



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2019**

1. The Strategic Planning Process

The previous five-year strategic plan for SOS Sahel Sudan covered the period up to 31 December 2014. Therefore, the Executive Committee has decided to develop a new five-year strategic plan to be ready for implementation as from January 2015. The process was developed and agreed upon with the SOS Sahel Sudan strategic management team, and guided by Terms of Reference. The ToR were developed for external facilitation of the strategic planning process, and to ensure adherence to SOS Sahel Sudan's values: participatory and cross-learning and to approaches that recognise the important role of communities in decision making, implementation and monitoring; engagement of women and youth on decisions affecting their lives; fostering of effective partnerships with other actors; and knowledge production and sharing.

The strategic planning process included the following tasks, to assure a participatory process and ownership of the strategic planning process and product by SOS Sahel and its target communities and stakeholders:

- Desk research and writing of an up-to-date paper on contextual realities of Sudan
- Review of the previous strategic plan and of performance and evaluation reports and other relevant documents;
- Interviewing of key informants, particularly the strategic management team of SOS Sahel Sudan and the staff leading the programmes at state and community level;
- Strategic planning workshops, attended by the leaders of the SOS Sahel Sudan board of directors, by staff from different Sudanese regions, and by representatives from donor and partner organisations;
- Development of drafts, obtaining inputs and comments from the SOS Sahel Sudan strategic management team, and incorporating these into the production of the final strategic plan document.

The process was well informed by knowledge and data available from different sources on the Sudanese context. There was also rich information and knowledge held by SOS Sahel Sudan regarding its areas of programme operation. The contextual analysis was therefore well informed by the following secondary data sources:

- SOS Sahel Sudan's Executive Committee, advisory board members, and staff, and knowledge and opinions generated from various consultation meetings and workshops with partner organisations and target populations;
- Research papers by academics and consultants' reports on conflicts, poverty profiles, vulnerability surveys, and similar;

- Reports from UNDP, UN Women, and other UN agencies, on the MDGs, gender inequality, country analysis, and humanitarian agency situation reports (e.g. from UN-OCHA);
- National Government policies and priorities (including Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers);
- Donor funding trends and priorities, and donor country strategy papers.

The detailed methodology included but was not limited to the following:

- Review of the previous strategic plan document: its relevance to context, applicability, achievements, and lessons learned;
- Context analysis: scanning of the external environment of SOS Sahel Sudan (both nationally and in programme areas) including updates on context, changes and trends, enabling and disabling factors in the environment for SOS Sahel Sudan, opportunities and threats, and challenges for the future;
- Review of SOS Sahel Sudan's capacities, including both strengths and weaknesses: its governance system and institutional set-up, social accountability systems, approaches to participation, and professionalism;
- Interviews and discussions with key SOS Sahel Sudan Board members, staff, and representatives of key stakeholders, including a series of workshops and group discussions for shared analysis, capacity review, and decisions on strategic issues and choices, and the development of an agreed strategic framework.

2. Strategic Analysis: External Environment

2.1 Strategic analysis process

The strategic planning process included analysis of the Sudanese context and in particular of the regions where SOS Sahel Sudan has been operational over the period of the previous five-year strategic plan. This was to better understand the contextual realities and trends and to help identify the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing poor and disadvantaged women and men within the country and to determine what SOS Sahel Sudan could potentially do to respond to these challenges.

An analytical review document was prepared and discussed in depth, distilling key external issues faced by specific groups of poor and disadvantaged communities, that could potentially be addressed by SOS Sahel Sudan and its partnerships (existing or potential). This external context analysis established the key conflict, vulnerability, and poverty drivers facing poor and disadvantaged women and men and their communities in Sudan.

The analysis concluded that the most vulnerable and most disadvantaged are the rural people in conflict areas. Besides insecurity, they suffer more from destruction of livelihood systems, difficult access to and use of the natural resources, and from hazards related to climate change, from health hazards, and from gender-based violence. Women and youth within these communities were seen as the most powerless and had limited ability to participate in society's affairs. Both modern and traditional power structures were dominated by men and by powerful, politicized local leaders. Such power relationships are expected to be durable, hence contributing to ongoing processes of marginalization, inequality and injustice. This implies an evident need to help address the challenges and vulnerabilities that keep people disadvantaged and poor.

