita programmes in climate change adaptation, rural livelihoods development and access to basic services</p> <p>Sustainable annual grant income secured from diversified institutional funding sources</p>	<p>Expanded and well-networked Vita Group structure covering UK, US and Europe</p> <p>Vita Green Impact Fund expanded as an internationally acclaimed model of scalable, innovative financing and service delivery</p> <p>Green Impact Fund 2 established to further Vita's developmental mission</p> <p>New social impact investment finance raised in multiple jurisdictions</p> <p>New integrated commercial-development partnerships established and additional impact investment and social enterprise models adopted</p>	<p>Strengthened brand and identity of the Vita group in Ireland, UK, Europe, Africa and North America that supports more transparent and cohesive communications and fundraising and serves to unify Vita's activities under one identity.</p> <p>Sustainable fundraising model designed, developed, funded and embedded</p> <p>Sources of restricted and non-restricted income diversified including funding sourced from non-traditional sources.</p> <p>Vita is an authoritative voice in Ireland and internationally on climate-led social impact investment, innovative carbon finance & scalable models of community-led development</p>	<p>Financial systems established to support the delivery of Vita's strategic objectives, with appropriate capacity for adaptation</p> <p>Culture of shared organisational learning and knowledge management established, functional and productive</p> <p>Vita supported by strong governance and highly engaged Board of Directors providing insight, oversight and foresight</p> <p>Coherent, consistent application of organisational policies and standards applied across Vita entities</p>
Accountability	Each sub-objective is tracked by SMART indicators in rolling three-year business plans which are reported against on a quarterly basis to dedicated sub-committees of the Vita Board. The business plans of each core Vita function, and individual staff work plans, will align to each strategic objective and sub-objectives.			

2. Who we are

Vita is an Ireland-based development partner founded in Dublin in 1989, under the name of Refugee Trust International/RTI. Originally focusing on emergency response and post-conflict recovery, our work evolved into longer-term development work, with a focus on building sustainable rural livelihoods.

Vita has been working in the Horn of Africa for over 30 years, partnering with communities, state agencies and research institutions in Eritrea and Ethiopia to deliver knowledge-backed, community-based strategies for sustainable livelihoods and access to essential services. Today we have a team of over 100 people across Ethiopia, Eritrea and Ireland, managing programmes that directly or indirectly reach over 400,000 people.



2. Our Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles are what defines us as an organisation and shapes all of our relationships, from our partner communities to our teams to our development partners, friends and supporters.



Defining who we are

Realising Africa's enormous potential:

Africa has enormous socio-economic potential and our ambition is to make a meaningful contribution.

Community-Centred Development:

The communities we partner with must drive their own development.

Respect:

We are sensitive to and respect the culture and traditions of our partner communities and staff.

Innovation:

Our focus on innovation requires courage and sometimes disruption.

Impact:

The impact of our programme is measurable, tangible and sustainable.

Accountability:

Honesty and transparency are reflected in all our programmes and fundraising. It is a privilege to play a role in development and we cherish it.



4. Context



In the development of this strategy, Vita conducted detailed analyses of the diverse yet interlinked contexts in which the organisation operates. This included a study of global environmental, political, social, economic and technological trends, stakeholder analysis and in-depth studies of the different environments in which the organisation operates. This process complemented a comprehensive SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats) analyses conducted at organisation and country levels. Together, this work has been critical in identifying the unique role the Vita must play in today’s world to deliver the most impactful change with limited resources, and the organisational changes required to do so.

The past decade has been the hottest on record. Global temperatures are projected to rise as much as 3.2°C by the turn of the century, with the world alarmingly off-track to meet the limit of 1.5°C set out in the Paris Agreement [\[The State of the Global Climate 2020\]](#). Climate extremes contribute to human suffering every day, intensifying the frequency and severity of natural disasters and food crises. The sharp inequality in how these impacts are experienced across the world points to a deep injustice; those who have contributed least to global climate breakdown, and are least equipped to mitigate and adapt to its impact, are the most affected. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa account for 33 of the 40 countries most vulnerable to climate change – combined, they are

responsible for less than 0.1% of global carbon emissions per annum. [\[ND-GAIN Country Index\]](#). Women suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change, facing inequitable access to the resources required to adapt to its impact.

Against this backdrop, these countries must meet the continent’s key demographic challenge; ensuring economic opportunity is available and accessible for the tens of millions of young people entering the workforce each year. Supporting the development of climate-smart rural economies that provide viable work and sustain thriving communities, while protecting the natural resource base upon which rural livelihoods depend, has never been more urgent. Contested, scarce resources and lack of economic opportunity undermine aspirations for peace and security. The Horn of Africa has seen the return of serious conflict with the outbreak of the war in Tigray in 2020, and a wider intensification of instability within Ethiopia. Prospects for region-wide stability remain uncertain. Political turmoil threatens restrictions on already limited civil society space, while challenges relating to governance, human rights and irregular migration remain.



