

Zurich, 26. Juli 2024

Introduction to the Strategy 2024-2028

"A world with sufficient and healthy food for all, naturally" has been Biovision's motto for 25 years - and thanks to strong partnerships and broad support, we made significant achievements.

Our vision has not changed - sustainable development requires long-term and systemic thinking, planning and actions at local, regional and global levels.

Every person has a fundamental right to a healthy and stable livelihood with access to adequate and healthy food. At the same time, sustainable food systems are key to overcoming poverty. With our core theme of "food security and sustainable, ecological agriculture" we are contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the international and national level. In Africa, more than half the population suffers from a growing food insecurity. Women are particularly affected, eating last and less, even though they do most of the work in agricultural and food systems.

In development cooperation, we continue to focus on helping people to help themselves. To actively and sustainably improve the livelihoods of the local population, we strengthen the independence of our partners at all levels.

In the coming years, our focus - in Switzerland, at the global level and in development cooperation in Africa - will be on transforming existing structures into a food system with a future: sufficient and healthy food for all, produced and consumed by healthy people, in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

In our 2024-2028 strategy documents, we present how, where, with whom and for what purpose we will use our commitment efficiently and effectively in a world in transition. I wish you a stimulating read. Thank you for your interest - and I look forward to a fruitful collaboration.



Hans Rudolf Herren
Chairman

Biovision – Foundation for Ecological Development

Strategy 2024 – 2028



1	Preamble	3
1.1	Biovision – Foundation for Ecological Development	3
1.2	Milestones in the development of the Biovision Foundation	3
1.3	Purpose and structure of this document	4
2	Our changing context	5
2.1	Globally	5
2.2	In Sub-Saharan Africa	6
2.3	In Switzerland	7
3	What we want to achieve	8
3.1	Our vision	8
3.2	Our role	8
3.3	Our impact targets	9
3.4	Our values and principles of action	10
4	How we work	12
4.1	How do we make an impact?	12
4.2	Our strategic initiatives	13
4.3	Principles	14
4.4	Where we work	15
4.5	Work with partner organisations	16
5	How we want to develop	16
5.1	Organisational goals	16
5.2	Healthy finances	17
5.3	How we address opportunities and risks	19
6	Annexes	20
6.1	Agroecological principles and “One Health” approach	20
6.2	Biovision’s general strategic partnerships, and more specifically with the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT)	21

Contents

1 Preamble

1.1 Biovision – Foundation for Ecological Development

Biovision is a non-religious, politically independent Swiss foundation based in Zurich with a branch office in Geneva. The aim of the foundation is to promote the conservation of natural resources for present and future generations. It supports projects in Switzerland and in low-income countries that foster the sustained use of natural resources under social conditions and at the same time seek to preserve the diversity of flora and fauna whilst encouraging and supporting ecological thinking and actions (article 2 of the statutes). Biovision is largely financially independent thanks to its growing patronage and diversified financing partnerships. Biovision is subject to federal foundation supervision, is recognised as a charitable organisation and is certified by ZEWO. Its superordinate body is the Foundation Board, which determines the strategic direction of the foundation, appoints the management and makes decisions on the use of the assets and on all other issues relating to the foundation.

1.2 Milestones in the development of the Biovision Foundation

Since its establishment in 1998, Biovision has pursued the ambitious, essentially self-evident vision of a world with enough healthy food for everyone, produced by healthy people in a healthy environment. Based on the realisation that the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment are interconnected, Biovision promotes ecological solutions for improved food security and income in sub-Saharan Africa and, thanks to its strong partner network, develops and fosters practice-oriented agroecological knowledge and action (Figure 1). Ever since it was first established, Biovision has worked intensively with the international insect research institute icipe in sub-Saharan Africa.

Over the years, further strategic partnerships have been added in order to implement and further develop Biovision's holistic approach. In 2009, Biovision founded the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), an organisation with similar objectives. Together, Biovision and BvAT pursue the common goal of transforming the food systems in sub-Saharan Africa according to internationally recognised agroecological principles. From a sustainability and self-determination perspective, this requires innovative strengths with local roots that are given the necessary support to develop.

In total, the Biovision Foundation's partner network comprises around 30 organisations in six countries (as of 2023). In 2008, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (IAASTD), co-chaired by Biovision founder Hans Rudolf Herren, called for a radical change in the way food is produced, in line with agroecological principles.¹ On this basis ("business as usual is not an option"), Biovision is committed to changing the relevant political framework conditions at national, regional and global level.

¹ See report: „International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science & Technology for Development“ (IAASTD)

In 2012, Biovision was the first Swiss non-governmental organisation to be granted general consultative status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 2013, Hans Rudolf Herren and Biovision received the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize. Since the publication of the IAASTD² in 2008, Biovision has increasingly and consistently carried out targeted advocacy work to campaign for the inclusion of food systems in global issues such as climate change, poverty and world nutrition at all political levels, for instance with the FAO, the UN Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC), the Rio plus 20 environmental conference (2012), and in the formulation and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, especially SDG2). In 2015, Biovision was granted institutional partnership status by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In 2017, Biovision created its “Programme Switzerland” and, in association with the interdisciplinary Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern, set up SDSN Switzerland – an official offshoot of the global Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The aim is to make an explicit commitment to the SDGs to complement awareness-raising work in Switzerland. Since 2019, an alliance has been in place with the Centre Ecologique Albert Schweitzer (CEAS) as part of the joint programme, which has received substantial support from the SDC since 2021 (programme contribution). A branch office was opened in Geneva in autumn 2019 in order to raise Biovision’s profile in French-speaking Switzerland and further expand its relationships with local and international stakeholders and partners.

Food system

The food system comprises all the related components and activities ranging from production, food processing and distribution to consumption, as well as all the substances that the system absorbs and releases for this purpose. A sustainable food system guarantees food and food security today without jeopardising the social, economic and ecological foundations of future generations. (Source: FAO HLPE)

1.3 Purpose and structure of this document

In times of rapid change, a strategy should not be a set plan, but must enable agile action. This strategy is therefore intended to serve as a guide for the organisation and above all for its employees. It explains the role they play in the current dynamic context, their objectives and the best way to achieve them. It describes who we work with and how, the way we want to develop as an organisation, what financial targets we set ourselves and how we address opportunities and risks. The strategy also serves as a guideline for continuing to develop our divisional strategies and for formulating our programme.