2.2 Sudan country context

Sudan, along with other countries in the Sahel belt, has suffered several long and devastating droughts in the past few decades, as noted in the 2007 UNEP assessment. The most severe drought occurred during 1980-1984, and was accompanied by widespread displacement and localised famine. The UNEP assessment also listed the erosion of natural resources caused by climate change as among the root causes of social strife and conflict.

The impact of historical climate change, as recorded in Northern Darfur, is severe: the reduction in rainfall has turned millions of hectares of already marginal semi-desert grazing land into desert. The impact of climate change is considered to be directly related to conflict in the region, as desertification has added significantly to the stress on the pastoralist livelihoods, forcing them to move south to find pasture, as the report states.

Sudan's development is hindered by regional and local conflicts. In spite of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) concluded in 2005; the Abuja Peace Agreement for Darfur (DPA) in 2006; the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in 2006; and the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) in 2011) sustained peace has not been achieved.

The independence of the Republic of South Sudan on the 9th January, 2011 has created a new reality in the country. More than 90% of Sudan is now within the world's drylands, where the impacts of climate change on already fragile livelihoods are particularly severe. The economic and financial losses related to the secession are substantial and have affected all sectors of the Sudanese economy. The country has lost some three-quarters of its largest source of foreign exchange (oil), half of its fiscal revenues, and about two-thirds of its international payment capacity.

The deterioration of economic conditions in Sudan since 2011, resulted in a sharp rise in the cost of living and enormous pressures on the livelihoods of poor women and men, especially in rural areas. Meanwhile, the secession of the South, the Arab Spring Revolts and the current crises in the Middle East, have diverted international resources away from Sudan, resulting in a hardening of the economic situation and curtailing of the Government's ability to deliver core services.

According to official data, 46.5% of the Sudanese are under the poverty line, with the share of the rural population in the total poor estimated at 75%. Regional variations between states are enormous, with the highest rate of poverty incidence (70%) being in North Darfur. Estimates¹ suggest that 13 million people in Sudan are chronically food deprived, and according to 2014 data² 6.1 million people in Sudan (around 20% of the total population) were in need of humanitarian support. The rapid rate of population growth (from 7.8 million in 1955/56 to 30.9 million in 2008) and its very young nature (47% are children under 17 years of age) reflect the increasing demands for food, land and natural resources, and basic social services.

In spite of rapid urbanisation (from 8.3% in 1956 to approximately 40% in 2008³), Sudan remains rural in social, economic, and cultural outlooks, with the majority (over 60%) of its population living in rural areas and pursuing livelihoods based on traditional rain-fed farming and pastoralism as the two fundamental economic systems and lifestyles.

Although constituting the majority of the labour force in the country (around 60% in 2008) and despite their vital role in the national and local economies, the food security and environmental viability of smallholder producers, and their livelihoods, are under

¹ *National Baseline Household Survey, 2009.*

² *Ali Zatri, Sudan remains important, Shafa Daly Newspaper, 11 Dec 2014.*

³ *Sudan First Population Census 1955/56 and Fifth Population Census 2008.*

enormous pressure, and a persistent state of crisis has developed with a bleak trajectory. Over the course of recent history, they have lost control over their lands, pastoral migratory routes are shrinking, and their rights of access to public resources including formal credit have been curtailed by socially irresponsible legal and policy frameworks⁴. Important manifestations of this crisis in rural livelihoods include food insecurity; severe conditions of poverty; decreased resilience to vicissitudes of nature and climate change; rupture of the moral economy that historically served as a defense against acute hunger and destitution; proliferation of resource-based conflicts; general stagnation of the rural economy; and consequentially very rapid rates of rural-to-urban migration.

Erosion of environmental governance in the country, in particular the multiple and parallel systems of natural resource management, the diffuse and ill-defined governance arrangements that exist, and the ambiguous and confused land laws, together with the erosion of community natural resource management mechanisms, have created a scarcity of land resources for smallholders, while setting in motion a progressive process of their alienation and marginalization. This calls for an urgent need to engage people in dialogue over access to, control of, and use of land and natural resources, while identifying mechanisms for negotiating the diverse interests of the state and the various social and livelihood groups.

Most local conflicts are resource-based, and involve conflict between pastoralists and farmers or amongst pastoralist communities, over land, water, grazing land, and forest resources. They also include competition within and amongst tribal groups over community boundaries, mining resources, and livestock routes that have become major conflict zones. The developmental costs of conflicts are high, involving human insecurities, erosion of governance, disruption of local economies, disrupting of development interventions, and political instability.