4. Context condt/.



The COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented an unprecedented challenge to the world’s health, economic and social systems, continues to evolve, highlighting inequalities within and between societies and slowing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. [\[Report 2020\]](#). In such turbulent circumstances, it is all the more necessary for Vita to draw on long-established, credible relationships with partners on the ground, and enter the new strategy period with heightened conflict sensitivity and adaptability in pursuit of programme objectives.

While these challenges demand a renewed urgency and agility from development actors, the rural communities in the Horn of Africa that Vita works with face familiar, but even greater challenges at the frontline of climate breakdown. They rely on precarious livelihoods that are vulnerable to economic shocks, and dependent on a fragile, depleting natural resource base. Economic opportunities, and the resources to take advantage of them, are scarce. Limited livelihood prospects contribute to movement away from rural areas, and irregular migration flows overseas. Inadequate access to essential services impedes household and community development, while potentially transformative knowledge and technologies remain out of reach. Recent experiences of global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic have only further underlined the relevance of our work. External resources and

expertise are vulnerable to disruption. Community-level systems and capacities are critical for the sustainable management of essential services. These must be supported by the scaling up of innovative financing solutions for climate action including the harnessing of non-traditional capital streams, to support adaptation and mitigation in those communities most vulnerable to the impact of climate breakdown.



5. Innovation for Climate Justice 2016-2020 Achievements



The past five years have been a period of expansion for Vita. Core competencies have been developed in innovative approaches to climate change adaptation, mitigation and development financing, building on the organisation’s long standing engagement with Carbon Finance since 2010. Our programmes have directly or indirectly reached over 400,000 people in Eritrea and Ethiopia through improved livelihoods and resilience and access to safe water and energy, including 311,000 through the Vita Green Impact Fund. Innovations that have been many years in development have matured into proof-of-concept. Through the Vita Green Impact Fund (VGIF), Vita has mobilized impact investment to deliver social and environmental outcomes in rural communities, while generating carbon finance from emissions savings that delivers an economic return to investors and enables us to expand our work. Our approach to technology transfer - networking state services and research institutions with smallholder farmers – has evolved in Eritrea and Ethiopia. This has delivered change in the lives of rural households, influenced decision makers and opened the door to new collaborations and opportunities.

Vita has pioneered the *Community-Led Total Approach* to sanitation for over 15 years in Ethiopia. This methodology is now practiced in over 70 countries, and has been officially mainstreamed by government agencies and institutions globally. Since 2018, in partnership with Dr Kamal Kar’s

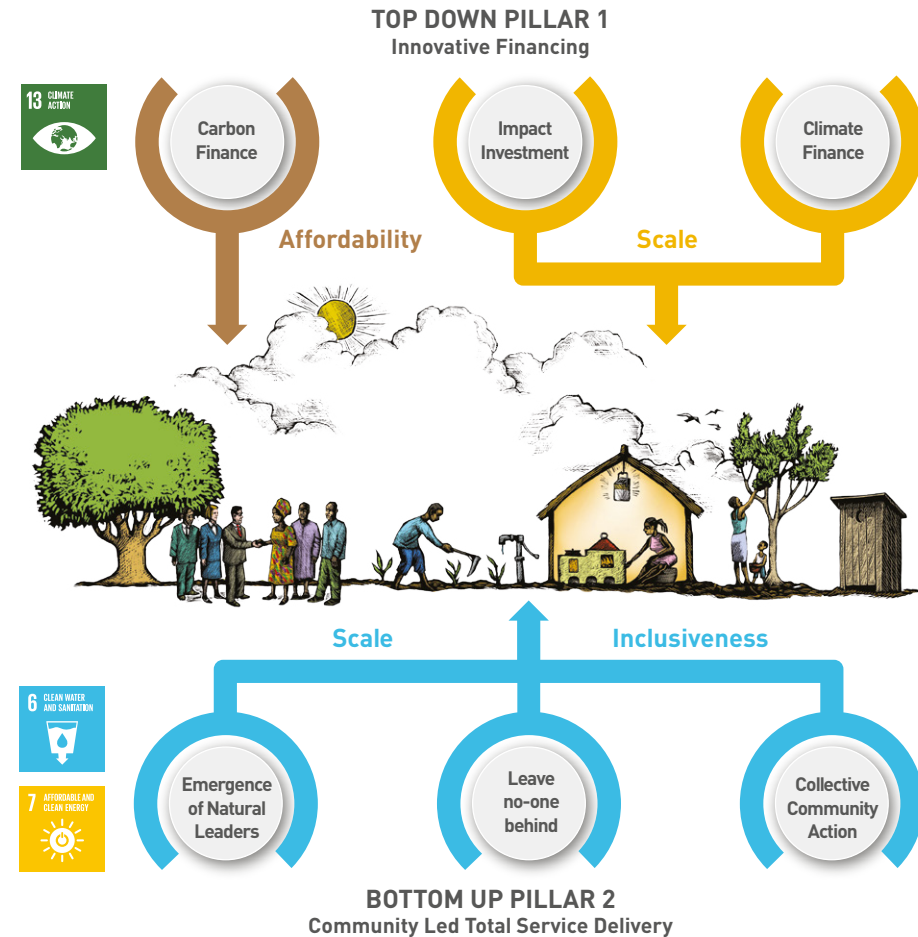
Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Foundation, we have been adapting and testing this model’s potential to be applied to other key challenge faced by rural communities in Africa – the interlinked issues of deforestation, environmental degradation and fuel security. A pilot project of the Community-Led Total Cookstoves approach in Gamo Zone, Ethiopia returned a near total adoption rate of new cookstove technology among households .