² <https://www.globalagriculture.org/>

2 Our changing context

2.1 Globally

The world is in turmoil, the balance of power and paradigms are shifting rapidly, and the general feeling of insecurity is intensifying. Ecological, economic, social and political crises are exacerbating and reinforcing each other, and there is growing pressure to act in order to bring about a fundamental transformation. The COVID pandemic and the Ukraine crisis have also raised questions about the resilience of globalised supply chains. Politicians, scientists and society as a whole are gradually acknowledging that food systems have a particularly important role to play. They are the main drivers of some of the most important social challenges of our time: hunger, undernourishment and malnutrition, widespread poverty, loss of soil fertility and biodiversity, water pollution and climate change. At the same time, food systems can be part of the solution to these problems if they are transformed accordingly. Biovision's long-promoted approach³ to agroecology⁴ has increasingly gained recognition in recent years.⁵



Agroecology

Agroecology as a holistic concept encompasses a scientific discipline, a set of principles and a social movement. From a scientific point of view, it analyses how the components of an agroecosystem interact with each other. It strives to achieve a transformation towards sustainable and robust food systems by applying a number of principles. Finally, the social movement emphasises the multifaceted role of agriculture in society and seeks to strengthen individual components such as social justice, cultural diversity and individual empowerment.

www.agroecology-pool.org

In 2021, an agroecology coalition was founded – partly thanks to the commitment and financial support of Biovision – which has so far been joined by 50 nations and regional unions, as well as 110 organisations.⁶ In addition, particular emphasis has been placed on the establishment of favourable political framework conditions and the redirection of investments to bring about a successful transformation. The UN Climate Change and Biodiversity Conferences are now also paying more and more attention to the need to transform food systems in order to achieve the relevant goals.⁷

The increased sense of urgency in politics, science and society has resulted in a rapidly growing number of initiatives, projects and networks for the transformation of food systems, making it difficult to maintain an overview. Agroecology is gaining momentum, but is also in strong competition with approaches such as efficiency enhancement, biotechnology, plant-based nutrition, etc. Previous rivals such as agricultural groups and wholesale structures are also increasingly recognising that sustainability must become a key factor in their future business models. Some try to open up new options, but often with “sham” actions. At the same time, they are often vehemently committed to maintaining their existing core business.

⁵ IPCC (2022): Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

⁶ <https://agroecology-coalition.org/>

⁷ <https://unfccc.int/cop27> and <https://www.unep.org/un-biodiversity-conference-cop-15>

2.2 In Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa, which currently comprises 59 countries, including nine of the ten poorest countries in the world, is experiencing the greatest population growth by international comparison. The population is expected to increase from the current level of 1.4 billion people to 2.5 billion by 2050. According to many development indicators, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) lag behind other regions despite some advances.⁸ Around 40% of the population in SSA continues to live in extreme poverty (less than USD 1.9/day), and more than half suffers from a fragile food supply. Women are particularly affected, but at the same time do most of the work in agricultural and food systems. The growing population of sub-Saharan Africa is young, the level of education is rising, and people are increasingly moving to the urban economic centres. This opens up new opportunities for income generation and for alternative approaches in the food system, e.g. through new economic relationships between producers and consumers. At the same time, inequality within regions and countries and environmental challenges are increasing due to the additional purchasing power and concentration in urban areas. Biovision's work in SSA focuses on the closely interwoven areas of food security, poverty reduction, health and the environment – in other words, the agroecological transformation of food systems.

As an important economic sector, agriculture is the central issue, but this has not yet been recognised by policy makers and decision-makers when it comes to state funding for research, innovation and training, nor in terms of sustainability, biodiversity and climate change. Structural challenges such as the ageing of farmers and the simultaneous migration of many young people from the countryside to urban centres (or abroad) are not being actively addressed by politicians. Smallholder families continue to form the backbone of food security in Africa. But it is precisely these families that are usually denied access to capital, advice and sales markets. Food systems are facing extreme challenges as the population grows, and demand for healthy and safe food rises as a result, as cultivation and grazing areas are being degraded by climate change and unsustainable production methods, and as political and social demands increase (e.g. with regard to prices, availability and safety).

Huge investments are needed in many areas, especially in food systems, in order to overcome these challenges. However, major international initiatives and the policies of many countries continue to focus on short-term, one-sided increases in yields by means of intensive cultivation methods. In addition, international players are acquiring land in sub-Saharan Africa on a large scale for export crops and, more recently, for the right to a say in land use for carbon trading, usually without taking sufficient account of the needs of the local population. In recent years, however, agroecology has also gained importance in sub-Saharan Africa. It is increasingly recognised as a convincing approach for producing enough healthy food with the means available without destroying the basis of life. Generating shared knowledge of adapted, environmentally friendly and resilient cultivation methods, and then disseminating and applying this knowledge, is an important aspect of this. Solutions must respond to the real needs of direct stakeholders. This involves strengthening local capacities, supporting institutions and civil society players in sub-Saharan Africa, and giving these players fair access to funds under their own responsibility so that they can determine their use for themselves. This is particularly difficult for donor institutions, as there is still an imbalance in terms of money flows which has an impact on external influences in Africa in favour of the North (industrialised countries). Africa must be given the opportunity to tackle the continent's challenges from its own perspective, on an equal footing with global partners.

A sustainable transformation is only possible from within. This requires a rethink – at multiple levels and in various sectors. Biovision sees itself as a pioneer and is continuing to support this transformation at local, regional and international level with its expertise and access to key players. This will allow strengthening from within (projects in SSA with local partners) and from the outside (in committees, institutions and on global platforms, where decisions are made on crucial financial flows in relation to development programmes).

⁸ <https://hdr.undp.org/>

2.3 In Switzerland

The political and social debate on the sustainability of the food system has picked up again in light of the war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, the rapid loss of biodiversity and the COVID pandemic. However, debates in Switzerland are polarised and sometimes polemical. Although the acceptance of agroecology continues to grow at a political level, it tends to be the focus of international cooperation rather than being taken into consideration for Switzerland's own food system.

