



Strategic Plan 2008-2010

Approved by Board of Directors
September 2008

Summary of Plan

VITA was previously known as Refugee Trust International (RTI), founded in 1989 to provide relief to refugees and displaced persons caught up in emergency situations wherever these occurred. One such situation which arose in the early 1990s was the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and it was as a result of this prolonged conflict that RTI (and now VITA) became involved first in post-emergency support for people left destitute by the war, and subsequently in longer-term development initiatives in the Horn of Africa. In this way, communities which were victim to the conflict were enabled to gradually revive their prospects and entitlement to basic livelihood security for the future.

As a natural consequence, Vita's niche lies in **community based sustainable livelihood development**. For Vita, this means striving relentlessly for improved quality of life of the poor and dispossessed at household level in the Horn of Africa region, working in genuine partnership with communities, local government and other like-minded organisations.

Vita's focus will continue to be on food security, natural resource management, income security and access to essential services in challenging, mainly rural communities in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Our long-term Sustainable Livelihoods Programme combats chronic food insecurity and poverty in communities exposed to degraded natural resources and lack of development resources. In addition – and in harmony with our origins as a refugee relief organisation – **Vita** is conscious of its humanitarian obligation to respond flexibly to sudden-onset emergency situations within our three chosen programme countries, and to work alongside others to address post-emergency recovery needs, from a livelihood security perspective.

Outside the geographic focal area of the Horn of Africa, Vita may also engage with partner communities elsewhere, should opportunities for sharing and accelerating learning with relevant projects or programmes arise.

To equip itself to consistently deliver a programme of the highest quality, Vita will implement an extensive organisational development plan to improve governance and programme management, including monitoring and evaluation systems. We will also build on existing programme strengths in innovation, flexible partnerships and programme niches such as micro-finance. In the process, Vita will fully incorporate the findings from participatory reviews at community level, and formal evaluations by donor partners and host governments.

1. Vision

Vita's¹ fervent ambition is help to bring about a world in which all people can attain the quality of life to which each has an inalienable right - that is, a life which is free from hunger, poverty, exploitation, preventable disease and drudgery, thereby increasing poor peoples' prospects for a better and more sustainable quality of life.

2. Mission Statement

Vita is an Ireland-based non-profit organisation whose mission is to enable poor and marginalised communities in the Horn of Africa to improve their livelihoods in ways which are innovative, appropriate and environmentally sustainable, whilst respecting the human rights and dignity of all.

3. Core Values

In its work, Vita upholds certain core values in all dealings with its stakeholders (internal and external), namely:

Core Value	What it means for Vita.....
Accountability	To build trust with and between ourselves and our donors, beneficiaries, supporters and staff; adherence to codes of good practice of (a) host countries and (b) 'People in Aid'
Impact	To ensure that the programme results are identified, that tangible benefits accrue which endure beyond the phase of direct support from Vita, by strengthening the capacity of communities, civil society, and government partners.
Learning	To build an effective learning organisation through dialogue and sharing experience in partnerships and networks, documenting and publishing learning from our programmes, and contributing to the quest for good practice in development.
Respect	To uphold the dignity of each individual in their everyday practice. Especially, to promote respect for the dignity and culture of beneficiaries with all internal and external stakeholders
Empowerment	To elicit the active participation of poor communities (women and men, girls and boys) in identifying and tackling factors which inhibit progress towards livelihood sustainability, including HIV/AIDS.
Partnership	Vita works collaboratively with host governments, donors, civil society, co-operatives, and communities. The type of partnership is informed by local context, circumstances, and agreements.

¹ The full legal name of the organisation is Vita (RTI) with Vita registered as the trading name.

4. Context.

4.1 History.

Vita is the successor organisation to Refugee Trust International which was established in 1989, primarily on the joint initiative of Frs. Kevin Doherty and Norman Fitzgerald (members of the Spiritan Congregation).

Although RTI worked on several continents at different times², the region with the worst development indicators (aggravated by decades of war) is the Horn of Africa. This has therefore become the priority region for Vita (RTI), specifically in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

In October 2006 the name of the organisation was formally changed in Ireland from Refugee Trust International to Vita (RTI) and the Vita logo was adopted. The change of name reflected the organisation's evolution in the direction of longer-term development programming, in other words, improving livelihoods through better food and income security, as distinct from post-emergency relief and rehabilitation work. Vita has concentrated its work primarily on the first millennium goal of hunger and poverty reduction with particular consideration to women's issues.

4.2. External Environment.

The world's development challenges are intrinsically related by the United Nations Millennium Project to the imperative of **poverty reduction**. In an increasingly interdependent world, many problems – like conflict, crime, pollution and diseases such as HIV and AIDS – are caused or made worse by poverty. In parallel with this, the Irish Government White Paper on Aid (2006) declared that “poverty reduction, to decrease vulnerability and increase opportunity, is the overarching objective of Irish Aid.” (p.9). Vita strongly endorses and shares this fundamental aim.

Vita welcomes the principle contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) that “the Irish non-governmental sector will continue to be a key partner for Irish Aid's programme. Poverty reduction is our shared goal; we can work towards it in separate and complementary ways”. Vita therefore accords high priority to building a firm, trusting and collaborative relationship with Irish Aid, whereby Vita will be accepted into the multi-annual funding mechanism within Irish Aid's civil society framework.

4.3. Commitment to learning and good practice

Innovation and quality

Vita embraces the quest for best practice throughout the organisation, by investing in the continuous development of staff capacity, by nurturing a culture of ‘reflective practice’ internally, and by constantly looking for new ways of using scarce resources to best effect.

Shared Learning and Networking

Vita will document and publish the learning from our programmes and contribute to the quest for good practice by networking with other agencies and with institutions of education and research.