Innovation for Climate Justice

Vita has developed a mature understanding of both our organisation’s distinct role as a small NGO, and the value of our long-established partnerships with government and semi-state institutions. Supporting change in the lives of rural households and communities demands that we take a long-term view. Programmes must offer possibilities for scalability and replication to deliver impact far beyond the scope of Vita’s resources. We have refined an approach that integrates “bottom up” innovations in service delivery at community level, with “top down” innovative financing and international knowledge. The Climate Innovation in Africa Programme will present a conceptual framework and funding vehicle for this approach. Our 2021-2025 Strategy is informed by an evolving understanding of the pathways to bring such innovative models to scale.

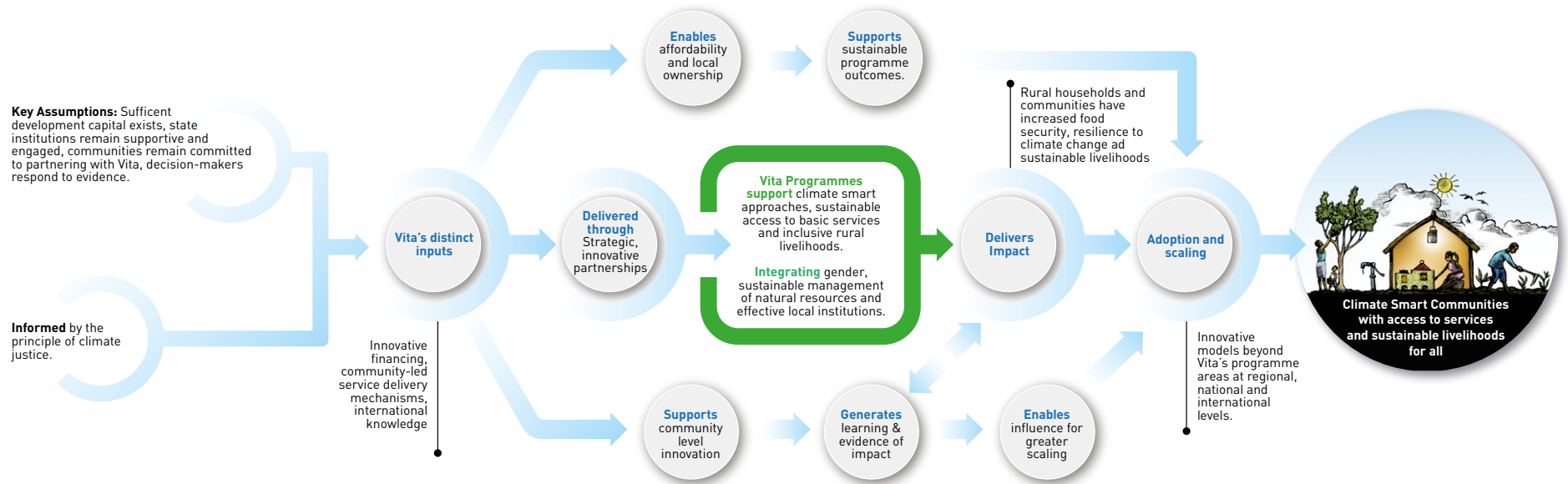
CLIMATE INNOVATION IN AFRICA *Affordable Services at Scale*



6. Our Theory of Change

The Vita Theory of Change illustrates a sustained adoption of climate-smart rural services, livelihood strategies and technologies builds household assets and contributes to improved water, food and energy security. Informed by the imperative of Climate Justice. It shows how, even with modest resources, the organisation can bring this transformational, inclusive change from community level up to national level in rural Africa, while influencing decision making internationally.

