



**ACF-INTERNATIONAL**  
**POLICY DOCUMENT**

# **ACF STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL INTERVENTIONS**





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# FOREWORD

ACF has been implementing programs to support smallholder farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen for several decades. The framework document on “Food Security and Livelihoods”, written in 2008, presents agro-sylvo-pastoral interventions as a way of strengthening food security on the same level as food aid interventions, cash-based interventions, income generating activities, etc. Furthermore, various practical guides on agricultural programs and self-training agronomic tools have been developed these past few years<sup>1</sup>. Given that the different types of interventions in Food Security and Livelihoods do not systematically result in strategic documents, why choose this strategy for ACF agricultural programs?

This document results from the organization’s will to bring a new impulse to agricultural programs through a partially renewed approach. The focus will now be on sustainable agriculture which reintegrates communities at the heart of decision-making. It favours the communities’ autonomy and improves food and nutrition security in emergency situations as well as in the long term. Advocacy becomes a tool serving farmers organizations to encourage smallholder farming and its contribution to nutrition security. Moving towards a sustainable agriculture based on agroecology requires important changes in our field practices, if not a cultural revolution for our field workers and partners. This strategy aims at supporting these changes by identifying the challenges and priority actions that we think essential from now to 2020.

# INTRODUCTION

ACF strategy for agricultural interventions aims to increase populations’ resilience to food crises and to prevent under-nutrition during and after emergency interventions.

It aims at improving food security and livelihoods of populations in rural and urban areas. It takes into account the basic needs of populations affected by chronic and/or seasonal undernutrition after a temporary shock. This strategy provides answers for emergency situations and proposes ways to push towards a sustainable and profitable agriculture that allows farmers to maintain their activity. It also focuses on building the capacities of communities in order to minimize the negative impacts of climate change and disasters on their livelihoods. This strategy is built around four objectives:

1. Ensuring agriculture rehabilitation after acute crises;
2. Increasing the resilience of small producers and agro-sylvo-pastoral systems;
3. Allowing access to a diversified diet;
4. Developing advocacy in favour of family farming.

These goals include priority activities and action plan to be implemented along with other ACF areas of intervention (Nutrition, WASH, MHCP, Research, and Advocacy). The implementation of the specific activities will come through projects focusing both on smallholders and communities most vulnerable to food insecurity.

1 - Low inputs agriculture (2011), Agricultural programs: from initial assessment to program implementations (2008), Self-training module Agro for beginners (2009)

# CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

One of the major challenges for agriculture is its ability to provide food and nutrition security for the world's growing population. According to a recent United Nations program report<sup>2</sup>, the current world population of 7.2 billion individuals will reach 9.6 billion by 2050. The strongest demographic growth will take place in developing countries where the population could reach 8.2 billion people by 2050. Because of its low agricultural productivity and its high demographic growth, Sub-Saharan Africa would then face a great stress on food and nutrition security. In order to be able to feed the world's population by 2050, the FAO<sup>3</sup> predicts that the global food production should increase by 70 per cent (and almost double in developing countries). Nevertheless, it is important to recall that, at global, the quantity of available food per capita is more important today than ever before. Globally, the issue of hunger isn't due to a lack of available food but rather to its uneven distribution.

This global food challenge seems even more significant knowing that the efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (especially those related to hunger and poverty) have not achieved expected results in the poorest countries. The FAO reported that in 2011-2013, a total of 842 million people, or almost one in eight persons, were estimated to be suffering from chronic hunger. This number can be increased to more than one billion if we include people suffering from seasonal hunger because of food deficiency during hunger gaps. The vast majority of this population, about 827 million of individuals, lives in developing and least developed countries (FAO, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of under-nourishment; more than one in four people are estimated to be under nourished. To these figures, one has to add those concerning malnutrition: 26 per cent of the world's children are stunted, 2 billion people suffer from deficiencies in one or more essential micronutrient (iron, zinc, iodine, A and C vitamins).

