

# SPANNA STRATEGY 2023-27

TRANSFORMING  
THE LIVES OF  
WORKING ANIMALS





# INTRODUCTION

**SPANA has a long history of successfully supporting working animals across the globe. But as we celebrate 100 years since our charity's formation, SPANA faces challenges and problems that are more complex than ever before, and life for working animals has never been more perilous.**

Rising global poverty and inequality, coupled with increased political and economic instability, are proving particularly hard on working animals. Owners are finding it harder than ever to care for, feed and even just keep

the animals who support them. The increase of global health risks such as zoonotic diseases and other issues, including the continued demand for donkey skins, are also posing ongoing threats to working animal welfare.

The situation is only being made more difficult by the increasing impact of climate change, which is particularly affecting countries that depend on working animals. Extreme weather patterns, natural hazards and food and water shortages are all threatening the lives of people living in poverty – and, the less income people have,



Tunisia

*'SPANA's strategy for 2023-27 outlines how we will rise to these significant challenges and evolve our work.'*

the harder it will be for them to recover from failed harvests, destroyed homes and health crises and, critically, support the welfare of their working animals. The World Bank estimates that by 2030, climate change could push over 120 million more people into poverty.

The increase in global challenges we face is matched only by the growth of volatility and uncertainty within the global economy. Demand for our work is greater than ever, at a time when SPANA is facing increased competition for support and funds. This means that SPANA will need to find ways to achieve more for the welfare of working animals without an equivalent increase in resources.

SPANA's strategy for 2023-27 outlines how we will rise to these significant challenges and evolve our work. Shaped by the views and input of SPANA stakeholders, including our supporters, partners, staff and other organisations in our sector, our new strategy sets our

ambitions to develop and expand our core activities and operating model.

Historically, SPANA's focus has been on ensuring the treatment of working animals in need, while seeking longer-term changes in animal welfare through the training of owners in animal care and the teaching of children in animal welfare. All of those activities will remain the foundation of our work. But as we continue to Treat, Train and Teach, we will also seek to Transform – through innovative new activities and strategic partnerships, we will transform the welfare of working animals, in a world where animals, people and the environment are respected and thrive.

Our new strategy will involve scaling our impact while maintaining quality delivery; demonstrating greater value for money; and using evidence to influence globally – all while improving the resilience and wellbeing of working animals and the people who depend upon them. In line



Linda Edwards

with the United Nation's groundbreaking 2022 Animal Welfare, Environment and Sustainable Development Nexus Resolution, our work will also reflect the interdependence between animals, people and the environment, as we strive to improve working animal welfare.

Above all, our strategy will enable SPANA to deliver a true and lasting transformation in the lives of working animals across the world.

Linda Edwards  
Chief Executive

# WE ARE SPANA

SPANA – The Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad – is the global charity for the working animals of the world. Since our foundation in 1923, we have worked where they work, to support the welfare of working animals, including horses, donkeys, mules, elephants, oxen and camels.

## OUR VISION

is of a world where every working animal lives a healthy and valued life.

## OUR MISSION

is to transform the welfare of working animals in a world where animals, people and the environment are respected and thrive.



Zimbabwe



# THE KEY PROBLEMS WE SEEK TO ADDRESS

**Working animals have an essential role in low-income and vulnerable communities across the world. More than a billion people rely on donkeys, mules, horses, elephants, camels and oxen to do the jobs of trucks, tractors and taxis. In the process, these working animals allow people to make a meagre living and are vital to day-to-day life in their communities.**

Yet, despite the important role they hold in communities, working animals are often overlooked and taken for granted, and they almost always lead incredibly difficult lives. Many endure brutal workloads, and when they become sick or injured, there is limited or no local provision of basic animal health and welfare services. Even when local support services are available, poverty will often prevent owners from seeking treatment or care for their

animals. This lack of access to welfare services and resources, along with an absence or weak enforcement of local animal welfare legislation, is the primary problem working animals face today.