- *Our distinct inputs of innovative financing, community-led service delivery mechanisms and international knowledge are designed to deliver sustainable, affordable and impactful models of rural development that are highly replicable.*
- *Sustainability of impact is further supported through the integration of climate, gender and partnership with effective state services across all programmes*
- *Evidence of impact and effectiveness is generated to support scale up at sub-national and national level in close partnership with local institutions, and influence decision making in the international sphere among peer agencies and wider development fora, financiers and actors.*



7. Our Strategic Objectives

7.1 Programmes

7.1.1 Country Programmes



7.2 New Business Development



7.3 Fundraising & Communications



7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance



7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance



Vita's four core Strategic Objectives for 2021-2025 are outlined below. They correspond to each critical function of the organisation; **Programmes, New Business Development, Fundraising and Communications** and **Finance, Administration and Governance**, to allow each strategic objective to cascade into departmental and individual staff work plans, and support effective implementation of the strategy.

Vita's programmes strengthen innovation, impact and learning

- *Community-Led Total Cookstove Approach is adopted at scale by diverse partners and institutions*
- *Innovative rural service delivery models and climate-smart agricultural approaches are adopted and mainstreamed by government institutions and development actors in Ethiopia and Eritrea*
- *Strengthened evidence of impact across Vita programmes*
- *Sustainable annual grant income from diversified institutional funding sources*

THE VITA APPROACH

Enabling access to sustainable, community managed rural services

We will engage with government institutions, peer agencies and international organisations to expand delivery and scaling of the Community-Led Total Cookstoves model in Ethiopia. Vita will continue expansion of programmes delivering safe water for rural communities, combining repair of broken-down water points with the strengthening of community-level capacities in the maintenance and management of water infrastructure.

Conventional approaches to agricultural extension service provision, characterised by top down dissemination of knowledge from experts to farmers, are often inadequate to help smallholder farmers address increasingly complex agro-climatic challenges in diverse social contexts. Although various participatory methodologies have been mainstreamed into extension services in recent decades, the emphasis remains on technology transfer, often at the expense of the social factors that accompany agricultural interventions. Building on our evolving learning from adapting the Community-Led model to key rural services such as water and energy, we will explore the potential of the approach to support inclusive, sustainable community-led adoption of agricultural knowledge and technologies.

7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	▶
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



Supporting household adoption of climate-smart agricultural approaches and technologies

Vita’s climate smart programmes will sustainably increase agriculture productivity and household incomes, adapt and build resilience to climate change, and where possible, contribute to carbon emission savings. Vita will continue to support the development of community-based seed multiplication systems for strategic food security crops, including the potato, to expand access to clean, high-yield and climate-appropriate seed varieties. This will include strengthening the functionality of producer’s groups and cooperatives to deliver key services for smallholder farmers and producers. Where appropriate, we will support the inclusive community-level adoption of appropriate digital technologies, such as remote sensing data and mobile Artificial Intelligence (AI) crop diagnostic tools, that can strengthen the capacity of communities to control and manage their environment and livelihood.

Vita will support the design and application of climate smart approaches to agriculture and natural resource management that provide economic returns to smallholder farmers and their communities, while protecting and restoring the natural resource base that supports sustainable rural livelihoods. This will include community-managed land restoration techniques, forestry and landscape rehabilitation, and integrated soil fertility management.

Inclusive rural livelihoods development

Vita will support the development of inclusive rural value chains and strengthen the capacity of smallholder farmers to engage profitably within them to raise household incomes. We will prioritise climate-smart local economic development strategies that link women and rural youth, including persons with disabilities, to farm, off-farm and non-farm economic opportunities. The climate-smart transformation of inclusive dairy value chains will also be a key component of the organisation’s work, providing decent livelihood opportunities and greater availability of nutritious food for rural households. Access to inclusive financial services that allow households to take advantage of economic opportunities and build resilience to climate and economic shocks will also be integrated, leveraging context-appropriate developments in digital financial technology.

Vita will strengthen the skills and functionality of producer’s groups, associations and cooperatives in the potato, cereal seed and dairy sectors: to enable them to identify profitable market opportunities and make informed business decisions in response in order to raise household incomes. A specific focus will be strengthening women’s cooperatives and producer’s associations in agriculture and agribusiness. Building on our experience working in consortia in Ethiopia in this sphere, we will work with relevant technical

7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes

7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	▶
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



training institutions, government departments and agribusiness to support the delivery of skills development that is relevant to local labour markets.