The rapid growth of urban population implies new challenges in terms of global food security. By 2030, 60% of the world's population are supposed to be living in cities, with 2 billion people living in slums or informal cities<sup>5</sup>. Urbanization goes along with modifications in eating habits. In general, city-dwellers have access to a more diversified diet containing more animal proteins. However, for the majority of the urban population, urbanization does not go hand in hand with economic growth and emergence from poverty.

Furthermore, the impact of climate change amplifies the already existing threats on livelihoods and food security through its immediate effects on food availability, accessibility and utilisation. Climate change primarily affects households that are already the most vulnerable. Today, most people living in poverty and chronic food insecurity are smallholder farmers and livestock breeders. A report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that undernutrition due to extreme weather events may become one of the most important consequences of climate change for many vulnerable populations (IPCC, 2007)<sup>6</sup>. This report predicts that, due to climate change, the malnutrition rate in Africa will increase by 25 to 90% by 2050.

On the impacts of climate change is added the pressure that unsustainable agriculture practices are having on natural resources (soils, water, and biodiversity). In recent years, the water and soil availability issue has been emphasized by the soaring prices of raw materials as well as land grabbing. According to a study of the Land Matrix project<sup>7</sup>, 83.2 million hectares of agricultural land in developing countries have changed ownership during the last decade, including 56.2 millions in Sub-Saharan Africa. At global level, agriculture uses 11 percent of the world's land surface for crop production. It also makes use of 70 percent of all water withdrawn from aquifers, streams and lakes (FAO, 2011)<sup>8</sup>.

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2 - World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision

3 - High-level expert forum: How to feed the world in 2050

4 - FAO, 2013. The state of food insecurity in the world

5 - Food for cities at [www.fao.org/fcit](http://www.fao.org/fcit)

6 - IPCC, 2007. Fourth assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change

7 - Anseeuw, W.; Boche, M.; Breu, T.; Giger, M.; Lay, J.; Messerli, P. and K. Nolte. 2012. "Transnational Land Deals for Agriculture in the Global South. Analytical Report based on the Land Matrix Database".

8 - The state of the world's land and water resources for food and agriculture: Managing systems at risk.



Despite the growing urbanization in developing countries, agriculture remains a powerful factor to reduce poverty in rural areas. The World Bank estimates that growth in agriculture is twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth in other sectors. Investing in smallholder farming should allow the poorest countries to better feed their population and overcome shocks caused by the variation of international food prices<sup>9</sup>. According to the 2013 report<sup>10</sup> of the high level panel of experts on food security and nutrition of the FAO World Food Security Committee, smallholder agriculture, when adequately supported by policy and public investments, has the capacity to contribute effectively to food security, food sovereignty, and significantly to economic growth, employment generation, poverty reduction, emancipation of neglected and marginalized groups, and reduction of geographical and socio-economic inequalities. Within an enabling institutional and political environment, it can contribute to sustainable management of biodiversity and other natural resources while preserving cultural heritage. Despite the obvious importance of agriculture in food security and rural economy, family farming is still not a priority for developing countries and their technical and financial partners who prefer “conventional” agriculture considered to be more “modern” and more productive (C2A, 2013)<sup>11</sup>.

On a global scale, there are, schematically, two diverging models of agricultural production systems and food systems. The conventional agriculture model relies on high specialization based on comparative advantages, massive use of private investments, promotion of technology, further market opening for global market competition. The system of production is extremely simplified. It is essentially based on the use of chemical inputs on a soil that is no more than a growing medium. The agroecologic model stands up against this type of agricultural development and pushes towards a territorial approach focused on enhancing natural resources (soil, water, biodiversity) and managing them sustainably. The model of agroecology focuses on investing in smallholder family farming and pursuing food sovereignty. Family farming includes all family based agricultural activities linked with various aspects of rural development. In its 2009 annual report, the International Assessment of Agricultural knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD, 2009)<sup>12</sup>, pointed out the negative impact of conventional agriculture practices and their indirect social and environmental consequences and puts smallholder farmers at the heart of sustainable agriculture and food security. In the context of agriculture, “sustainability” refers to the capacity of the agro-system to combine economic efficiency with social acceptability and the reduction of negative environmental impacts.