In its “2030 Sustainable Development Strategy”, the Federal Council declares the food system to be a key lever for Switzerland's progress towards the 17 goals of the UN 2030 Agenda (SDGs). Consumption and production are also among the key topics set out in the Federal Council's action plan. Although the Federal Council recognises the need for action, reforms are being put on the back burner with a target horizon of 2050. This does not do justice to the prevailing urgency: the way we produce and consume (or waste) food is a major contributor to biodiversity loss, climate change, farmer extinction (get big or get out), water pollution and health problems, resulting in huge costs for society. Our current food system exceeds the earth's capacity to feed humanity. As Switzerland imports almost half of its food and animal feed, the Swiss food system is closely intertwined with problems such as poverty and environmental degradation in the countries of origin. At the present rate and with the current means, Switzerland will not be able to fulfil its promise to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

A functioning, sustainable food system requires not only a systemic food system policy, but also and above all the involvement of all stakeholders: the sustainable transformation of our food system is a task for society as a whole that should be driven by politics. All the stakeholders along the value chain (such as agriculture, processing, trade and consumers) must participate and pull in the same direction. From a scientific point of view, the goal must be to establish a food supply based on agroecological principles that combines economic with ecological and social interests across the entire food system. That is why it is so important to encourage politicians to be more coherent, to develop and implement solutions in association with companies, and to make the Swiss population aware of the connection between their own behaviour and its (global) impact. However, this last task is becoming increasingly difficult as media usage behaviour is changing rapidly, with more and more channels and less and less time to absorb complex content.

3 What we want to achieve

3.1 Our vision

Biovision is pursuing an ambitious **vision** that is supported by large numbers of people:

a food system that is fit for the future: enough healthy food for everyone, produced and consumed in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner.

To achieve this vision, which is based on a comprehensive understanding of nutrition and health, we urgently need a profound agroecological transformation of our food systems – from the field to the plate. With the “One Health” concept⁹, we combine the health of humans, plants, animals and ecosystems and add further dimensions taken from the agroecological principles¹⁰ (see Annex 6.1). We are trying to achieve climate-friendly agriculture that promotes human health, soil health, animal welfare and biodiversity and conserves the natural resources on which it depends. Healthy and varied food must be produced under dignified conditions and be accessible and affordable for everybody. The consumption of healthy, safe, sustainable and locally produced food helps make communities more adaptable and resilient. Food systems of the future must improve the living conditions of all population groups and offer prospects for young people and women in particular.

3.2 Our role

Biovision sees itself as a **catalyst**¹¹ for bringing about a fundamental agroecological transformation of food systems – in large parts of Africa, in Switzerland and globally. We are part of a growing ecosystem of organisations and initiatives working together towards systemic change. We define our **mission** to implement our vision as follows:

We encourage people to commit to an agroecological transformation of food systems and support them in this endeavour. Together we set levers in motion and achieve a systemic effect.

Depending on the situation, the core role of “catalyst” can take on different forms: mediator, bridge builder, facilitator, enabler, innovator, etc. We work with strong partners to advocate a holistic approach and demonstrate viable agroecological alternatives, we help promising innovations to spread, influencing our food systems and their framework conditions in the process. As an innovative, agile pioneer on the one hand and a solution-oriented, practical pragmatist¹² on the other, we help the affected stakeholders to develop joint strategies and create favourable framework conditions. We show that agroecological approaches work, and we encourage decision-makers to support them. That is why we consciously work at different levels, be it on specific implementation projects or at a political level.

We achieve great things as a relatively small organisation by applying leverage at systemically important points and working with a large number of strong partner organisations to apply pressure in the relevant areas. We motivate and empower our partners and the population to play an effective role in the transformation process. We capitalise on the momentum gained from the fact that a growing number of actors and people are committed to sustainable food systems, and we promote cooperation among them.

⁹ See definition of the One Health High Level Expert Panel by the FAO, OIE, WHO and UNEP.

¹⁰ <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/13aeprinciples/>

¹¹ In chemistry, the term “catalyst” refers to a substance that increases the reaction rate by reducing the activation energy. We use it in a figurative sense: we are enabling, activating and/or accelerating food system transformation.

¹² Acting practically and in a solution-orientated manner in support of a cause or a goal; not dogmatically or ideologically. We define the limits of pragmatism through our values.

3.3 Our impact targets

The overriding premise of Biovision's work is to achieve a long-term impact in line with our vision and mission.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Biovision helped to develop, provide a comprehensive framework for tackling the most pressing global challenges, ranging from poverty and inequality to climate change and environmental degradation. All countries are equally called upon to work together to solve the world's most urgent challenges. As an NGO accredited by the UN Economic and Social Council, Biovision recognises its responsibility to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our focus is on Sustainable Development Goal 2, "Zero Hunger" – ending hunger, achieving food security and better nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. We adopt a holistic approach to promoting inclusive agroecological food systems that help meet generally recognised social goals and offer prospects for women and young people in particular. In doing so, we make an important contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals SDG 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger: sufficient, healthy food through sustainable agriculture), 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 5 (Gender Equality), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

We make an impact by bringing about change at the most important leverage points for transforming food systems (see section 4.1). We use these leverage points to formulate our impact targets accordingly, creating synergies between them (Figure 1).