Sudanese women although play a major, but often under-recognised, role in livelihoods and the household economy; the overwhelming majority of them, especially in rural areas, are beyond the reach of basic services while suffering a web of inequalities of a socio-cultural, economic and political nature including limited access to land and livelihood assets, limited investment in social capital development, and limited representation in economic decision-making processes.

Civil society in Sudan has expanded significantly over the last ten years, with increasing presence of women in the sector. Although some aspects of capacity have been acquired over the years, CSOs suffer from critical capacity deficiencies including minimal organisational, advocacy, and social mobilisation skills, insufficient technical capacities in

⁴ *Livelihoods of smallholder producers in Gedarif State, Maan Organisation, 2014, Gedarif State.*

terms of relevant sectoral expertise, accountability systems, M&E, resource mobilisation, and reporting. Although it is visible and highly reputable as a professional organisation, SOS Sahel Sudan, similar to other national NGOs, operates within an environment which is characterised by many challenges, including:

- Limited trust of civil society organizations by authorities and restrictive systems, procedures and HAC laws at national and state levels;
- Recession in rural economies, protracted conflict situations, and degraded resource bases and local management systems at community level;
- Lack of direct donor support for national organisations and local communities;
- Tribal, regional, cultural, and ethnic polarization; weak community structures and a dependency mentality;
- Restrictive cultural perceptions about women and their roles in the community.

3. SOS Sahel Sudan Strategic Plan 2010-2014

3.1 Summary of strategic plan and programming

The strategic mandate of SOS Sahel Sudan is to find meaningful interventions to reduce the poverty of marginalised groups in dryland areas of Sudan. SOS Sahel Sudan has adopted innovative ways to secure the rights of marginalised and discriminated-against groups, to draw attention to poverty, and to strengthen the quality of development policy and practice via encouraging collaboration and participation of all stakeholders in sustainable solutions.

Since 2010, when SOS Sahel Sudan first transformed into a national NGO (having previously been the Sudan country programme of SOS Sahel UK), projects have been implemented in the states of Kordofan (North, South and West), Northern Darfur, and Eastern Sudan (Red Sea). The local contexts of these SOS Sahel programme areas are as follows.

Kordofan: Composed of North, South and West Kordofan states and consist of diverse ethnic groups with different economic activities (mainly based around traditional agro-pastoral production) live in in the region. Kordofan is well-known for hosting seasonal migratory routes of pastoralists, who pass through areas of settled farming. This shared use, combined with a rapidly increasing population, has been increasingly accompanied by insecurity, concentrated in some traditional grazing areas of the pastoralists. This has increased already existing competition over diminishing natural resources and thereby increased conflicts between settled farmers and pastoralists. Within this context, SOS Sahel Sudan has continued a programme begun in 2007 in South Kordofan, now entitled “Community-based Conflict Reduction in South Kordofan, Sudan”.

Eastern Sudan: Composed of Red Sea, Kassala, and Gedaref States, Eastern Sudan is a region of significant political and economic importance. Projections for 2011 estimate its population at 4.6 million (Red Sea 1.4m, Kassala 1.8m, Gedaref 1.4m), or about 12% of the national population. Most development indicators in the Eastern states are worse than the respective national averages and comparable with those in conflict areas of Darfur. Pastoral livelihoods in Eastern Sudan support only sparse rural populations but the value of their production to the national and local economies is great. Other major livelihoods are based on agro-pastoralism and crop production, mainly sorghum. The main features of pastoral areas in Eastern Sudan are high rainfall variability, scarcity of water, low natural productivity and extreme temperatures. SOS Sahel Sudan has worked to address the drivers of vulnerability, particularly drought and related food insecurity, and unmet demands for water, in addition to unprecedented gender inequality.

Darfur: Composed of North, South, East, West and Central Darfur states, consist of diverse ethnic groups with different economic and social activities. Over centuries, powerful and effective conflict resolution mechanisms were developed that enabled the native administration mitigated and resolved conflicts between farmers and nomadic pastoralists. Strong social solidarity and ties between settled farmers and the nomads also helped to reduce conflict. In the last three decades, environmental degradation; population growth and growth of animal herds; and scarcity of resources led to the movement of many large tribes southward and to settlement in land belonging to other tribal groups. This has led to further increased conflict over land and pastures.

In February 2003, conflict broke out in Darfur and hostilities have escalated since then between the Government of Sudan and pro-government militias on one side, and the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on the other side. SLM/A and JEM draw support from similar ethnic background, primarily from indigenous tribes who announced that they are taking up arms to protest the neglect, marginalisation and underdevelopment, and lack of government protection of the sedentary farming tribes against regular raids and attacks.