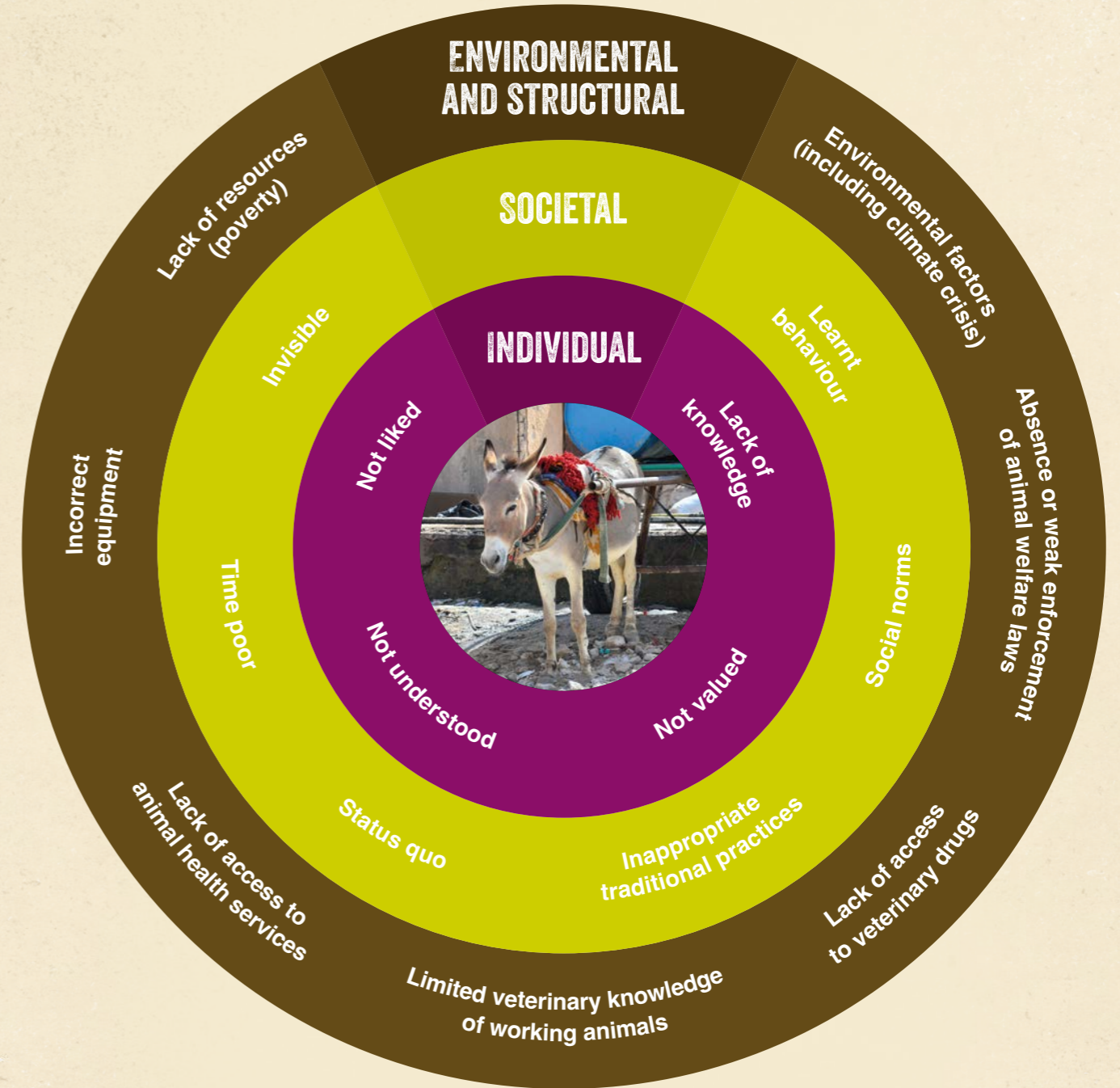
This problem is further underpinned by owners' lack of knowledge of good animal welfare. In the absence of knowledge, working animals often face mistreatment and neglect, as their owners ignore issues or try to resolve them through the use of inappropriate traditional practices.

Life for working animals will only become more challenging in the years ahead, due to the growing impact of climate change and environmental degradation. This impact will affect working animals both directly and indirectly, through the way it will shift how animals are used and the environments they live in. It will also compound poverty and underlying vulnerabilities in communities that rely on working animals, as well as expose animals

to new threats from poor air quality, plastic and toxic pollution in their feed and water.