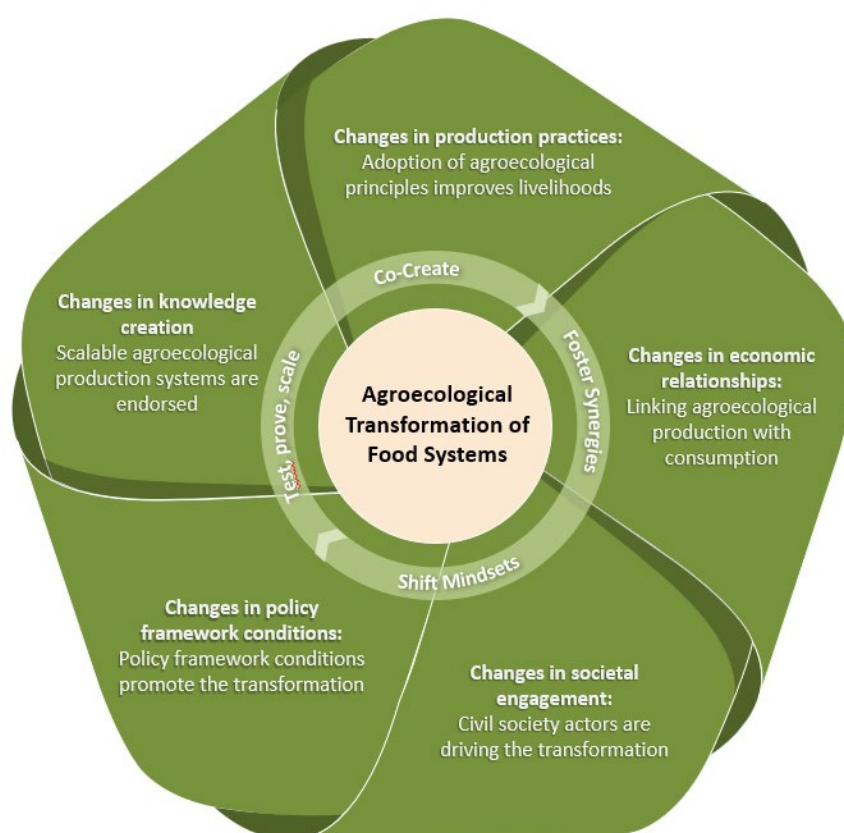


Figure 1: Changes sought at the main leverage points for an agroecological transformation of food systems. The inner ring shows the principles of the method for bringing about these changes.

Biovision has set itself the following impact targets for the 2024 – 2028 strategy period:

1. Scalable agroecological production systems are available: sustainable, participatively developed and scientifically sound agroecological production systems are accessible and can be scaled locally.
2. The application of agroecological principles is improving living conditions: an increasing number of producers and communities are applying agroecological principles in a self-determined way, thereby improving local living and environmental conditions.
3. Combining agroecological production with consumption: a growing number of companies and markets are successfully connecting agroecological producers with consumers.
4. Civil society stakeholders are driving the transformation: organisations and individuals are informed, are capable of taking action and are committed to establishing a sustainable, local food system – in a self-determined, empowered way both in sub-Saharan African countries and in Switzerland.
5. Political framework conditions are promoting transformation: strategies, laws, agreements and programmes at global, national and sub-national level are steering production, trade, consumption, research and education towards agroecology. The levers for the relevant large cash flows are set in motion by means of advocacy and corresponding networking.

These impact targets are defined with key partner organisations¹³ and as part of our programme in alliance with CEAS, and their achievement is systematically and regularly reviewed.¹⁴

3.4 Our values and principles of action

Everything we do in terms of ecological development is based on the following values and principles of action:

- We show solidarity and are committed to social and ecological justice – for present and future generations.
- We help people, institutions and societies to recognise interrelationships and to take responsibility for their own actions.
- We work in a participatory manner (co-creation) and treat our partners, patrons and target groups as equals wherever possible.
- We recognise geopolitical imbalances in our collaboration and actively work to redress them to promote a sustainable and inclusive future.
- We value cultural diversity and respect local knowledge because we understand how important the local context is in shaping the future of the communities we work with.
- We act holistically and endeavour to achieve systemic change.
- We build bridges and promote synergies between agriculture, politics, science, civil society, the private sector, philanthropy and international cooperation.
- We are a learning organisation, actively share our knowledge, try out new solutions and cultivate a constructive error culture.

¹³ For historical reasons, Biovision Africa Trust is a priority in the strategic partnerships in SSA.

¹⁴ Result frame with indicators and targets at outcome and output level; review as part of monitoring activities, annual reporting to the SDC.

- Our actions are based on evidence and focus on making an impact; we communicate honestly and authentically.

4 How we work

4.1 How do we make an impact?

Biovision pursues a systemic approach in order to set the necessary political and social course for food system transformation. This approach is based on the understanding that shifts in social systems are most likely to occur as a result of changes in awareness, in knowledge generation, in the relationships between the elements and in the framework conditions.¹⁵ To this end, Biovision's programmes in the food system address five interconnected leverage points (Figure 2). Moving these levers requires the joint efforts of a large number of players. We work with them to develop and scale up innovative solutions, harness synergies and help to ensure that women and young people in particular can take advantage of the opportunities offered by an agroecological food system (inner maturity in Figure 2). We pay particular attention to using examples to show that an agroecological transformation works and serves the goals of society as a whole: healthy people; thriving, resilient communities and a healthy environment. Biovision's work is based on evidence and builds on existing practical experience and scientific findings. Biovision supports the development of innovative approaches and relevant knowledge, which are incorporated into policy dialogue and awareness-raising work and shared with both internal and external stakeholders. By demonstrating this evidence, we influence social narratives in such a way that they further reinforce the desired changes at the leverage points by creating a positive feedback loop.