SOS Sahel Sudan has worked to address the drivers of vulnerability, particularly local conflict and shared management of natural resources, and unmet demands for water.

Pulling together the different aspects of the above three programme areas, the strategic plan for SOS Sahel Sudan for 2010-2014 summarised the organisation's work as follows: ***SOS Sahel Sudan works with poor and marginalised dryland dwellers in Sudan to promote their rights and livelihoods, and to reduce the inequalities they experience in the fragile environment on which they depend.***

SOS Sahel Sudan's strategic plan for the period 2010–2014 had the following stated strategic objectives:

- To work with rural communities to combat poverty to provide decent living standards;
- To promote environmental rehabilitation while raising awareness on climate change;
- To contribute to the reduction of natural resource-based conflict;
- To support rural women's empowerment for effective participation in environmental rehabilitation and the reduction of rural poverty;
- To build the capacity of community-based organisations (CBOs);
- To support disaster-affected groups;
- To support efforts leading to effective, sustainable, and rational management of natural resources.

SOS Sahel Sudan's programme priorities for the period 2010-2014:

- Focus on natural resource management (NRM) and prevention of conflicts over natural resources, for improved livelihoods and reduction of poverty;
- Enhance local and state capacities in NRM and conflict prevention;
- Enhance the resilience of pastoralists and farmers to the effects of climate change;
- Mainstream the participation and influence of women, youth, and pastoralists in programmatic interventions;
- Set a replicable model for the effective transformation of INGOs into national NGOs;
- Advocate for policy reform around decentralised land and water management.

SOS Sahel Sudan's projects have been numerous since 2010. To mention a few:

- Capacity building and strengthening of local NGOs and CBOs (Kordofan, Darfur)
- Water and environmental sanitation projects (North and South Kordofan, Red Sea)
- Livelihood and poverty reduction projects (Kordofan, Darfur and Red Sea)
- Community based conflict reduction projects in Kordofan and Darfur
- Response to risk and disaster management (emergency projects)
- Peace building and peaceful co-existence projects (Darfur, Kordofan)

3.2 Overall performance of strategy (2010-2014)

SOS Sahel Sudan's initiatives have been relevant to the context of Sudan and to the organisation's mandate. Natural resource management issues, livelihood systems of marginalised and vulnerable groups, water and environmental sanitation, and conflict reduction were consistently seen by people as their most important concerns for living in dignity. In addition, evaluation reports indicated huge successes in terms of achievements and results. Target populations showed clear evidence of positive impacts in relation to local peace building and improvements in their livelihoods. There are also some clear trends of heading towards anticipated impacts on people's resilience and capacity, and changes in institutional, legal, and policy frameworks related to natural resources, as a result of SOS Sahel Sudan working with its partners on an advocacy agenda.

In addition, audited financial reports, the excellent reputation of SOS Sahel Sudan, and the competences of its management, voluntary leadership, and staff indicate the efficient use of resources and effectiveness of its approach, reflected in achievements on the ground. SOS Sahel Sudan's grassroots approach, giving ownership of their projects to communities, remains an important cornerstone of sustainability for project beneficiaries. The points below highlight some relevance, efficiency, and sustainability dimensions in SOS Sahel Sudan's work.

- Diversification of activities: differing 'soft' and 'hard' activities and events have been conducted to achieve the objectives of the different projects;
- Trust-building with communities, government agencies, and donors, and promotion of grassroots democracy, through selecting participants for training and capacity building which includes components on ownership rights (such as, in local management of water sources and community forests);
- Building on past experience; scaling up and replication of best practices (such as the scale-up of natural resource-based conflict reduction programming from North Kordofan to South Kordofan, and subsequently to Darfur), while also adopting innovative ideas and adapting the project approach (such as use of community radio, and including emergency response and disaster risk reduction projects);
- Focusing on the main issues: the root challenges of agro-pastoral production, rural development, legal and policy reform, water and environmental sanitation, and rural development issues in Sudan, and enhancing people's capacity to lobby for change;
- Knowledge creation and use for sustainable development modalities;
- Special consideration given to cross-cutting issues: gender mainstreaming in all implemented projects; conflict sensitivity / 'do no harm' approaches in all conflict-sensitive areas; environmental conservation and human rights as related to issues of natural resources.