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9 - ONE, 2012. Agriculture [http://www.one.org/c/fr/presentation\\_des\\_problemes/3480/](http://www.one.org/c/fr/presentation_des_problemes/3480/)

10 - 6<sup>th</sup> report of the high Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, 2013: Farmers and Investors: Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security

11 - C2A, 2013. Agriculture and food in questions

12 - Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), 2009

# ACF POSITIONNING

The food, nutritional, climatic, environmental, social and economic challenges of agriculture demands for an efficient, social and ecological agriculture. The agroecological model seems to be the best way to address these challenges. Moreover, supporting smallholder family farming aims at guaranteeing a decent income for farmers which is a necessary condition to maintain farming businesses and to develop rural territories. Agroecology and support to smallholder farmers seem to be the best-suited way to fight against all forms of malnutrition and food insecurity.

Agricultural programs represent a significant part of ACF Food Security and Livelihood sector. The purpose of these programs is first and foremost to support communities in helping them meet their basic food needs either by their own production, or by exchange. Most of the time, ACF operates in countries where the agricultural sector is predominant and essential for the local economy. Supporting local agriculture is therefore a major challenge, especially for populations facing food insecurity and that are vulnerable to hunger. It allows the restoration of the productive capacities as well as sustainable access to food.

ACF mandate is to fight against hunger by focusing its efforts on undernutrition. Undernutrition results from interactions between various and complex factors. The immediate causes are linked with inadequate food intake and diseases. Food insecurity combined with inappropriate care practices and unsanitary and inadequate environment (limited access to health services, water and sanitation) are the main underlying causes of undernutrition. Since these causes usually relate to one or more of ACF technical sectors (nutrition, food security, health, mental health, water, sanitation and hygiene), ACF promotes and uses a multidisciplinary approach to prevent and treat malnutrition.

Consequently, it seems fundamental that ACF agricultural programs should not only improve agricultural production systems and food supplies for urban and rural communities affected by crises (natural disasters, conflicts, insecurity, soaring prices, etc.) but also to strengthen these populations' and systems' to become more resilient to shocks and stresses. Moreover, ACF agricultural programs deal with the issues of hidden hunger and micronutrient deficiencies through the promotion of diversified agricultural production and diversified diet. Lastly, supporting farmer-led and civil society organizations are necessary requirements to make significant progress in the right to food and food sovereignty.



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ENSURING AGRICULTURE REHABILITATION AFTER ACUTE CRISES**

ACF has been working with populations directly affected by natural and/or man-made disasters. Droughts, torrential rains, floods, harsh winters, violent winds all reduce and/or destroy farmers' agricultural resources and threaten the functioning of agricultural systems by: ruining crops and fodder, killing livestock, destroying market and supply chain systems, etc. For ACF, it is essential to contribute to agricultural rehabilitation by offering adequate support to farmers to enable them restore their productive capacities, their autonomy and their dignity so as to provide to consumers access to foods that cover their basic nutrition needs.

### **1.1 - Understanding local agricultural systems: an imperative**

Before implementing any agricultural program, it is mandatory to understand local agricultural systems. As part of its agricultural interventions, ACF always recommends to use an analytical approach to understand local agricultural systems and farming practices. This analysis helps to determine how and why these practices have changed following recent traumatic events. It is important to specifically identify the links between the different types of agricultural systems and study their potentials and limitations. Therefore, spending time in the field with farmers and livestock breeders is fundamental to understand the existing production systems and to identify their characteristics: cultivation type, cultivation practices, livestock type, modes of animal stocking, etc. Existing adaptation strategies, risk analysis, farmers' decision making rules, production capacity, and food availability are to be taken into account in the proposed agricultural recommendations. Prior to any seed distribution and/or seed fair, a study on seed security must be conducted to assess local availability and access to seeds. This point is particularly important within the "do no harm" approach.