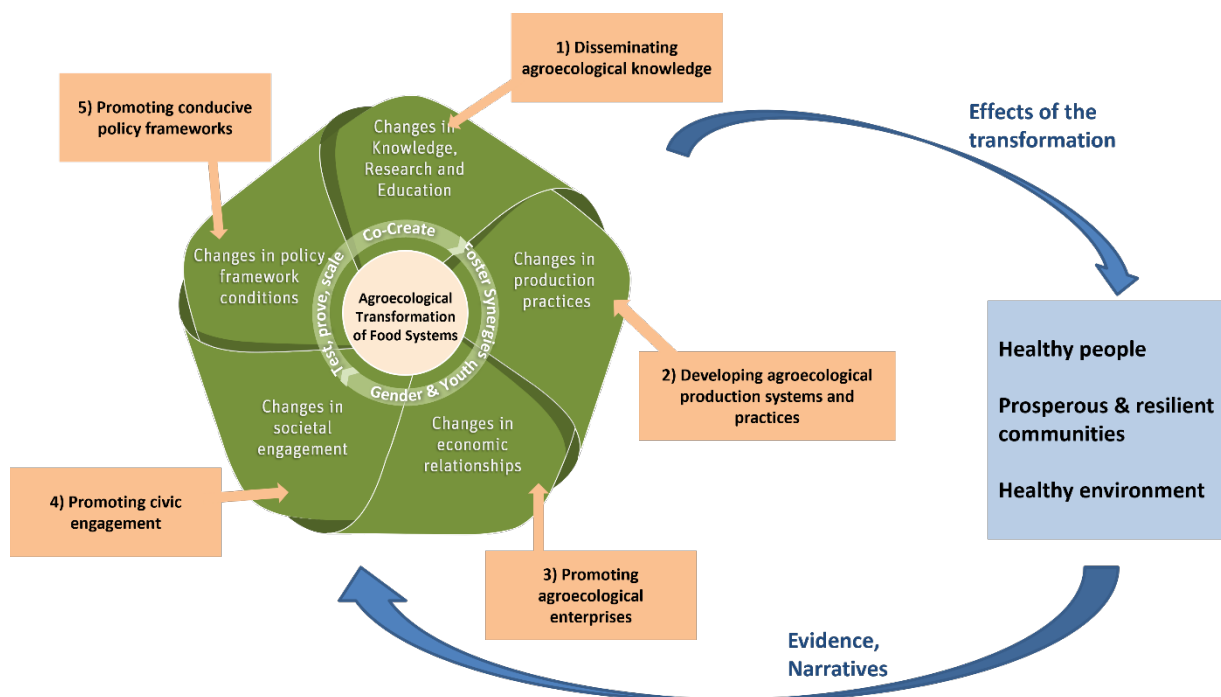


Figure 2: Biovision's "Theory of Change": using strategic initiatives (orange), we achieve changes at five key leverage points (green) in order to contribute to an agroecological transformation of food systems that has a positive impact on people and the environment. The resulting evidence influences prevailing narratives, which in turn reinforces the changes at the leverage points.

During this process, dynamic changes can be seen in the relationships within the system and in the context. Biovision therefore continuously reviews its actions, adapts them where necessary and learns from experience. Wherever possible and appropriate, we develop interfaces with humanitarian aid in order to be able to offer support via our local partners in crisis situations.

¹⁵ Donella H. Meadows (2008): Thinking in Systems: A Primer

4.2 Our strategic initiatives

In accordance with the five impact targets along the identified leverage points (section 3.3), and based on our “Theory of Change” (section 4.1), our work in this strategy period will focus on the following five strategic initiatives. These are areas in which we want to achieve substantial progress and make a relevant contribution.



1) *Developing agroecological production systems*

In close cooperation with researchers and practitioners, we support developments in agroecological production systems that significantly improve nutrition, health, income and resilience, and that primarily offer women and young people prospects in agriculture. Systems of production are tailored to the needs of local and regional target groups and markets.

- ➔ Main focuses: International Partnerships (IP): fruit and vegetable cultivation projects, projects for the diversification of cultivation systems and integrated animal husbandry



2) *Disseminating agroecological knowledge among practitioners*

We support knowledge exchange among practitioners and promote agroecological approaches through information, training and advice. We strengthen the capacity of competence centres and promote exchange between science and administration. In doing so, we generate a deeper understanding of factors that promote or hinder the implementation of agroecological practices and systems.

- ➔ Main focuses: IP: projects to disseminate knowledge and skills, such as the Farmer Communications Programme, or to promote competence centres and advisory services (e.g. One Health Clinics) and agroecological content in vocational and higher education



3) *Supporting agroecological enterprises and markets*

To better connect agroecological producers with consumers, we facilitate systemic changes in local and regional markets (relationships among market actors and frameworks that are more ecological and social). We help small and medium-sized agroecological enterprises to gain access to technical advice, labour capital and relevant networks. We motivate donors to invest more in such enterprises and in more conducive frameworks.

- ➔ Main focuses: IP: market projects, Policy & Advocacy: “Investing into the Agroecological Business Case” programme



4) *Strengthening civil society engagement*

We raise awareness among broad sections of the population regarding interrelationships in the food system (regarding environment – health – social justice) and the influence of their own behaviour. We support relevant national and regional civil society initiatives to transform the food system. To positively influence individual and institutional attitudes, narratives and behaviour (including consumption), we use concrete examples and facts to demonstrate that agroecological approaches generate added value for society and the environment.

- ➔ Main focuses: IP: strengthening and promoting local expertise – project development with partners for the self-determined implementation of transformative development projects and processes (e.g. entire project cycles). Projects to promote food system initiatives and agroecological civil society engagement; Programme Switzerland: awareness-raising projects; communication work



5) *Establishing political framework conditions for agroecology*

We help multi-stakeholder initiatives and policy makers to develop policy frameworks that steer the production, trade and consumption of food, as well as research and education, towards agroecology. In doing so, we show how agroecological approaches contribute to national and international goals (regarding climate, biodiversity, and social and economic development).

- ➔ Main focuses: Policy & Advocacy: achieving leverage in global financial flows in favour of agroecology “Policies for agroecology” programme; Programme Switzerland: political work in Switzerland; IP: Empowering strategic partners on the ground to engage at a political level in the relevant geopolitical and cultural context in coordination with national and pan-African initiatives¹⁶



Through our five strategic initiatives, we as Biovision want to generate perceptible added value and position ourselves on the basis of successful “flagships”. The strategic initiatives are therefore given extra consideration (e.g. in capacity building, learning processes and communication) and corresponding resources compared to other ongoing projects.

4.3 Principles

The following principles receive special attention across all impact targets and strategic initiatives¹⁷:

- **Gender equality and youth**

Biovision recognises the key role of women in producing and marketing agroecological products and ensuring a balanced diet. The whole of society is needed for an agroecological transformation – from both an ethical and an impact perspective. That is why our actions at various levels form the basis for ensuring that women and young people in particular have access to knowledge, resources and

¹⁶ e.g. The Africa We Want: <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

¹⁷ Specific implementation details are worked out in the programme.

decision-making power, and why we actively help them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by agroecological approaches.

- **Agroecological evidence**

We work with our partners to generate and disseminate evidence that agroecological approaches work and provide added value for people and the environment.