3.3 Lessons learned from previous strategic plan (2010-2014)

SOS Sahel Sudan's interventions are based on a three-way partnership of collaboration, which includes relevant Government agencies, the community (including CSOs and CBOs), and SOS Sahel Sudan itself. It is clear that successes of SOS Sahel Sudan's interventions are highly attributable to the following:

1. Close relationships with relevant Government agencies and with the community, including fostering partnerships with relevant line ministries and other Government institutions and sharing the responsibility for natural resource management with Government institutions and community-based shared management structures.
2. Close, fair and strongly trusted relationship with the community, maintained through: regular visits and meetings; staffing priorities based on local capacity; respecting local leadership systems; building and strengthening capacity of local NGOs, CSOs, and CBOs; fair choice of beneficiaries (based on participatory consultations) and contributions to solving existing conflicts.
3. Using of modern technology (media) in implementation of some projects (e.g. community radio programmes).
4. Building partnerships with relevant national and international entities, e.g. for the gum arabic belt project: the Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS); IFAD project implementation; and collaboration with ADO in Red Sea State.
5. Improved understanding of local context and commitment to community priorities (social accountability) and donor concerns (financial accountability) and to humanitarian principles.

4. Scanning of SOS Sahel Sudan Internal Environment

4.1 Overall performance

This section considers how factors internal to SOS Sahel Sudan produce a distinctive organisation, and how this affects the strategic plan. SOS Sahel Sudan's leadership, both volunteer board members and staff, embarked with full transparency on scanning and analysis of the organisation's internal environment, together with their partners including representatives of donor organisations. This included honest consideration of both positive and negative aspects: strengths and weaknesses, and so on.

As part of their review of the operational context influencing Sudanese NGOs (and wider civil society), the strategy workshop participants considered repositioning SOS Sahel Sudan strategically, as an organisation working in fragile zones and with the most vulnerable groups of men and women in Sudan. The tables that follow in this section shed light on the context of CSOs which definitely affects SOS Sahel Sudan in both positive and negative respects.

Despite the challenges it faces, the organisation has used its niche and strategic competences, working with local people and focusing on what most affects their livelihoods, navigating effectively and building solid ground on which to reposition itself as a highly reputable organisation working on natural resources and environmental governance, to help build people their capacities for resilience to hazards and sustainably improve their livelihood systems.

Within what can be a disabling environment, SOS Sahel Sudan's strategic focus should be towards working with others to initiate and execute possible responses of advocacy; to promote networking and partnership; to support capacity building at different levels including of the organisation's staff; and to search for different available technological options and to benefit from relevant social research and studies.

4.2 SWOT analysis

The table below and on the next page summarises the most critical strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to SOS Sahel Sudan, including institutional issues, management and staffing, programmes and projects, relationships with stakeholders and partners, and image and marketing challenges.

Issues	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. SOS Sahel Sudan as an institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well recognised and established NGO • Clear structure • Diversity of professional board members • Clear mandate • Accumulated experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-based funding • Reliant on renting of building
2. Management and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced staff, well aware of context • Strategic plan • Clear policies and management systems • IT/electronic capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear cut division between internal audit and financial management • Divergence between staff capacity and organisational growth and evolution
3. Programming and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well informed, drawing upon mandate and strategic plan • Relevant to context • Driven from situation analysis through participation • Dynamic/flexible and responding to changing realities • Focus on vulnerable groups in fragile areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs and demands of beneficiaries far beyond current programming • Tension between programme approaches: long term versus short term • Emergency response versus development
4. Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationships with stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variability in how different agencies understand “partnership” concept
5. Image and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulated experience and knowledge • Good practices • Good reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor dissemination of good practice

	Opportunities	Threats / risks
6. Opportunities and threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological revolution • Government and donor acceptance of SOS Sahel Sudan • Decrease in INGO direct implementation in Sudan; SOS Sahel Sudan can contribute to filling this gap • Need for SOS Sahel Sudan's experience and knowledge in NRM to be utilised and shared with other development actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of situation related to Government policies • Insecurity and inaccessibility • Dwindling donor support

4.3 Stakeholder analysis

SOS Sahel Sudan's approach of working in partnership with others at local, national, regional, and global levels has proved to be the best way to achieve success. The table below and on the next page summarises a map of stakeholders for SOS Sahel Sudan, including shared interests and how relationships have evolved and been put in motion. The table shows specific areas for capacity support and areas for improvement. There is a consensus that SOS Sahel Sudan has proven competences in organizational management, and financial and social accountability systems, and outstanding competences in management and staffing which make it a professional Sudanese NGO that can partner effectively and efficiently with like-minded and shared interest partner organisations.

