



# Working Animal Alliance

## Concept Note

*Our Vision - We believe in a world where working animals are recognised for the invaluable contribution they provide to humankind.*

The Working Animal Alliance provides a cross-sectoral discussion space from which to coordinate information, activity and aspirations for working animal welfare.

Previous actions by individual organisations have brought the working animal narrative into the sphere of the United Nations (UN), and the Alliance aims to facilitate the inclusion of a range of voices to support development of these continued activities.

### Introduction

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An estimated 200 million working animals are essential to the livelihoods of communities worldwide. Utilised for transport and traction, and valued for their outward traits of stoicism and endurance, the socio-economic value of these animals and the long-term benefits of ensuring their health and welfare are often neglected in favour of immediate outcomes.

Strong working animals can play a crucial role in building resilience. Donkeys and mules for example, are better suited to arid zones and can therefore support livelihoods in adapting to climate change. Working animals can assist with restoring income and productivity after a disaster and help their owners resume work.

In many low and middle-income countries, many millions of people living on less than \$2 a day are highly dependent on working animals; they can often represent the largest and most precious asset for their owners. Not only do they enable their owners to participate in work, boosting their economic capacity, but they also promote gender equality, access to essential services and resources, and offer opportunities for resilience, for example, by enabling owners to earn additional animal generated income, which can be invested in community-led support schemes. Animal labour proves to be a particularly suitable and accessible energy source to smallholders and family-level production. Working animals are the energy behind agricultural systems, generating essential income for their owners while reducing requirements for traditional fuels.

The use of working animals in agriculture is common, especially as a means of rural traction and transport. They help to tend land by pulling ploughs and carts, herd livestock, collect water and other supplies for production and deliver goods to market. In urban areas, they are reliable workforce, carrying people and goods as well as facilitating industry and local services including construction and refuse collection. Where cost or terrain restrictions mean that mechanical vehicles are not practical, working animals enable communities access for example, local food markets, increasing the potential for quality nutrition.

Many of the most urgent United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be achieved using simple and inexpensive "ground-up" solutions, focusing on both human and working animal welfare, benefiting particularly those whose voices are not heard, are excluded or left behind.



## Alliance Outline

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*Our mission: To join forces in informing and expanding the global dialogue, working collectively to bridge cross-sectoral themes and shared interests to make a positive impact on the health and welfare of working animals and the people who rely on them.*

Acknowledging the role of working animals in the sustainability dialogue, the Alliance is an established, yet informal group of interested parties. Stakeholders within the Alliance are able to share knowledge, seek collaborative opportunities for its dissemination and promote greater integration of working animal welfare into the UN fora.

As a living mechanism, the Alliance will evolve progressively according to the demands of the moment. It will not be characterised by a mere exchange of inputs but will encourage the creation of shared values that will allow stakeholders to appreciate each other's skills and contribution to the debate.

Whilst the narrative of working animals within the UN has begun to develop beyond the traditional classification constraints of production livestock, our ambition is to create a stronger voice for these animals.

Incorporating a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, international bodies, NGOs, academics, women, youth, farmers, the private sector and other relevant actors, the Alliance will offer a proactive and engaging space to work collaboratively, opening up discussion across thematic siloes and opportunities from local to international level.

As such, the narrative of objectives for the Alliance spans a considerable scope:

- Emphasising the vital support working animals provide towards sustainable development,
- Offering expertise to countries wishing to instigate and report progress within relevant UN processes such as voluntary national reviews (VNRs)
- Facilitating greater communication between stakeholders to encourage and build synergy into the implementation of development frameworks.

Thematic areas include, but are not limited to:

- Livelihood support
- Resource acquisition and management
- Social integration and gender empowerment
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Risk mitigation for infectious diseases at the human-animal interface, as highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic

## Alliance Impact

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The Alliance aims to generate impact at scale by uniting stakeholders in shared aspiration and activity to promote holistic and novel, yet practicable solutions within sustainable development and working animal welfare. In advancing the use of expertise to develop mutually beneficial, cross-sectoral and solution-based thinking about the interlinkages between human and animal welfare within existing UN frameworks and processes, the potential impact could be considerable.

- Working animals will benefit from better welfare due to the increased recognition of the role they play in supporting sustainable development and appropriate provision through information and infrastructure. Perception and understanding will be improved through the use and dissemination of representative media.



- Communities with healthy working animals will benefit from the continuation of the support provided by this invaluable workforce, including livelihood support, essential resource access and diversity, social, financial and environmental resilience, such as gender empowerment and disaster recovery (both physical and financial) and a mitigation of disease development and transmission at the human-animal interface.
- Countries will benefit from effective and contextually relevant advice, policy development and programming, for example maintaining sustainable approaches to agriculture and ecological impact, utilising expanded wording within UN reporting frameworks to showcase their progress in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation.

## Alliance in Action

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To support our impact the Alliance will:

- Act as a discussion space for potential policy development that members can then take forward to decision makers.
- Promote opportunities for collaboration and sharing of information, knowledge and expertise amongst members.
- Develop an ongoing dialogue to identify gaps in evidence-based knowledge on the role of working animals, and support research that builds on the existing premise of interlinkages.
- Participate in events by promoting members independent activity and facilitating collaborative approaches.
- Share reports and toolkits for use by members and wider stakeholders; including suggested reporting lines and evidence-based targets for measuring impact and prompting discussion as part of UN reviews such as VNRs, thematic framework analysis and the upcoming Global Sustainable Development Report in 2023.
- Increase media coverage by supporting production of versatile content for use across platforms and formats.

## Governance and Management

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The Alliance functions with a core group, meeting regularly to discuss and implement strategic aims, its members support and contribute to Alliance objectives and projects.

The Core Group hold responsibly for:

- Maximising knowledge-management efforts
- Providing internal coordination among members
- Promoting the Alliance's activities while increasing external visibility

The Core Group comprises:

- The Donkey Sanctuary
- World Horse Welfare

Expressions of interest for membership are carried out through the Working Animal Alliance website and email. Organisations will be required to share their vision and mission and individual membership, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Core Group meets virtually fortnightly, with additional and face-to-face meetings arranged subject to ad-hoc needs. Alliance member meetings will take place virtually once a quarter.

Each year the Core Group and Alliance members will review and evaluate its activities. During this review, the Core Group will explore UN key themes and suggest relevant activities or suspend activities dependant on need.



Members are under no obligation to participate in all events but can propose additional events for the Alliance's consideration. At the end of each year, there will be an opportunity for members to feedback and reflect on the Alliance activities and their role in it.

Prior to acceptance, the Core Group will review new membership applications based on shared interests and experience. The Core Group has the right to hold a membership review for any organisation acting in a way deemed detrimental to the Alliance and related activities.

## Technical Details

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Website: <https://www.workinganimalalliance.org/>

E-mail: [info@workinganimalalliance.org](mailto:info@workinganimalalliance.org)

Zoom: Working Animal Alliance

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEP-txH3HX3UewuPdcDn3jA>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/working-animal-alliance>