Strategic partnerships

We will continue engaging with implementation partners (government institutions, local civil society organisations, peer NGOs and international organisations) to support effective coordination, local ownership, sustainability and scaling. Knowledge and learning partnerships will be maintained and further cultivated to ensure the highest level of technical expertise supports Vita programmes, while pursuing mutual research and development objectives. These include partnerships with the Irish agri-food sector (most significantly, building on the established partnership with Teagasc), the Community Led Total Sanitation Foundation (CLTSF), and carbon finance specialists.

A focus on women’s lives and livelihoods

Vita recognizes that women - and households headed by women - are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty. Women often do not share the same levels of access as men to the productive assets, knowledge and networks required to build resilient livelihoods. Limited participation in decision making at household and community levels further entrenches disadvantage. Closing this gap is not only a question of justice,

but a necessity for development. We share the recognition, outlined in A Better World – Ireland’s Policy for International Development – that in many poor countries “women are an untapped resource that can bring about transformational change with the right support”. ([A Better World](#)). It is estimated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation that closing the gender gap in access to agricultural inputs alone would lift 150 million people out of hunger. ([FAO’s work on Gender](#)). Vita’s programmes will also specifically target women’s enterprises, cooperatives and local civil society organisations in the development of inclusive rural value chains. The primary benefits of our water and improved cookstove programmes will be realised by women, who continue to overwhelmingly shoulder the burden of water and fuelwood collection.

Vita understands that framing women as simply a primary target group is insufficient to address gender-related barriers to inclusion and empowerment. Interrogating the specific social, cultural and economic factors faced by women in each project context, and supporting the development of locally tailored strategies to overcome them, will be mainstreamed across our programmes. Gender analyses results will inform all programme design and planning so that meaningful female participation and decision making is facilitated.

7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	▶
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



Evidence and learning for Impact and Influence

Monitoring and evaluation will move beyond a focus on compliance and accountability to the systematic generation of learning and evidence that informs programme design, strengthens programme impact and supports influence and scaling. We will partner with academic and research institutions in the programme countries, Ireland and globally, fostering linkages between them in the pursuit of mutual learning objectives.

A Learning Centre for the Community-Led model of rural service delivery, established in Gamo Zone, Ethiopia, will engage communities in a process of in-depth, iterative learning about the social drivers of rural development. Insights gained from this community-centred learning will be used to maximise the potential of the community-led total development approach to deliver essential services across communities in a sustainable, scalable model. Vita will support the further development of community-led, locally appropriate mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable households. Building on the organisation’s experience of highly participatory modes of community-managed water points and improved cookstove provision in Eritrea, a similar Learning Centre will be established in Asmara during the strategy period, enabling further opportunities for cross-country exchange and learning.

Disability inclusive development

During the strategy period, Vita will strengthen the mainstreaming of disability inclusive development practices across our programmes. To this end, we will engage with Disabled People’s Organizations in each national context, and peer agencies with the relevant specialisation, to ensure persons with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in our programmes and that their specific needs and interests are integrated into all processes across the programme cycle.



7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

- 7.1 Programmes ▶
- 7.1.1 Country Programmes**
- 7.2 New Business Development ▶
- 7.3 Fundraising & Communications ▶
- 7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance ▶
- 7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance* ▶



Vita will continue to focus on Ethiopia and Eritrea. Those country programmes will be guided by national strategies developed by our offices in Addis and Asmara, fully aligned to this organisational strategy and informed by detailed context analysis and learning processes conducted in each country and across the organisation in 2020. These strategic plans will contextualize and operationalize the overall organisational strategy at country-level.

Ethiopia

Central to the organisation’s work in Ethiopia during the strategy period will be further learning and development of the Community-Led Total Cookstoves approach centred through an established Learning Centre in Arba Minch, from which evidence and learning will be disseminated to support adoption and scaling of the model across the country. Climate Smart Agriculture will remain a core focus of Vita’s work in southern Ethiopia. Vita will expand programmes in community-managed forestry and natural resource management, and work in consortia in broader actions supporting inclusive rural economic development and job creation. Under the Green Impact Fund, Vita will continue to expand access to community-managed safe water and clean cooking technology in Amhara Region, building on continued programming in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region (SNNPR). The organisation is also well positioned to support post-conflict recovery and

development in the north of Ethiopia. Following a thorough risk analysis, needs assessment and a review of potential strategic partnerships, we will seek to establish a regional office in the Tigray region within the strategy period.