Institutions	Shared interests	How we relate to each other	Capacity requirements	Specific points to be considered
Donors, UN, INGOs				
EU	Conflict, capacity building for CSOs, livelihoods, economic equity, environmental governance, rights (gender, pastoralists, vulnerable people)	Knowledge sharing, projects on the ground, monitoring visits, meetings, mutual learning, success stories, sharing SOS Sahel Sudan's strategies	Reporting, access on the ground, approaches and methodologies, M&E capacity, financial management capacity	Institutional donor, credibility for SOS Sahel Sudan, marketing and image, long-term projects

Institutions	Shared interests	How we relate to each other	Capacity requirements	Specific points to be considered
DFID	As above, plus WASH	Relations via INGOs (ZOA, Practical Action, Oxfam)	Institutional capacity of SOS Sahel Sudan, reporting, presence on the ground, M&E	Institutional donor, long-term projects
USAID	WASH, peacebuilding	Relations via AECOM and Concern	Reports, knowledge sharing, field visits	Short-term projects, in-kind mechanisms
UNEP	Natural resource management, environmental governance, CEAP, resource-based conflict reduction	Knowledge sharing, projects on the ground, monitoring visits, meetings, mutual learning, success stories, sharing SOS Sahel Sudan's strategies	Reports, research and analytical skills, presence on the ground and technical knowhow	Complicated funding agreement system make gaps between projects
Oxfam	WASH, capacity building for CSOs, pastoralists	Direct knowledge sharing, projects on the ground, reports	Assessment for capacity building, M&E	Gaps between projects
NCA	WASH, capacity building for CSOs	Projects, reports, meetings, workshops, visits, evaluations	Training for SOS Sahel Sudan staff, capacity assessment, reports	Strong sense of partnership
Practical Action	Livelihoods, peacebuilding	Joint project proposals, knowledge sharing	Institutional capacity of SOS Sahel Sudan	Development oriented

Institutions	Shared interests	How we relate to each other	Capacity requirements	Specific points to be considered
Community actors CBOs Pastoralists' and Farmers' Unions Native Administration VDCs Peace Committees Women's and youth groups	Community needs, capacity building, lobbying, peacebuilding, basic rights, M&E, NRM	Meetings, visits, projects, capacity building, assessment, awareness, M&E	Knowledge about the local context, high need for capacity building	Power analysis, monitoring of changing context, security, conflicts around NRM
State actors HAC MoA SWC MoSA Security Localities FNC WES	Legal status, technical support, access, movement, strategies of both parties	Technical agreements, meetings, monitoring visits, coordination, reports, workshops	Knowledge of government strategies, building relationships, institutional linkages, trust building	HAC and security departments procedures need special consideration
Sister NGOs DDRA, SECS, ADO, SOS Sahel network	Similar mission, vision, strategic objectives, geographical locations, donors/funding, capacity building	Coordination, joint projects, workshops, knowledge sharing, exchange visits, meetings	Public relations, trust building, lessons learned	
Private sector PDS, DIG, Golden Arrow, water companies, individual consultants	Knowledge, studies, technical know-how, training, capacity building, research	Professional procurement, advertisements, contracts, think tank meetings, reports, analysis, evaluations, meetings	Mapping of relevant private sector actors, trust building	

4.4 SOS Sahel Sudan's distinctive competences

Over the past five years, SOS Sahel Sudan has been able to position itself within the Sudanese Civil Society Organisation sector and has developed the following distinctive competences:

- Building on its long history in Sudan (as SOS Sahel UK, since 1984), an accumulated wealth of experience and engagement with Sudanese communities;
- A deep understanding of the Sudanese context and mutual trust with local and rural people;
- Engagement with local authorities at community and locality levels
- An inherited culture of wide recognition and admiration of SOS Sahel Sudan as an effective and efficient professional organisation;
- The SOS Sahel Sudan Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the General Assembly and senior management are highly recognised in the field and well-connected nationally, regionally and internally.

5. SOS Sahel Sudan Strategic Plan Issues and Choices

5.1 SOS Sahel Sudan strategic issues

Natural Resource Management (NRM) in Sudan and in turn, the rural communities whose livelihood systems depend on natural resources, suffer from huge deficits in environmental governance. Land tenure arrangements and related laws and policies regarding land investment, land use planning, land grabbing, and similar issues remain important. Traditional systems of land rights and tenure are suffering from systematic erosion and the available land is shrinking owing to desertification, fuelling local conflicts between pastoralists and farmers. In addition, land has been subjected to Government policies favoring petroleum production, mining, and large-scale commercial agricultural schemes.