- **Co-creation and learning**

We develop new approaches with partners and target groups and promote processes that enable continuous learning.

- **Fostering synergies**

We specifically harness synergies with strategic partners and between strategic initiatives, and generally promote cooperation between partners.

These principles are aspects that must be observed and encouraged when putting our projects into practice in order to achieve our impact targets. They are therefore taken into account and integrated into the various phases of project implementation.

4.4 Where we work

We aim to be active where we can achieve the greatest (leverage) impact through our holistic approach and our networks and where we can drive substantial change. We continue to work in three geographical areas: in our focus countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in political processes and networks at a global level, and at home in Switzerland. The relationships between rural and urban areas are becoming increasingly important. The priority levers and fields of intervention vary depending on the level and country (specific context, existing partnerships, stakeholder environment).

In sub-Saharan Africa, Biovision is currently supporting projects in six focus countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe). In some projects, we support the development of knowledge that can be utilised beyond these countries. For historical reasons, our project portfolio is heavily focussed on Kenya (2023: 21 projects, 52% of the EP project volume). On the one hand, Kenya is a regional hub for many organisations – e.g. BvAT; on the other hand, this concentration on one country represents a certain cluster risk for Biovision with regard to the political, economic and climatic conditions and for maintaining the willingness to donate (Kenya is increasingly developing into a middle-income country). In order to reduce these risks, to enable programme work across national borders and to make even better use of synergies between partner countries, Biovision will continue to work closely with Kenya-based strategic regional partner organisations such as BvAT during this strategy period, but will also continue to expand the country diversification that it has already started. By 2028, we want to work actively with partner organisations in at least six priority countries in Eastern and Southern Africa where we can incorporate synergies of this kind. At the same time, the alliance with CEAS, with its focus on West Africa, is an opportunity for establishing further synergies. Our aim is to use these synergies with our French-speaking team in Geneva and at BvAT, for example to boost the pan-African impact of example projects in East Africa. Within the framework of the institutional partnership with the SDC, there is also a potential for synergies due to overlaps in geographical areas and topics with the focus countries for Switzerland's international cooperation. By strengthening our expertise on the international stage in the area of advocacy, we can uphold the involvement of our branch office in Geneva thanks to its proximity to the UN and international players.

4.5 Work with partner organisations

Close cooperation with carefully selected partner organisations and networks is a vital part of Biovision's working methods at all three geographical levels. It is based on the conviction that systemic change can only take place if different players work towards transformation at multiple levels. The call for change will only be heard if it comes from several different voices that are legitimised by their responsibility, expertise and local roots. Together, we will achieve the critical mass required to help the transformation achieve a breakthrough. Biovision also remains true to the principle of strengthening and revitalising existing structures and contributing to their further development, rather than creating parallel structures. Biovision has pursued this approach ever since its foundation because it believes that local implementation partners are best placed to correctly assess the respective context and to develop targeted interventions. Biovision therefore deliberately avoids assuming a dominant position and instead endeavours to build strong coalitions and enable its partners to play their role as agents of transformation as effectively as possible.

That is why we work closely with established and promising local, national and regional organisations to implement our projects in sub-Saharan Africa. Through the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT), an organisation founded by Biovision, we want to further develop our cooperation to form a strategic partnership of equals, in which both organisations contribute their respective strengths and make targeted use of synergies. Biovision is helping BvAT to develop its capacities (see also Annex 6.2).

We are also working with a number of international organisations that implement agroecological projects and initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. In the future, we also want to increasingly utilise synergies in association with our alliance partner CEAS.

In order to reinforce our strengths, exploit synergies and achieve a greater impact, we are involved in networks and maintain strategic partnerships with selected powerful organisations. These strategic partnerships are constantly being developed.

An agroecological transformation is a task for society as a whole. Biovision sees itself as a bridge-builder and, as such, works with different target and stakeholder groups: research institutions, civil society organisations, national politics and administration, UN organisations and international networks, the private sector and various donors. We recognise the important role of small, medium-sized and large enterprises in the transformation of food systems and therefore consciously involve them in projects and processes wherever possible and appropriate. Farms and civil society remain among the most important stakeholders that Biovision works with. The annual support of tens of thousands of people in Switzerland also makes us a strong membership organisation with broad legitimacy.

We have a long-standing, respectful and transparent working relationship with private donors, foundations, parishes, companies and state, cantonal and municipal donors in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC supports both our international programme and individual projects. We also enjoy increasingly close cooperation with international foundation networks to promote agroecological transformation.

5 How we want to develop

We define a small number of targeted key performance indicators (KPIs) for the organisational and financial targets described in this section. These KPIs are reviewed at regular intervals. They provide guidance and are designed to support the continuous development of the organisation.

5.1 Organisational goals

1) Convincing positioning

Biovision stands for food that is fit for the future. We want to position ourselves as an effective catalyst for bringing about an agroecological transformation of the food system. We achieve this by means of easily understandable, integrated communication geared towards specific target groups that is coordinated by the Communication and Fundraising departments. We regularly update the content we publish and ensure its consistent implementation. We want to raise our profile, further expand the communities that identify with us and encourage them to participate in food system transformation, mainly through knowledge transfer and involvement. Despite all our marketing-related focussing efforts, we never forget that Biovision remains true to its own name and that the holistic approach remains a firm part of its communication.

2) Stronger organisational culture

In order to meet complex, rapidly changing challenges, our employees at all levels are given a high degree of creative freedom and responsibility. The focus is on strengthening self-competence, practising a culture of trust and solidarity, and establishing leadership based on empowerment. We work together across divisional boundaries to make optimal use of the available skills and resources. We promote team spirit and mutual trust in order to constantly improve cooperation and offer employees sufficient space for dialogue and creativity. We are increasingly focussing outwards and boldly entering into unusual collaborations in order to pursue our goals.