### **1.2 - Restoring production factors that have been destroyed and/or damaged**

ACF agricultural interventions aim above all at supporting populations in helping them meet their food needs either by their own production, or by exchange. These programs often include agriculture rehabilitation through the restoration of production factors that have been destroyed or damaged by: supplying small farming equipment and inputs when necessary, developing small-scale irrigation through cash and/or food for work approaches, recapitalization of livestock, etc.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 2: INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF SMALL PRODUCERS AND AGRO-SYLVO-PASTORAL SYSTEMS**

It is fundamental for food production, trade and supply systems to be sustainable. ACF mainly operates in contexts characterised by degraded natural resources and repeated natural disasters. According to the food security conceptual framework, food stability is the fourth and last of its pillars alongside food availability, food access and food utilization. Stability refers to the temporal dimension of food security.

### **2.1 - Supporting more sustainable food production systems**

Moving towards sustainability is vital for future food security and an essential component of the right to food (Olivier de Schutter, 2010)<sup>13</sup>. Through its agricultural interventions, ACF will further support vulnerable populations to develop and/or strengthen their agro-ecological practices in the restoration and management of soil fertility, promotion of seeds and plant materials suited to local conditions, and integrated management of cultural practices.

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13 - de Schutter, O., 2010. "Agroecology and the Right to Food", Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

To ensure sustainable soil fertility, ACF will further support the implementation of conservation agriculture practices (minimum tillage, permanent mulch covers, crop rotation, etc.) as well as the development of crop association and connections between agriculture and small-scale breeding. The use of chemical inputs, in particular synthetic fertilizers, will be limited to the strict minimum and subject to prior soil analysis. ACF will not distribute GMO seeds in its agricultural interventions. Access to efficient, resistant and locally well adapted seeds and plant materials might require ACF support through the dissemination of techniques of seed production and conservation as well as the organization of seed fairs and seed experimentations in farmer field. Integrated management of crops and livestock will enhance and optimise natural resources and production factors. It also helps reducing the use of chemical inputs that are hardly accessible and not considered a priority when other local solutions exist. For example, the integrated pest and disease management will result in a significant drop in pesticide use. Lastly, supporting agro ecological practices sometimes requires developing small specific tools that are well adapted to minimum tillage, sowing, small-scale irrigation and small-scale breeding.

ACF promotes local innovation by prioritizing knowledge transfer between farmers working in comparable agro-climatic and cultural conditions. The organization provides the necessary support for medium term changes through the development of: partnerships with local (producer organisations, ministries of agriculture, agricultural research institutes, agricultural extension services, etc.) and/or international actors, specific training programs and access to appropriate tools and equipment. This strategy will focus on developing production systems based on small scale irrigation as much as rain-fed crops. By involving smallholder farmers in agricultural innovation platforms at a local, national and regional level, ACF will facilitate the links between smallholder farmers and operational research activities.

Moving towards agro-ecological production systems, involving less use of chemical inputs, must be supplemented by support measures that will avoid increasing the vulnerability of smallholder farmers while the production system reaches its new balance. These measures depend on the context, and solutions are above all local.

## **2.2 - Reducing post-harvest losses**

Post-harvest losses are estimated at 25% for grains and may reach 50% for more perishable foods (fruits, vegetables, tubers, etc.). Therefore, they represent a central issue for food security. Poor harvest, storage and first-stage processing conditions favour losses, pest attacks as well as rot development (afatoxin and other mycotoxins) that may have a negative impact on nutrition.

In order to minimize these losses, ACF will support farmers' organizations to disseminate improved techniques and equipment for storage and processing. Developing small-scale community based infrastructures, such as silos, foodgrain banks and animal food banks, contribute significantly to the reduction of post-harvest losses.