The growing number of global and local crises caused by extreme natural events and human-made disasters is bringing further challenges for working animals. Whether caused by an earthquake in Nepal, a flood in Pakistan, a major drought in Ethiopia or a fire resulting from an accident or conflict, environmental/humanitarian crises lead to displacement of both people and animals, and compromised animal welfare. The impact of a natural disaster on working animals is often overlooked, even when working animals often become the invisible facilitators of aid relief in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Clearly, working animals face many difficult problems, which occur at individual level, a societal level, and an environmental and structural level. Our strategy aims to address all these problems.

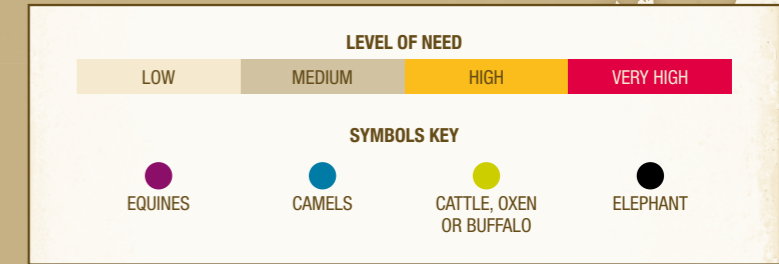


SPANAs global need framework has been developed to identify where working animal welfare would most benefit from the charity’s support. It will now be a key part of our strategic decision making, informing our work in order to ensure we reach the areas and species of greatest need.

Our global need framework has been developed using data from a variety of sources, to provide a guide for working animal welfare needs. It reflects elements which include country demographics, the global poverty index, estimated working animals populations, veterinary capacity, animal welfare legislation and the presence of existing support for working animals\*. Each criterion is weighted

based on importance in the SPANA context and its impact on working animal welfare. The collective score for each country will inform its position within our global need framework.

Our global need map illustrates the level of need for working animals by country, and shows the species present in these regions.



# GLOBAL NEED

While the global need framework has been developed using the best available data, it is important to recognise that local data relating to working animals is often limited. This means the framework can only provide an illustrative snapshot of the global situation. Further analysis will also be required to support the design of specific programme interventions.

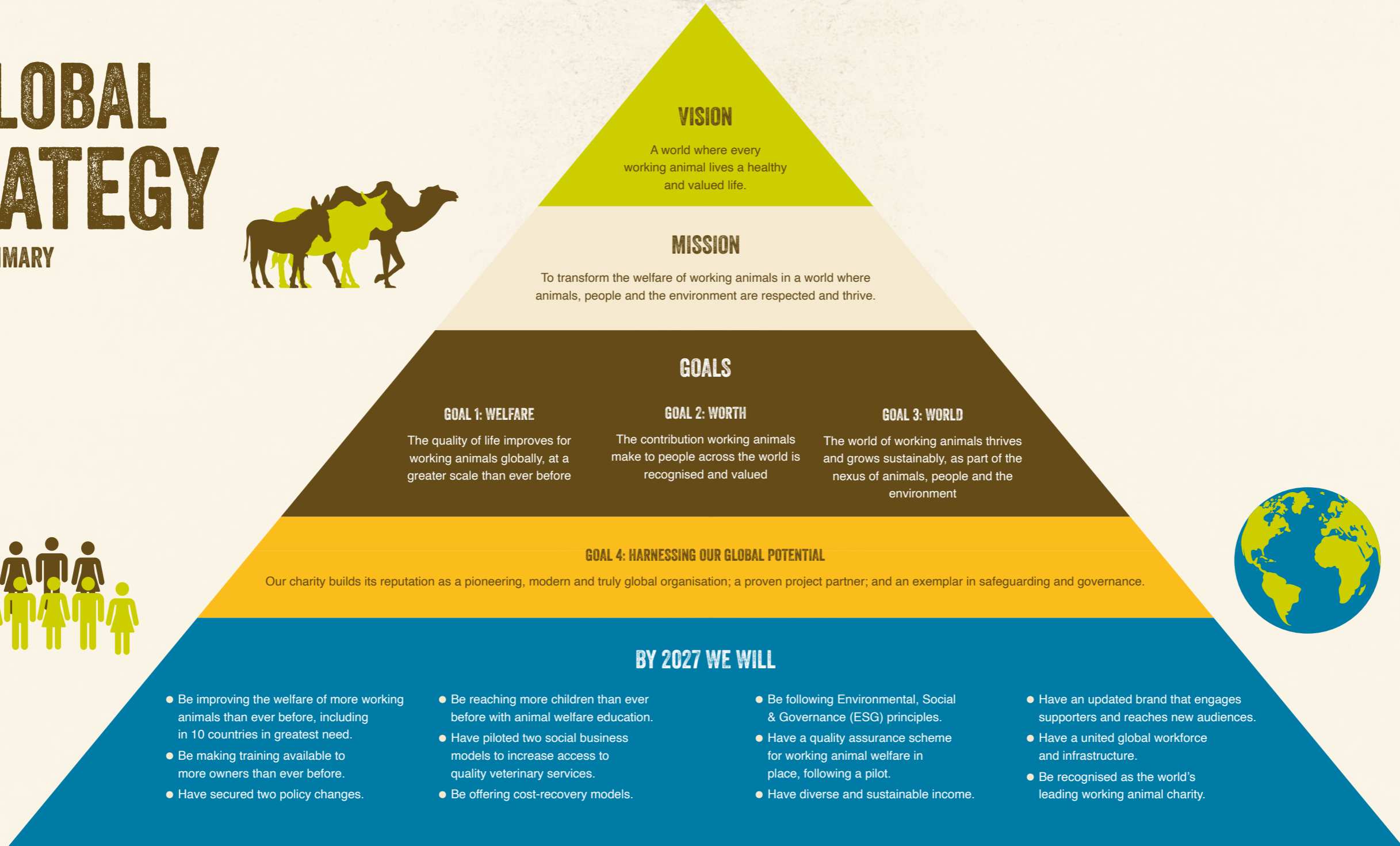
\*Data sources for working animal statistics include the World Bank, WOA, FAO and ICWE. SPANA uses globally recognised indicators to predict welfare needs. Population numbers are based on FAO statistics which do not differentiate between livestock and working animals. Gaps in the data exist where countries have not reported figures in their agricultural census.