3) Learning organisation

Given the urgency of transforming food systems, we are always looking for new ways and means to maximise our long-term impact. To this end, we reflect on our actions, give and accept constructive feedback, admit mistakes, talk about them and learn from them. We celebrate successes and communicate honestly with the outside world about the efforts involved in pursuing the goals we have set ourselves. We systematically use impact measurement information to make fact-based, realistic decisions about project adaptations and to continuously improve our work. We actively share the knowledge generated in this way within and outside the organisation. We reflect on our internal processes, consciously promote the further development of our employees' skills, and draw on external expertise where necessary.

4) Positive use of digitalisation

We are developing our digital management systems on a modular basis to make sure that we are ideally equipped for the future and can work as efficiently as possible (project management, data management, editorial tools, knowledge management, customer relationship management, marketing automation tools, etc.). We make selective use of the opportunities presented by technological developments and manage the associated risks (including artificial intelligence). Managers strengthen their digital skills and actively encourage employees to expand their own skills in this area.

5) Responsibility towards employees

It is particularly important to us to have healthy, motivated and professional employees who enjoy working at Biovision. All employees receive fair wages and experience equality, appreciation and solidarity. We offer clarity and security that provide our employees with guidance in a dynamic working environment. We promote gender diversity at all functional and hierarchical levels and take into account the family and social situation of our employees. We ensure the health, safety and satisfaction of our employees by creating the best possible framework conditions and improving their personal work-life balance.

5.2 Healthy finances

Biovision's primary goal is to achieve an impact, not the largest possible financial volume. In the coming strategy period, we will be aiming for low growth. This will enable us to achieve the goals set out in our strategic initiatives, to ensure that our internal systems and processes are fit for the future, and to make the necessary investments. Fundraising focuses on stability and sustainability (slight growth in the number of donors and memberships by attracting new target groups, diversification of funding sources) and increasing efficiency (utilisation of digital opportunities).

For reasons of efficiency and sustainability, Biovision continues to work directly with local partner organisations rather than through its own national offices. The decision-making power over the use of funds and project content should remain as close as possible to the actual project participants. The gradual transfer of more responsibility and self-determination to local partners will continue and may include areas such as fundraising, programme coordination, financial control, public relations and awareness-raising, etc. Biovision wants to remain a pioneer in this area and aims to test and develop innovative forms of cooperation in specific pilot projects.

To ensure that we can continue to act in a self-determined manner, we intend to ensure that more than half of our financial resources continue to come from free donations or programme contributions. In order to maintain our legitimacy as a strong membership organisation and avoid one-sided dependencies, at least a quarter of our income should continue to come from private donors and patrons in the future. In order to ensure sufficient diversification among institutional donors, whenever the opportunity arises we will also apply for funding from organisations outside Switzerland and Liechtenstein with a focus on agroecology. In close cooperation between the Communication & Fundraising, Programme and Finance teams, we use their respective expertise to make targeted and efficient use of the opportunities available to develop projects for funding in association with potential donors (co-creation). In selected cases, we also take part in tenders that are specifically geared towards our objectives and approach and that make a significant contribution to the further development of the organisation. Clever, forward-looking and holistic planning of the acquired funds and their utilisation is vital in order to meet the various requirements of the donors and our strategy.

In the future, we will continue to try and invest around 80% of our income in projects and programmes (including awareness-raising), more than half of which will continue to go towards international cooperation. The remaining funds are channelled into administration, marketing, communication and fundraising activities. At least 2% of our programme funds will continue to be used as core contributions (unrestricted funds) for the organisational development of selected strategic partners in sub-Saharan Africa. All departments make optimum use of existing resources and act in a cost-conscious manner. We budget and allocate expenditure and income to projects and areas in line with actual requirements. In doing so, we ensure sufficient liquidity and adequate reserves.

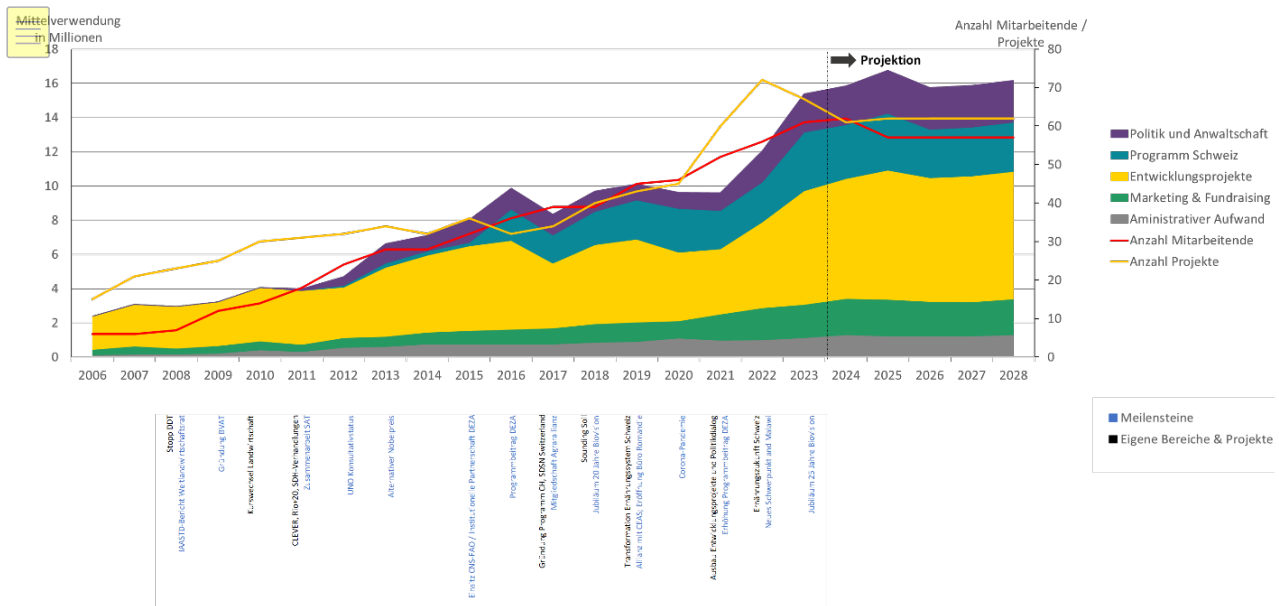


Figure 3: Development of Biovision 2008 – 2023 and projection until 2028

5.3 How we address opportunities and risks

The changes in the context of our work outlined above open up new opportunities for us to achieve a high systemic impact. In particular, increased public awareness of the issue of sustainable food systems and their importance for climate change, biodiversity, health and resilience gives us the chance to drive forward the urgently needed transformation – even in Switzerland. Dynamic social and economic development in sub-Saharan Africa, where there is an increasing number of well-educated young people and heightened nutritional awareness, makes new approaches possible. Biovision wants to actively utilise and shape these opportunities by launching ambitious, innovative projects with high impact potential as part of its strategic initiatives and by entering into strategic partnerships with powerful players.