## **2.3 - Promoting local supply chains and local markets**

Globally, smallholder agriculture produces more than half of the world food production, notably 50% of the world cereal, 60% of the world meat and 75% of the world dairy production<sup>14</sup>. In this way, it plays a key role in supplying foodstuffs for urban areas which are expanding increasingly. Short supply chains seem to be less sensitive to the fluctuations of energy prices and more global shocks. Additionally, they enable the economic development of rural territories in the South via a diversification of income sources for rural actors. Providing urban consumers with foodstuffs, especially vegetables, is envisaged through the development of urban and peri-urban agriculture as well as of short circuits of marketing.

Organizing the local production will allow assessing the economic interest in marketing part of the agricultural production and therefore strengthen smallholders' market capacities. The added value generated throughout the production chain is distributed among the various parties involved in the chain and allows paying smallholder farmers at a sufficiently remunerative price. Furthermore, supporting short value chains is consistent with the objective of creating diversified and resilient agricultural production systems. ACF will support cooperative

14 - Kremen, C., A. Iles & C. Bacon, 2012. Diversified farming systems: an agro-ecological, systems-based alternative to modern industrial agriculture. *Ecology and Society* 17(4): 44.



organizations to develop market studies, implement small processing and packaging units in rural areas and routing of the processed products. ACF will also promote information systems on market prices, such as mobile phones, and will push towards more remunerative conditions for cooperatives.

Lastly, ACF will investigate using social insurance systems for crops and livestock (index based micro-insurance, warrantage). Some other risk management tools will be assessed so as to reduce the risks of natural disasters, price fluctuations and the proliferation of pests and diseases. These systems can be supported by micro-finance institutions, NGOs or agricultural cooperatives.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ALLOWING ACCESS TO A DIVERSIFIED DIET**

Despite the considerable progress achieved in the agricultural productivity of some regions, the number of people suffering from hunger is still extremely high. Indeed, while, an increase in productivity expands the access of populations to wider food availability, an increase of the agricultural productivity based on single monoculture farming does not necessarily improve the nutritional status of these populations. Although the general strategy aims at ensuring good nutrition for food insecure populations, this strategic goal targets particularly the production and consumption of diversified foods containing vegetables, fruits and animal proteins. This responds directly to the “food utilization” dimension of food security. It encourages consumers affected by and/or vulnerable to important deficiencies as well as people lacking food diversity, to access the foods which they need the most. Most often, women are the gatekeepers of household nutrition, food security, health and care. Strengthening their role and their empowerment is crucial for successful results<sup>15</sup>.

In order to contribute more effectively to the further improvement of households' nutritional status, ACF agricultural interventions will implement the recommendations and the twenty principles listed in the FAO document: “*Synthesis of guiding principles on agriculture programming for nutrition*” (FAO, 2013)<sup>16</sup>. So as to implement these principles, ACF will work jointly with many actors such as ministries of agriculture, social affairs, health (nutrition department) as well as NGOs and community-based organizations.

#### **3.1 - Supporting the development of vegetable gardens, urban and peri-urban agriculture**

While food crops are considered to be fundamental for household energy intake, vegetable gardens can radically contribute to the reduction of deficiencies in vitamins and minerals for malnourished populations.. The diversified productions coming from these gardens should, first and foremost, be given to young children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. If combined with sensitisation to gender issues, child protection, support to behavior change and promotion of feeding practices, they will have a greater impact on malnutrition. However, it is also possible to develop garden activities with vulnerable urban populations, including displaced people that are cut from their traditional means of existence and from their income sources.

#### **3.2 - Promoting highly diversified production systems**

Agricultural systems based on production diversification favour more diversified diets. Crop associations and the integration of small-scale livestock within a farm will not only reduce the vulnerability of smallholder farmers to shocks and unexpected weather events, but also allow a better access to protein and micronutrient sources. ACF will also support production diversification through the promotion of fish farming and agriculture wherever local conditions allow it. Generally speaking, promoting agroecology fits perfectly into the wider objective of diet diversification.

15 - Kremen, C., A. Iles & C. Bacon, 2012. Diversified farming systems: an agro-ecological, systems-based alternative to modern industrial agriculture. *Ecology and Society* 17(4): 44.