7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

- 7.1 Programmes ▶
- 7.1.1 Country Programmes**
- 7.2 New Business Development ▶
- 7.3 Fundraising & Communications ▶
- 7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance ▶
- 7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance ▶



Eritrea

Vita’s work in Eritrea will continue to focus on effective seed systems and inclusive value chains that deliver for smallholder farmers and rural households, and the strengthening of local and national level capacities in climate smart agriculture and land resource management approaches. This will include developing the productivity and effectiveness of women’s producer associations and enterprises. These programmes will build upon the well-established and effective partnership between Vita, Teagasc, Self Help Africa and the Ministry of Agriculture, under a new 5-year Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2021. Under the Green Impact Fund, Vita will expand access to community-managed safe water and cleaner cooking technology beyond the current focus regions of Maekel, Debub and Anseba. Building on the highly participatory approaches to rural service delivery that are well-established in the country, we will also establish a Learning Centre in Asmara to explore potential adaptations of the *Community-Led Total* approach to development.

New Countries

We will seek to expand our presence and influence in further countries during the strategy period through the organisation’s programme development role in the Green Impact Fund (GIF), under which the organisation will provide services

to other NGOs directly implementing GIF projects. Building on this wider country engagement, we will conduct comprehensive country assessments and due diligence processes to inform the expansion of Vita’s direct programme presence to one additional country in the Horn of Africa, for which our development approach and expertise are broadly congruent with identified needs. Thus, by 2025, Vita expects to have direct programming operations in three African countries.



7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	▶
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	▶
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



Vita's international presence is developed, further expanding scale and influence

- *Expanded and well-networked Vita Group structure covering UK, US and Europe*
- *Vita Green Impact Fund expanded as an internationally acclaimed model of scalable, innovative financing and service delivery*
- *Green Impact Fund 2 established to further Vita's developmental mission*
- *New social impact investment finance raised in multiple jurisdictions*
- *New integrated commercial-development partnerships established and additional impact investment and social enterprise models adopted*

THE VITA APPROACH

The Vita Green Impact Fund

The Vita Green Impact Fund (VGIF) is a major strategic initiative that has been undertaken by Vita since 2016. Providing the organisation's single largest source of development capital, the Fund will be central to the delivery of this strategy. The €2m pilot fund (2016-20) has enabled over 300,000 people in rural Eritrea and Ethiopia to access safe water and fuel-efficient cookstoves while saving over two million tons in carbon emissions (Co2 equivalent). This pilot fund will generate further carbon offset income, to enable repayment to investors and provide Vita with a surplus for reinvestment in low-carbon development. When the Vita Green Impact Fund was established in 2016, three long term objectives were established. The same three objectives underpin the new, externally regulated Green Impact Fund 2 (GIF) that will be established in the forthcoming strategy period:

1. To enable scaling up of existing sustainable community energy and water supply programmes
2. To drive new money into development, which can provide Vita and the sector with new programming and organisational income
3. To position Vita as a leader in social impact investment and carbon finance

7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	▶
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Vita will lead project development for the Green Impact Fund 2. In this capacity, the organisation will receive multi-annual grant funding to implement low-carbon programmes. While the new Green Impact Fund company will be independent of Vita, we will ensure that the Fund applies the same developmental focus and values which the pilot fund demonstrated, expands the scale and influence of our climate and social impact programmes and furthers our developmental mission. In addition to the externally regulated Green Impact Fund 2, Vita will implement replicas of the € 2m pilot fund in-house, raising loans from investors in Ireland, UK and the US.

Growing the Vita Group Internationally

In order to expand fundraising and investment, Vita is gradually building an international presence. Funds mobilization capability is being established in the US as well as the UK, where a joining of forces with the UK charity New Hope is almost complete. We will also seek to establish partnerships in Switzerland, German, Canada and Australia, building on existing relationships in those countries. In each jurisdiction, fund mobilization strategies will be tailored to specific local target markets, informed by thorough donor mapping and expert knowledge of specific national and thematic contexts. Financial systems, group web domain, and brand and trademark management will be consolidated across all entities under the Vita Group structure.

Continuous innovation in development

Informed by experience gained piloting the Vita Green Impact Fund, the organisation will continue to work with diverse partners to develop and deliver innovative financing models. Grounded in detailed mapping of potential funding streams, legal frameworks and innovation partners, these will be designed to attract significant and non-traditional development capital into climate action. Vita will lead the modelling of various equity, loan and grant vehicles and blended approaches that reduce the cost of capital, promoting scale and affordability in programme delivery.