**TOGETHER, WE WILL**  
**TRANSFORM**  
**THE LIVES OF WORKING**  
**ANIMALS**

# OUR GLOBAL STRATEGY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





**‘SPANA WILL DRIVE A LASTING, TRANSFORMATIVE IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR WORKING ANIMALS.’**

## **GOAL 1: WELFARE**

**THE QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVES FOR WORKING ANIMALS GLOBALLY, AT A GREATER SCALE THAN EVER BEFORE**

SPANA will drive a lasting, transformative improvement in the quality of life for working animals that builds on the conditions set by the five freedoms of animal welfare (freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort and pain; freedom from injury or disease; freedom from fear and distress; and the freedom to express normal behaviour). While the five freedoms establish the basic requirements for acceptable welfare, SPANA’s work will strive to improve all aspects of a working animal’s life – encompassing good health, adequate and appropriate food and fresh water; adequate rest periods; protection from adverse weather conditions, predators, pain, fear and suffering; and an ability to carry out normal activities, such as grazing and browsing.

SPANA will increase the wellbeing of working animals to a greater level than ever before. We will ensure that working animals are content and treated with compassion as described in the five domains, and – as a result – have a good quality of life.

To pursue this goal, SPANA will work strategically with partners and other stakeholders to radically build and extend our reach – in terms of both the numbers and species of working animals whose lives we improve but also in terms of geographical reach, including remote regions where there is greatest need. Our development and monitoring of new animal welfare standards will enable and support improvements to the quality of life for every working animal around the world.



Mauritania





**'SPANA WILL DEVELOP A RANGE OF NEW PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES THAT WILL REINFORCE AND BUILD AWARENESS OF WORKING ANIMALS' CONTRIBUTION TO PEOPLE'S LIVES.'**

## **GOAL 2: WORTH**

### **THE CONTRIBUTION WORKING ANIMALS MAKE TO PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD IS RECOGNISED AND VALUED**

Working animals are often overlooked and taken for granted, while their vital contribution to communities go largely unrecognised. They are sometimes referred to as 'invisible workers', their value to humanity not understood.

Across the world, working animals support communities in a wide variety of ways – from ploughing fields and carrying vital supplies of food and water, to transporting goods, providing services and getting children to school. During times of crisis, they also help and rescue people in remote and difficult locations.