16 - FAO, 2013. *Synthesis of guiding principles on agriculture programming for nutrition*

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 4: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY IN FAVOUR OF FAMILY FARMING**

ACF is committed to a work program on advocacy, aiming at influencing government decisions and public policies. One of ACF objectives is to place family farming and its associated models at the heart of the strategies for food and nutrition security.. Family farmers should be both the first beneficiaries and the main driving forces for these policies. To this end, ACF commits to taking action on the following objectives:

### **4.1 - Promoting family farming as an efficient, resilient and sustainable model of production**

Family farming is able to feed humanity today and tomorrow. Smallholder farmers must remain at the heart of agricultural policies. Upholding a diversified family farming based on fair and secure distribution of production factors is a necessary prerequisite for food and nutrition security. Family farmers must be able to sustainably ensure their families food and nutrition security. If supported and optimized, smallholder and family farming can achieve high yields with important added value per hectare. This requires farmers to intensively resort to family labour thus reducing rural exodus.

### **4.2 - Promoting sustainable production systems and food systems that guarantee the rights and interests of smallholder farmers**

Societal concerns on food quality and environmental protection have given a new dimension to smallholder farming. Agricultural production resulting from agro-ecological methods is becoming a guarantee of food quality for consumers as it provides healthy, nutritious food that is locally available. To fight hunger and malnutrition, ACF agricultural strategy will advocate for the rights of farmers and will promote good, innovative and sustainable agricultural practices.. ACF will report any act of land grabbing preventing smallholder farmers from properly feeding their family.

### **4.3 - Take part in national/international discussions and consultations so as to influence decisions in favour of smallholder farmers**

Factors causing food and nutrition insecurity are, above all, political issues of global concern. ACF will push for a more enabling policy and institutional environment enhancing global food security through the promotion of small-scale farming and sustainable agricultural practices. In this way, ACF will participate actively in various think tanks and forums on agriculture issues as well as in international political events and dialogues in order to advocate for the global governance for food security and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Taking advantage of its presence in more than forty countries in the South and its alliances with local NGO, ACF will develop coalitions to make heard the voice of civil society in favour of food security and nutrition.



# OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy is based on the ACF Food Security and Livelihoods policy framework that is included in the nutrition causal framework whose purpose is to describe the underlying causes of undernutrition. Because, these causes usually relate to one or more of ACF technical sectors, the operational implementation of this strategy will be realized through its integration into the different ACF sectors of interventions.

## 1. INTEGRATION INTO THE FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS (FSL) SECTOR

The main objective of the agricultural interventions is to fight hunger while improving the income of vulnerable households. Since agricultural interventions are an essential component of FSL programs, the strategy will be implemented according to ACF principles of intervention in FSL. The strategy will be made operational through various projects focusing on smallholder farmers and vulnerable households. These projects may be built on previous ACF-led agricultural interventions with positive results and up-scaled accordingly. They may also be triggered by new needs expressed in the context of country strategies.

## 2. INTEGRATION INTO OTHER TECHNICAL SECTORS

### 2.1 - Nutrition and Health

The various links between agriculture and nutrition show that agriculture can have positive as well as potentially negative impacts on nutrition. This strategy will aim at maximizing positive impacts while minimizing the negative ones. The operationalization of the strategy will come through nutrition-sensitive agricultural programs and will be based on the recommendations described in the ACF document: *“Maximizing the nutritional impact of Food Security and Livelihoods interventions”*. As an example, this will be achieved through food diversification by promoting family farming and nutrient-rich food, by improving post-harvest processing and management, by the biofortification of local cereal crops, etc. More generally, the impact on nutrition will come through multisectoral approaches and interventions which go beyond mere agricultural production.

### 2.2 - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Water being a major factor of production in agriculture, the operationalization of this strategy will be accomplished through a close collaboration with the WASH sector. This integration will come through the development of joint projects focused on water access for irrigation, flood protection plans, mitigation of drought impacts, etc. This joint effort will also encourage the restoration of soil fertility by using composting techniques and encouraging the re-use of domestic waste water (grey water). Lastly, training sessions on hygiene will be combined with activities related to meal preparation.