The *Climate Innovation in Africa Programme* will present a conceptual framework and fundraising vehicle for the Green Impact Fund 2, blending of “top down” innovations in financing with “bottom up” innovations in community-led service delivery. During the 2021-2025 strategy period, we will continue to innovate in the financing and delivery of agriculture, energy and water services and through collaborative models with investors, private enterprise and technology providers. Additionally, the organisation will build on recent country initiatives and partnerships in renewable energy, financial inclusion and job creation, leveraging local experience and relationships to broaden our developmental impact.

7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

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A strengthened Vita brand supporting sustainable, diversified funding streams

- *Strengthened brand and identity of the Vita group in Ireland, UK, Europe, Africa and North America that supports more transparent and cohesive communications and fundraising and serves to unify Vita’s activities under one identity.*
- *Sustainable fundraising model designed, developed, funded and embedded*
- *Sources of restricted and non-restricted income diversified including funding sourced from non-traditional sources.*
- *Vita is an authoritative voice in Ireland and internationally on climate-led social impact investment, innovative carbon finance & scalable models of community-led development*

THE VITA APPROACH

Diversification of income streams

Irish Aid and Europe Aid will remain the primary institutional donors of focus, while Vita will engage with and successfully source grant funds from at least a third major institutional donor over the course of the strategy period, building towards a level of sustainable annual donor grant funding. We will build integrated commercial development partnerships with Irish and international corporations that will provide programme finance alongside expertise and other resources in-kind. Unrestricted and semi-restricted income will be mobilized via public and corporate fundraising. Co-financing for programmes and projects will be supported by smaller grant funding from an expanded range of Irish, UK, European and North American donors.



7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	▶
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	▶
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



Positioning the Vita brand

Over the strategy period Vita will continue to position our brand as a next generation overseas aid agency with a focus on climate smart agriculture, rural services and equitable carbon finance models. We will reach new audiences and markets in new jurisdictions, through engagement with stakeholders in the UK, Europe and North America. As Vita’s partners help define our brand and support access to additional partnership opportunities, the brand currency of existing partners will be leveraged to maximise reach into new markets.

The highest ethical standards in fundraising and communications

A set of wide-ranging “carbon protocols” will be applied across all of Vita’s carbon finance activities, ensuring the highest standards guide all decision making and ensuring the Vita brand is protected. These protocols will also serve as a filter for potential investors, partners and customers of the Green Impact Fund. Our communications, fundraising and public engagement content will reflect the organisation’s values, and uphold and promote the dignity and agency of the households and communities we work with.



7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	▶
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



Effective, organisation-wide systems in place to support delivery of Vita’s strategic objectives

- *Financial systems established to support the delivery of Vita’s strategic objectives, with appropriate capacity for adaptation*
- *Culture of shared organisational learning and knowledge management established, functional and productive*
- *Vita supported by strong governance and highly engaged Board of Directors providing insight, oversight and foresight*
- *Coherent, consistent application of organisational policies and standards applied across Vita entities*

THE VITA APPROACH

Effective, adaptable systems and structures

New cloud-based business systems will support both the maintenance of financial transparency and accountability, and effective internal and external communications, fundraising and knowledge management. Vita policies will be developed through cross-organisation consultative processes, regularly reviewed and adapted to diverse contexts in order to support consistent application. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to adapt the way we work and communicate. Vita will continuously review and adapt working arrangements to the changing context, ensuring staff well-being is prioritized while enabling strategic objectives to be delivered.

A committed and well-networked team of Vita people

Vita is a dynamic, international team of skilled and highly motivated individuals bound by a shared purpose and core values. Investing in human capital will remain a priority for the organisation; staff will be supported to access academic, personal and professional development opportunities, while a talent management system will ensure adequate back stopping, succession planning and retention of institutional knowledge. Cross-country learning processes will be further formalized and developed to support learning and exchange between the Eritrea and Ethiopia country teams.

7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	▶
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	▶



Women in the workplace

Vita is committed to advancing gender equality amongst its own staff, Board of Directors, and those we work with and amongst. This commitment is reflected in our values. We will review the roles of women within the organisation and identify and enable access to the supports they need, to ensure they can overcome the specific challenges they face in order to progress their careers in Vita.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Vita's Revised Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Vita Board in 2020, which aims to further protect those we work with and among from coming to harm. The roll out of this policy is being supported by designated Safeguarding Focal Persons in Ireland, Ethiopia and Eritrea who will work with management to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and regular review, and ensure accountability and referral mechanisms appropriately tailored to local contexts and legislation.

Staff Wellbeing

The wellbeing of staff in the workplace, whether that be at home, in the office or out among the communities we work with, shall be protected and promoted across Vita. Guided by regular Wellness Audits and a culture of openness and honesty, we will ensure a supportive and harmonious working

environment is cultivated and maintained across the organisation, from front-line staff through to the Vita board.