Natural resource management is a key driver of the protracted conflicts seen in Sudan, and accordingly the ethnic tensions and latent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are commonly linked with conflict over natural resources. Drought and climate change hazards contribute much to rural people's vulnerability and act to degrade their resilience. Moreover, a number of socio-cultural factors, including tribalism and demographic dynamics, exert further pressure on natural resources and livelihood systems, further contributing to violent conflict. Historically, there was limited use of technology and limited productivity in rural Sudan; today, the proliferation of small arms and use of modern media and technology have aggravated the conflict situation in all fragile zones. Natural resource management is thus a key strategic issue, highly related to SOS Sahel Sudan's mandate.

Accordingly, the most important strategic areas that directly relate to natural resources and SOS Sahel Sudan's niches are:

1. Environmental governance, particularly the institutional, legal, policy and resource use planning aspects.
2. Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), including resilience, and early warning and response systems relating to climate change and resource-based conflicts.
3. Knowledge, capacities and information management (e.g. for early warning and response systems).
4. People's vulnerability and related demands for natural resources particularly livelihoods and water.

There are specific challenges for the marginalised areas and populations, which explain better the unprecedented challenges related to vulnerability of people in the periphery to political manipulation and political subordination by the core; the wide sense of socio-

cultural and ethnic inferiority and cultural subordination; and inability to control, access or use own resources; all leading to historical processes of impoverishment.

The poor and marginalised people are often exposed to events largely beyond their control:

1. Poor governance structures and weak institutional capacity and accountability of governance structures, which are unable to respond to people's essential needs and interests, including discriminatory legislation and policies leading to marginalisation of peripheral areas, regional inequalities, and exclusion of some communities and social groups.
2. Voicelessness and defenselessness of people owing to the weak asset base (social, economic, human and financial capital) leaving them susceptible to natural and man-made hazards (droughts, floods, climate change, desertification, etc), including epidemic diseases and threats of increasing HIV/AIDS prevalence (marked by limited popular awareness).
3. Protracted violent conflicts (political or communal) including intertribal conflicts and ethnic tensions.

5.2 Strategic choices

5.2.1 Geographic focus

SOS Sahel Sudan currently works in Eastern Sudan, Greater Kordofan and Darfur. During the period of the coming five years, expansion might occur in the cross-border areas between Sudan and South Sudan. This is necessitated by the fact that there is an apparent shift in population and economic activity from the drier parts of Sudan into the rich Savanna belt and thus intensification of resource-based conflicts in this belt. After the secession of South Sudan, more support to pastoralists and farming communities in Sudan's transitional and *tamazug* zones is required.

Cross-border issues with other neighbouring countries adjacent to SOS Sahel Sudan's zones of operation might also be areas for serious engagement. Challenges related to regional wars and climate change might create new realities. Regional initiatives and responses for disasters and risk reduction are inescapable. However, the expansion process will be gradual and manageable and grounded significantly in fostering effective partnerships with other relevant national and international actors as counterparts.

5.2.2 Thematic focus

Within this situation of multiple potential conflicts, SOS Sahel Sudan has identified the following critical areas for strategic focus:

- Strengthen responses at local and national levels and build the capacity of local state and local community actors to improve people's access to services and livelihood assets.
- Enhance people's capacity to prevent new violent conflicts and to support local conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives, working with diverse social grouping and livelihood systems.
- Build an effective synergy between humanitarian, recovery, and development work through building resilience for vulnerable communities affected by natural and man-made hazards.
- Empower civil society and local people's organisations to lobby for good environmental governance and an enabling environment.

6. Strategic Plan Framework

6.1 Vision, mission, and core values

Shared vision:

All people in Sudan *enjoy* peace and prosperity.

SOS Sahel Sudan's mission:

SOS Sahel Sudan supports women and men in Sudan to realise their rights, potentials, dignity and secured and sustained livelihoods.