However, Biovision's work is also associated with risks that jeopardise the achievement of its goals. The most important contextual risks in sub-Saharan Africa lie in the impact of climate change on agriculture and in political and social tensions. Assisted agroecological innovations could prove to be insufficiently effective or fall victim to or be appropriated by agro-industrial approaches in global political and economic competition ("greenwashing"). In Switzerland, reputational risks towards patrons and specialised stakeholders predominate due to Biovision's political involvement. In addition, the political agenda and social debate could shift away from sustainability (levelling off of the green wave) due to the influence of powerful interest groups or unforeseen events (e.g. political and economic crises). There is also a certain risk of losing touch with the rapid pace of digitalisation (e.g. in communication and public fundraising).

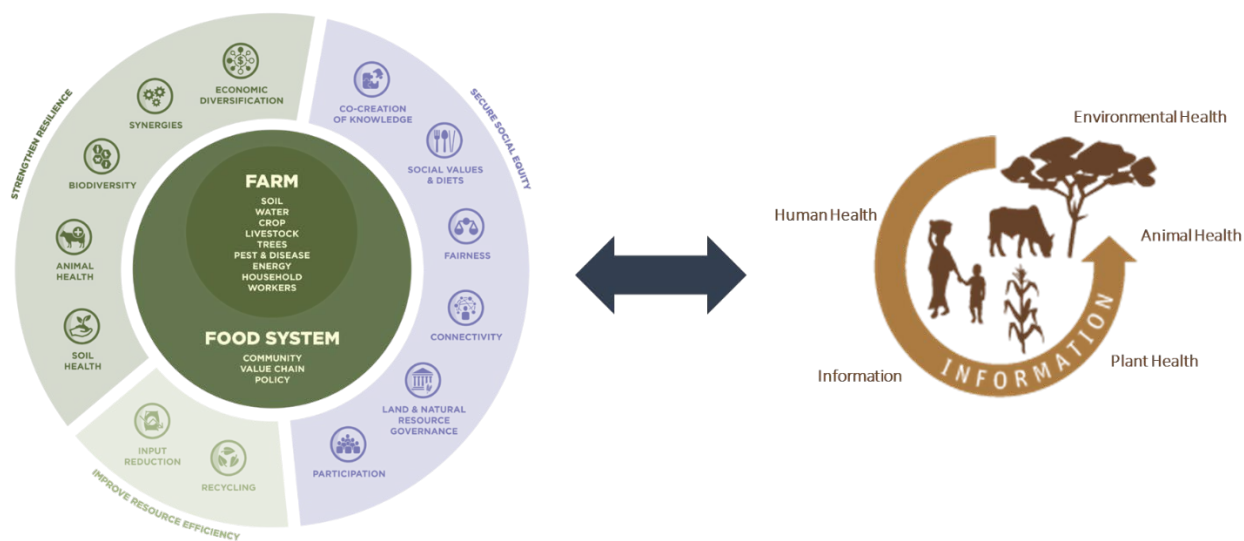
Both the Executive Committee and the Foundation Board of Biovision identify the most important risks at regular intervals, decide on risk minimisation measures and review the success of these measures.

6 Annexes

6.1 Agroecological principles and “One Health” approach

Agroecology and One Health are complementary approaches to creating a world in which all people have access to safe and healthy food whilst protecting the environment.

The diagram below illustrates this complementarity between the 13 agroecological principles (left) and the One Health approach (right).



6.2 Biovision's general strategic partnerships, and more specifically with the Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT)

Biovision stands for cooperation with and support for equal partners on the ground, especially with organisations that have developed from local structures and are established within society. In 2009, the Biovision Foundation (as “Founder of the Trust”) and like-minded people founded BvAT in Kenya as a non-profit, tax-exempt African NGO. The aim was to establish a locally anchored civil society organisation that would be financially independent, well networked on the continent, recognised and broadly supported. The idea is to increasingly empower and promote local capacities so that people on the ground can act independently and not only implement projects in sub-Saharan Africa, but also develop them. This adds to the sustainable impact of the donations invested in sub-Saharan Africa and to the local achievement of the Biovision Foundation's goals in the long term.

With the help of icipe, BvAT has developed into an independent African organisation, supported by several donors with three coherent long-term programmes. Networking is established in the area of grassroots movements, i.e. via direct contact with smallholder farmers, as well as in relation to African initiatives and frameworks such as the African Union's Agenda 2063. BvAT operates nationally in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as well as in a total of 10 African countries with selected partners. It successfully coordinates and implements international projects in line with Biovision's vision and strategy. The accreditation of BvAT in the African Union (AU) as a representative of civil society organisations and with a mandate from the African Union Commission (AUC) – Agriculture and Food Security Division to lead the continental EOA-I Secretariat (pan-African initiative of the African Union to promote organic agriculture) makes BvAT an extremely well-positioned African organisation in the area of food systems, and links and complements Biovision within Africa on the continent. For its part, Biovision, as an established and internationally recognised NGO, can facilitate access for BvAT to stakeholders in agroecological networks and to donors in the North.

The idea of the Biovision Foundation has always been to build and strengthen structures and expertise in sub-Saharan Africa that can act sustainably, credibly and proficiently under their own responsibility and further develop and implement Biovision's goals, both in cooperation with Biovision and independently. Biovision will continue to work in this direction in the 2024–2028 strategy period, piloting innovative cooperation models with its partner organisations and, if successful, expanding them. With this in mind, the intention is to specifically promote and develop the strategic partnership with BvAT so that the respective strengths of Biovision and BvAT result in the creation of effective synergies.