

Charter

"Partnerships with Companies and Foundations"

Our values

Two billion people worldwide make their living directly from crop and livestock farming. As an association dedicated to promoting international solidarity and recognized for its public utility, Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières has been working since 1977 to support rural communities threatened by exclusion and precariousness. We offer them professional skills in crop and livestock farming, animal health and rural development, and we help raise awareness about smallholder farming in both the North and South.

AVSF provides support in the following three areas to smallholder organizations and institutions working in rural areas:

- **Development of livestock farming and animal health:** we work to improve how livestock farms are managed and to set up services for livestock farmers by creating local veterinary services and by offering training and technical assistance.
- **Sustainable management of natural resources and rural lands:** we work with smallholder families to help them gain equal access to natural resources (water, land, forest, pasture) and to create sustainable-management systems for families and communities.
- **Support for smallholder organizations in local and international markets:** we work to improve the quality of crop and livestock products. We help set up smallholder organizations and help them gain access to local and international markets, particularly fair trade. We also help them strengthen their position as economic and political players capable of competing with others in the sector.

Partnerships with companies and foundations

To underpin the development of smallholder communities and organizations in rural areas, AVSF launched an initiative in 2008 to seek partnerships with companies and corporate foundations. The aim is to increase and diversify its sources of financing and carry out projects to support such development. By adopting this charter, AVSF is continuing the approach it undertook eight years ago. We outline the different types of partnerships and—for potential partners—the conditions for implementing them, as well as the principles we seek to uphold in establishing and coordinating such partnerships.

The implementation of such an approach has led, and will continue to lead, AVSF to be rigorous in selecting partner companies and corporate foundations and in choosing potential projects for those partnerships to coordinate. The corporate world is very diverse with a variety of actors: private local, national and multinational companies in the growing social economy (a sector where AVSF is also active); the informal commercial sector (which is highly developed in the South); large public companies; and other government-run companies. To ensure that the partnerships will actually contribute to rural development, we need to make sure that potential partner companies will have a real impact on the economy, job creation, social well-being and goods produced or consumed. We also need to make sure that the principles and practices of such companies are environmentally friendly and that they respect the rights of the local populations and other legitimate players in the areas in question.

AVSF works with:

- 1. Companies in the social economy to promote worldwide this vision of a commercial system that is beneficial to everyone** and that respects the economic, social and cultural rights of each person as well as the sovereignty of each country. AVSF teams up with these companies to provide complementary services to the smallholder organizations and companies it works with or has helped launch. AVSF also seeks to utilize their expertise and experience in terms of participative and democratic management and in terms of keeping production factors in the hands of the people who will make good use of them.
- 2. Companies outside the social economy that are committed to corporate social responsibility and whose values and practices are in line with our own.** AVSF seeks to establish long-term ties with companies in joint initiatives for sustainable development to support local smallholder organizations. Through its work, AVSF also tries to help companies find ways to better incorporate sustainable development into their practices in the South.
- 3. Foundations whose values, missions and practices are shared by AVSF,** to provide financial support for the solidarity initiatives proposed by AVSF and to boost their impact.

Before teaming up with a company, AVSF uses an approach approved by its Board of Directors to analyze how that company's actions will affect the lives and rights of people living in rural communities subject to exclusion and precariousness, and how those actions will affect smallholder organizations and local people's access to natural resources. AVSF reserves the right to refuse to work with companies or foundations whose activities or practices go against its values and do not respect the rights of the local populations.

Types of partnerships and their objectives

The partnerships AVSF enters into with companies or foundations can be broken down into four main types, each with its own specific objectives:

1. **CSR & RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES:** design, implement and assess projects to promote the socio-economic development of rural areas; help companies incorporate sustainable development into their practices; learn more about the roles and skills of each partner.
2. **SUSTAINABLE SOURCING:** develop partnerships for supplying agri-food, textile and cosmetic/pharmaceutical products to companies while complying with standards for sustainable development, quality and fair trade and supporting the interests of smallholder organizations.
3. **SOCIETAL INNOVATION:** jointly initiate innovative projects to support vulnerable rural populations, such as creating agricultural and artisanal companies in the social economy.
4. **SPONSORSHIP AND PATRONAGE:** mobilize human, in-kind and financial resources to initiate or co-finance long-term projects that will have a big impact on the areas and people in question.

Our principles

AVSF's partnerships with companies and foundations must comply with the following principles:

1. They must be established in full knowledge of the facts and must **comply with AVSF's values and principles—which are laid out in its charter**—and with each of the stakeholders;
2. They must be designed, launched and assessed **transparently** with regard to the communities and organizations in question and to AVSF's teams, the company and any other stakeholders;
3. They must preserve the **independence** of AVSF and the smallholder organizations in question, whose freedom of speech, expression and action and whose right to withdraw from the partnership are inalienable;
4. They must **protect AVSF's image** and must not allow activities that are contrary to AVSF's values and mission.