SPANA will develop a range of new, holistic and self-sustaining programmes and activities and will reinforce and build awareness of working animals' contribution to people's lives, both now and long into the future. We will be the voice for working animals around the world, highlighting their value to humanity and the benefits of high-quality animal welfare standards. By doing this, we will also evidence the multiple roles that working animals provide to societal

wellbeing and building resilience, as well as their support to the economies of communities and countries.

Importantly, we will highlight that these incredible workers have the ability to feel a range of emotions and feelings, such as pleasure, pain, joy, and fear. Animals are sentient beings, and this means that their feelings matter. By building recognition of this, we will increase how working animals are valued and also further improve their quality of life.



Morocco



**‘SPANA WILL DEVELOP NEW AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING THAT BUILDS UPON OUR TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE IN VETERINARY SERVICES AND WORKING ANIMAL WELFARE.’**

## **GOAL 3: WORLD**

### **THE WORLD OF WORKING ANIMALS THRIVES AND GROWS SUSTAINABLY, AS PART OF THE NEXUS OF ANIMALS, PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Humans have historically exploited animals and the environment, while not recognising the critical interdependency between them. SPANA will have an overriding approach of ‘Do No Harm’, be that to the environment, people or the working animals we are here to support. We will aim to pioneer new ways to inspire, educate, empower and collaborate, to ensure we respect the interdependency with the ultimate focus of working animal welfare.

We will develop new and innovative programming that builds upon our technical excellence in veterinary services and working animal welfare. This will include diversifying our programming to build our support of local veterinary services and working animal welfare. Through innovative and dynamic partnerships with the development and humanitarian sectors,

we will seek to deliver truly transformative change. We will also aim to explore opportunities to partner with the private sector, government and academia, to establish new ways of delivering veterinary services – thereby making access to animal health care more accessible to all.





**‘TO DELIVER OUR STRATEGY, SPANA WILL WORK TO REACH NEW LEVELS OF INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.’**

## **GOAL 4: HARNESSING OUR POTENTIAL**

**OUR CHARITY BUILDS ITS REPUTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS AS A PIONEERING, MODERN AND GLOBAL ORGANISATION, WHILE DELIVERING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE FOR WORKING ANIMAL WELFARE**

SPANAs strategy for 2023-27 is deeply ambitious in its overarching goals to transform the welfare of working animals across the world. To deliver our strategy, SPANA will need to develop its organisational infrastructure and resources in a way that allows the charity to reach new levels of innovation, efficiency and effectiveness. This will impact on every aspect of the charity, from our fundraising and communications, to the management of global resources and our global workforce.

To realise our pioneering plans, SPANA will need to look to build its income generation beyond its existing sources. This will include trialling and developing new fundraising, social enterprise and partnership activities that span the globe.

Our strategy will also involve driving SPANA’s growth and development as a high-performance, collaborative, dynamic, modern, global and inclusive organisation, that has a robust global governance structure and clear accountability. We will enhance all aspects of our global operations with a new focus on environment and sustainability, as well as an increased focus on innovation.

During the lifespan of our strategy, we will develop the charity’s brand identity to ensure the charity can reach new global supporters, in a broader demographic than our current brand, while maintaining our existing supporter base. We will also develop our communications programme to have a greater global reach.



Mali



**WHERE WE  
WILL BE IN 2027**

**AT THE END OF OUR STRATEGY'S FIVE-YEAR LIFE CYCLE, IN 2027, OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- We will be **improving the welfare of more working animals than ever before**, including animals living in 10 countries identified to be in greatest need.
- We will be **making training available to more owners than ever before**.
- We will be **reaching more children with animal welfare education than ever before**.
- We will have secured **two animal welfare-related changes** to national policies.
- We will have piloted **two social business models** to increase access to quality veterinary services.
- We will offer **new cost-recovery models**.
- We will follow **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles**.
- We will have a **quality assurance scheme** for working animal welfare in place, following a pilot.
- We will have **diverse and sustainable income streams**.
- We will have an **updated charity brand identity** that engages our existing supporters and reaches new audiences.
- We will have a **pioneering global workforce and infrastructure**.
- We will **build our reputation as the world's leading working animal charity**.



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