Safety and Security

The safety and security of Vita staff and those we work with and among is of paramount importance to the organisation. This includes partners and third parties engaged in our work at the invitation of Vita. Safety and security protocols will be continuously reviewed to ensure they are commensurate with evolving risks in each country of operation.



7. Our Strategic Objectives contd/.

7.1 Programmes	▶
7.1.1 Country Programmes	▶
7.2 New Business Development	▶
7.3 Fundraising & Communications	▶
7.4 Finance, Administration and Governance	▶
7.4.1 Governance, Risk Management and Compliance	



Effective and informed governance

Vita is supported by a highly engaged Board of Directors that bring diverse skillsets to the effective governance of the organisation. The continuous provision of insight, oversight and foresight by the Vita board will be maintained through assessing progress against agreed benchmarks across the strategy period, refining the Terms of References of Board Committees and a revision of succession processes. During the strategy period, we will also establish the representation of programme countries on the Board.

Risk Management

Vita's programme countries both present challenging operating environments in which diverse risks shift and evolve rapidly. Risk analysis and management strategies will be enhanced and reviewed in each jurisdiction throughout each year, and will be integrated into country strategies and annual business plans for Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee of the Vita Board will provide expert oversight of risk analysis and management across the organisation. The position of Risk Officer will be formalized in a more structured role working closely with management and board in the identification and mitigation of risks, while the review of risk registers at all levels of the organisation will be informed by and aligned to international best practice.

Internal and external policy compliance

The organisation's policy register will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with all policies at management level, and to inform the review of existing policy and the development of new policies as appropriate. Timely, effective implementation and roll out of policies across the organisation will be supported by clear delineation of responsibilities among staff, adequate guidance to support the contextualization and application of policies at programme level, and continuous monitoring of policy into practice. Vita will continue to ensure compliance with all relevant regulatory policies in each jurisdiction, and those required by donors and partners, is regularly reviewed and practice updated accordingly.



8. Accountability

Accountability to the communities we partner with

Vita recognises the considerable trust placed in us by the communities we work with. We are committed to being transparent, accountable stewards of the valuable financial, human and physical resources that enable our programmes. This means engaging

authentically and respectfully with the communities we work with in the Horn of Africa, and all other stakeholders, using means and mechanisms agreeable and appropriate to each.

Accountability to donors and partners

We are committed to ensuring that all information about how we mobilize, spend and protect funds is clear, thorough and available, and compliant with the highest regulatory standards in each jurisdiction. Our programme development, quality and learning processes, and our strategic partnerships, are all aimed at creating sustainable impact in the lives of rural households, and influencing wider adoption and scaling of innovations to reach many more people beyond programme target areas. This helps ensure Vita is achieving maximum impact with minimal resources. We continuously invite scrutiny of our programming outside formal donor compliance mechanisms, in order to constantly challenge our own assumptions and thinking.

Living our Values

We will critically reflect each year through a structured process on how we have invested in, lived and embedded Vita's guiding principles, and will make the organisation's six guiding principles, and will make any adjustments required in order to continuously reinforce them in our work.



8. Accountability contd/.



The Sustainable Development Goals

The organisation’s work is rooted in the overarching global framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This ensures we remain accountable to global efforts to ensure peace and prosperity for people and planet. Vita’s programmes contribute to a wide range of SDGs, including the reduction of poverty and food insecurity, and enabling access to basic services such as safe water and energy. Central to our work is addressing the challenges of climate change, and supporting the equal access of women to resources and opportunities. We will continue to monitor our contributions to the relevant global goals, including but not limited to those identified below.

Independent verification of carbon emissions savings

The climate change mitigation impact of Vita’s work on cook-stoves and access to clean water will continue to be measured and validated by independent accreditation agencies such as the [Gold Standard](#) and [Verra](#). These agencies continuously audit these projects, maintain a public register of CO2 emission savings and “retire” them as they are sold as carbon offsets. This verification process also captures data on numbers of people reached, litres of clean water provided as well as time saved by women and children collecting firewood.

Tracking implementation of the strategy

This strategy is designed in alignment with Vita four main business units that structure internal management and accountability processes. Under each of the organisation’s four strategic objectives, key activities, with allocated responsibilities and clear milestones to be achieved, will be tracked in the Strategy’s Implementation Plan. The plans of each function of the organisation will cascade through to individual work plans, so that annual staff work plans are clearly linked to relevant objectives in the organisational strategy. Each will report regularly to monitor progress against the plan, with a detailed Mid-term Review conducted in 2023. Detailed rolling plans and budgets will be produced, providing a rolling 3 year overall forecast with a detailed 12 month rolling budget.





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