### 2.3 - Mental Health and Care Practices (MHCP)

Integration within the Mental Health and Care Practices sector will be realized through Behavior Change Communication. Special focus will be placed on child protection, reduction of workload for women and nutritional education. ACF often intervenes in rural areas where traditional beliefs are deeply rooted; these may have negative consequences on food practices. Emotional shocks following natural disasters and/or conflicts may destabilize behaviors. Collaborating with the MHCP sector will help to better understand the obstacles to good nutrition practices and identify the most appropriate actions to implement.

## **3. LINKS WITH CROSS-DISCIPLINARY SECTORS**

### **3.1 - Disaster Risk Management (DRM)**

Agricultural interventions aim at rebuilding livelihoods for communities affected by an acute crisis and also sustainably improve food access for rural and urban populations suffering from food insecurity. Strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households' and communities' to shocks and stresses proves to be essential for the implementation of risk reduction and prevention activities. The consideration of economic and climatic risks and the implementation of tools to manage these risks require a close collaboration with the ACF Disaster Risk Management sector.

### **3.2 - Research**

The implementation of the strategy will have to be realized alongside operational research. This operational research will focus on a series of topics related to agriculture and nutrition. To do so, ACF will develop scientific partnerships with research institutions and actors in agricultural research for development as well as agricultural extension services in areas where it operates. A special focus will be placed on promoting local innovation within farmer field schools. The final objective is to identify efficient agricultural interventions regarding food and nutrition security in favour of vulnerable populations.

### **3.3 - Advocacy**

Advocacy work will be realized through ACF involvement in partnerships with associations or organizations active in advocacy, on various agricultural subjects and/or in the protection of smallholder farmers' rights. This advocacy work will also imply a sound knowledge of the local context and political obstacles, and capacity building of civil society so as to influence public policies on food and agriculture issues.

## **4. DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS**

The implementation of this strategy will come through partnerships with local stakeholders such as agriculture, health and social affairs ministries as well as producer organisations, NGOs and community-based organisations. Collaborations with networks and associations advocating for a sustainable agriculture will also be developed.

## **5. GENDER**

Within the operationalisation of the strategy, the gender issue will be integrated into agricultural programs based upon ACF Gender Policy. This document provides basic principles for a better integration of gender issues within different ACF programs. Given that the gender issue is an issue transdisciplinary to all the other ACF sectors of interventions, , it has to be taken into account at any level of integration and operational implementation of the strategy.

## GLOSSARY

### Agroecology

Agroecology is both a scientific discipline and an agricultural approach based on a set of practices. As a scientific discipline, agroecology is the science of applying ecological concepts and principles to the study, design and management of sustainable agro-ecosystems (IAASTD, 2009)<sup>17</sup>. As a set of agricultural practices, agroecology seeks to improve agricultural systems by mimicking natural processes, thus creating beneficial biological interactions and synergies among the components of the agro-ecosystem. Agroecology is not just a scientific discipline and a set of agricultural practices; it also encompasses social, environmental, economic and political dimensions (Levard and Appolin, 2012<sup>18</sup>; Stassart et al., 2012<sup>19</sup>).

### Conservation agriculture

According to the FAO's definition<sup>20</sup>, conservation agriculture is an approach to managing agro-ecosystems for improved and sustained productivity, increased profits and food security while preserving and enhancing the resource base and the environment. Conservation agriculture is characterized by three linked principles, namely: Continuous minimum mechanical soil disturbance (in some cases like direct seeding there is no tillage); Permanent organic soil cover (straw); Diversification of crop species cultivated in sequences and/or associations.

### Family farming

The concept of family farming refers to a means of organizing agricultural production which is managed by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour. The family is considered to be a production unit and a consumer as well as a source of labour. As a result, the farm's production and family aspects are closely related. Family farming is carried out by families (one or more households) whose agricultural activities generate a significant part of their livelihoods and income - in cash or in kind (AFD, 2014<sup>21</sup>; Cirad, 2013<sup>22</sup>).