Shared core values:

SOS Sahel Sudan is not based in one particular religious, ethnic, livelihood or geographic group and does not discriminate against or favour any particular group. Accordingly, SOS Sahel Sudan will adhere to and be strictly guided by the following principles:

Non-partisan Non-profit Rights-based People-centred Model of good practice Motivational Creative	Accountable Transparent Efficient Effective Results-oriented Tolerant and respectful of diversity Gender, environment, and conflict sensitive
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6.2 Strategic directions

1. Engaging and empowering rural communities to launch evidence-based lobbying and to advocate for good environmental governance.
2. Working with smallholders towards equitable access, control, use and self-management of natural resources and livelihood assets.
3. Capacity support and engagement with state and non-state actors at all levels.
4. Maintain adequate capacity for humanitarian action within a sustainable development approach.

6.3 Strategic / change objectives

1. Sound and sustainable environmental governance prevails in the fragile zones of SOS Sahel Sudan's targeted communities.
2. People enjoy equitable access to, control of, and use of natural resources and sustainable and decent livelihood systems.
3. Resilience is improved and long term and viable response systems for humanitarian and emergency situations are functioning and contributing to local and global efforts towards fragility and vulnerability reduction.
4. Local actors are enabled by knowledge, capacity, skills, and tactics to influence policies and practices that affect their lives and well-being.

6.4 Programme priorities (2015-2019)

1. Focus on Natural Resource Management (NRM) and environmental good governance.
2. Prevention and management of conflicts over resources and local social tensions.
3. Enhance the resilience of pastoralists and farmers to hazardous situations of climate change and other natural and man-made hazards.
4. Advocate with local people and others in alliances and networks for legal and policy reforms and programmes for land and water management.
5. Improvement of the asset base, reduction of poverty and improvement of livelihoods of rural people, particularly small producers, pastoralists and farmers.
6. Mainstream and strengthen people's own capacity to effectively engage and influence on issues related to their lives and livelihoods.
7. Set a replicable model for the effective and sustainable transformation of an INGO into a national NGO.

6.5 Approaches and ways of working

1. Concrete grounding in the 'M&Ms' model: approaches should be Manageable, Measurable, and Motivational.
2. Adherence to participatory and cross-learning and to approaches that recognise the important role of communities in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and ownership of SOS Sahel Sudan's interventions.
3. Fostering of genuine and effective partnership with other actors at different levels.
4. Knowledge creation, knowledge management, use and sharing for the benefit of men and women in Sudan.

Appendix: Logical framework

Strategic objectives	Areas of intervention	Outcomes
<p>Sound and sustainable environmental governance prevails.</p>	<p>Environmental and natural resource-related institutional support.</p> <p>Engagement of local and national actors on legislation, policies, and plans.</p> <p>Support for people’s capacity to advocate for decent livelihoods.</p> <p>Development of knowledge, information and communication management systems.</p>	<p>Local and national actors effectively influence legislation, policies, and plans.</p> <p>Legislation, policies, and plans are reviewed and applied as intended.</p> <p>People are involved, well-informed, and able to voice their rights.</p> <p>Information and knowledge sharing systems are improved.</p>
<p>People enjoy equitable access to, and control of, sustainable livelihood systems.</p>	<p>Support for livelihood systems of pastoralists, farmers and fishing communities.</p> <p>Development of modality and best practices for sustainable livelihood interventions.</p> <p>Reduction of resource-based conflicts and promotion of social peace.</p> <p>Empowerment of women and youth, with equitable access to, and control of, sustainable livelihood assets.</p> <p>Development and adaptation of viable technological interventions.</p>	<p>Productivity is increased for farming, pastoralism, and fishing.</p> <p>Best practices relating to sustainable livelihoods are adopted, and management of livelihood assets is improved.</p> <p>Capacity, skills, and knowledge are improved.</p> <p>People enjoy peaceful co-existence across livelihood groups.</p>
<p>Local resilience and response capacity regarding humanitarian and emergency situations are improved and contribute to reductions in fragility and vulnerability.</p>	<p>Emergency humanitarian support for disaster-affected communities (e.g. WASH and LEGS interventions).</p> <p>Support for resilience capacity and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of people vulnerable to climate change impacts, local conflicts, and epidemics.</p> <p>Development of relief – development continuum modality.</p> <p>Development of transparent, genuine and workable strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders at various levels.</p>	<p>People’s lives are saved.</p> <p>Disaster-affected people are able to protect and rebuild livelihood assets.</p> <p>Shocks are reduced and coping mechanisms adopted.</p> <p>SOS Sahel Sudan’s development mandate is recognised and acknowledged alongside its emergency role.</p> <p>Ongoing programming and funding link together relief and development efforts.</p>