### Food security

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (CSA, 2012)<sup>23</sup>. Food security relies on four main components: availability, access, utilization and stability. **“Availability”** refers to the availability of sufficient food quantities of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or importation (including food aid). **“Access”** refers to the physical and economic access to food. **“Utilization”** integrates water quality, sanitation and nutritional quality as well as food distribution within the household. **“Stability”** exists when the other three dimensions are verified over time.

### Industrial agriculture

Industrial agriculture<sup>24</sup> or “modern” agriculture refers to any type of industrialisation of agricultural production systems. Industrialisation methods are biotechnological, economic and political. This system is supported by ongoing innovation in agricultural machinery and farming methods, genetic technology, techniques for achieving economies of scale, creation of new consumption markets, use of patents on genetic data and trade globalisation.

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17 - Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), 2009

18 - Levard et Appolin, 2013. How and why agroecology can meet the challenges of the 21st century?

19 - Stassart et al., 2012. Agroecology: pathway and potential For a transition to sustainable food systems

20 - FAO, 2014. What is conservation agriculture? <http://www.fao.org/ag/ca/fr/1a.html>

21 - AFD: 2014: Year of Family farming

22 - Cirad, 2013. Family farming around the world

23 - CSA, 2012. Committee on Food Security. <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/fr/>

24 - Industrial agriculture. [http://fr.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agriculture\\_industrielle&oldid=92522505](http://fr.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agriculture_industrielle&oldid=92522505)

## Nutrition security

Nutrition security exists when food security is combined with a sanitary environment, adequate health services, and proper care and feeding practices to ensure a healthy and active life for all household members (CSA, 2012).

## Nutrition-sensitive agriculture

According to the FAO<sup>25</sup>, nutrition-sensitive agriculture is an agricultural development approach that advocates for the incorporation of explicit nutrition objectives into agriculture, health, education, economic and social protection policies. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture narrows the “nutrition gap” between actually available foodstuffs and foodstuffs needed to be available for good nutrition. It does this by increasing year round availability, access to and consumption of a diverse range of foods necessary for a healthy diet (FAO).

## Organic agriculture

Organic agriculture is an agriculture which is mainly characterized by the absence of use of chemical inputs in farms. It is a farming model that advocates the respect for the living and natural cycles through a production model respectful for the environment and animal well-being.

## Integrated (or “reasoned agriculture”)

Integrated (or reasoned) agriculture is a comprehensive approach to managing agricultural systems focusing on strengthening the positive environmental impacts of agricultural practices and mitigating the negative ones without compromising the farm’s profitability (Berton et al., 2012)<sup>26</sup>.

## Resilience

Resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions (IRIN, 2013)<sup>27</sup>.

## Sustainable agriculture

Just as sustainable development, sustainable agriculture promotes the respect of the environment and integrates the social, economic and political dimensions of human lives. In its widest sense, sustainable agriculture is an approach that aims at bringing together agricultural development and environment protection (TRAME, 2010)<sup>28</sup>.

## Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It relies on three principles: economic development, social development and environment protection (WCED, 2012)<sup>29</sup>.

25 - FAO. <http://www.fao.org/food/une-agriculture-sensible-aux-enjeux-nutritionnels-et-des-approches-fondees-sur-lalimentation/fr/>

26 - Berton, S. et al., 2012. Agroecology, a transition towards sustainable livelihoods and development

27 - IRIN, 2013. Understanding resilience. <http://www.irinnews.org/fr/report/97640/comprendre-la-r%C3%A9silience>

28 - TRAME, 2010. Agriculture Ecologiquement Intensive: Un nouveau cap Travaux et Innovations N°170.

29 - WCED, 2012. World Commission on Environment and Development [[www.unescap.org/drapad/vc/orientation/awareness/sustainable\\_development/sd\\_definition.htm](http://www.unescap.org/drapad/vc/orientation/awareness/sustainable_development/sd_definition.htm)]



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