Vita will look to develop a strong partnership with the UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science, focusing on research and knowledge management around Vita's livelihoods programme, including community perspectives on and participation in local development, community access to services including micro-finance, and community environmental management and sanitation.

² such as in the Balkan Countries, Rwanda, and Palestine,

5. Strategic Objectives

Objective A: Programmes:

By 2010, communities supported by Vita will experience improved sustainable livelihood outcomes through

- increasingly becoming masters of their own destiny,
- overcoming the cycle of poverty, dependency, drudgery and deprivation,
- achieving lasting positive change in their living conditions.

Objective B: Governance and Organisational Development

Vita intends to build on present attributes and establish itself by 2010 as a model of business excellence amongst Irish peers; ready for sustained growth based on accomplishment of mission and programme objectives, consolidation of Vita's distinct comparative advantage, and values, with rigorous governance and a robust organization capable of knowledge building and learning

Objective C: Funding:

Through to 2010, Vita will mobilise €7.5 million to support our programmes through a diversified, balanced and sustainable fundraising programme with the Irish Public, Irish Government (Irish Aid) and other institutional donors, based on Vita core values of accountability, partnership within the chain from donor to beneficiary, and respect for beneficiary communities and partner countries.

6. Vita's Programme Strategy (Strategic Objective A)

6.1 Development Approach

Vita's development approach is summarised as "introducing innovation in community based sustainable livelihood development for households, through partnership with communities, local government and other like-minded organisations". Vita will therefore frame all project activities within a **Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)**, which is coherent with the policy and strategic objectives of the MDGs, Irish Aid and the EU, and which emphasises the core principles of putting people at the centre of development, building on strengths, being holistic, dynamic and sustainable, and using macro-micro links.

Vita sees the SLF as a vehicle for:

- Enabling the communities with whom Vita works to access **innovation** through appropriate technologies and techniques, and absorb it into everyday development practice
- Developing **sustainable livelihoods** where "livelihoods" comprises the capabilities, assets (resources) and activities required for a means of living³
- Acting as a catalyst for **community based** self-development in communities, which enable **households**, including female-headed and marginalised, to achieve desired livelihood outcomes
- Empowering communities to participate in local development through meaningful trilateral model of **partnership** which brings together communities, local government, Vita and others

In addition – and in harmony with our origins as a refugee relief organisation – **Vita** is conscious of its humanitarian obligation to respond flexibly to sudden-onset emergency situations within our

³ Based on the principles of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework; 2001; DFID; livelihoods@dfid.gov.uk

three chosen programme countries, and to work alongside others to address post-emergency recovery needs, from a livelihood security perspective

VITA employs a composite strategy involving a number of key elements, the precise configuration of which varies according to context, but which are united by adopting a community-based and participative approach in the different settings. The key elements of this are:

- a consistent focus on **poverty reduction** as a core principle with real gender focus.
- integrating **capacity-building** throughout our programme, utilising **appropriate technologies** (e.g. drip irrigation, improved stoves) and **appropriate techniques** (e.g. Community Led Total Sanitation, agricultural extension)
- piloting **Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)** as one **entry point strategy** to stimulate participation with communities and their elected representatives and local government.

Vita's programme focus is to empower poor and marginalised people in the Horn of Africa, and their local government administrations and elected peoples' representatives, to bring about lasting positive change in their living conditions.

Vita's niche lies in **community based sustainable livelihood development**. For Vita, this means striving relentlessly for improved quality of life at household level in the Horn of Africa region, and working in genuine partnership with communities, local government and other like-minded organizations.

During 2008, Vita will develop Programme Implementation Guidelines for the application of this development approach.

6.2 Geographic focus - Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa has some of the world's worst development indicators, and the overwhelming majority of households suffer chronic food insecurity, malnutrition, preventable diseases (such as malaria and TB), drudgery (especially among rural women), high maternal and child mortality, and reduced life expectancy. Accordingly Vita will to maintain its concentration on the Horn, with Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya as partner countries:

- In Eritrea, Vita will focus on a gradual deepening of the existing area-based watershed and livelihoods programme in food and income poor, rural communities residing in degraded dry lands of the Anseba, Debub and Gash Barka Regions, while addressing household livelihood security through a sectoral focus on natural resource management, starting with forestry and fuel wood.
- In Ethiopia, Vita will gradually broaden the livelihoods programme within the present programme areas of the Southern People's Region, particularly in Chenchu Woreda, and also in Arba Minch and the degraded dry land communities of Hammer. In Chenchu Vita will extend the Community Led Total Sanitation entry point across the Woreda.
- In Kenya, based on appraisal and design, Vita will continue its engagement in the Rift Valley and Eldoret districts in Northern Kenya, focusing the initial engagements with rural communities residing in degraded dry lands. The Kenya office will be developed into a regional base for programme exchange and lessons learning.

Vita will retain sufficient flexibility in our country programmes to address post-emergency recovery issues, from a livelihood security perspective.

Vita may also engage with projects or programmes outside of this geographic area where opportunities for sharing and accelerating learning with like-minded programmes are identified.

6.3. *Thematic Focus*

Operational programmes will incorporate the following thematic areas (within the context of the overall Sustainable Livelihoods Framework):

Food Security

- ❖ Livelihoods approach
- ❖ Crop and livestock production; seed enterprise, Soil and water conservation, enclosures
- ❖ Irrigated vegetable farming

Environmental Resource Management and Sanitation


- ❖ Water harvesting, water quality, Community Led Total Sanitation
- ❖ Natural resource management; forestry, water, sustainable energy
- ❖ Forestry fuel wood efficiency, tree planting, enterprise development

Income Security and Access to Services & Resources

- ❖ Health; waterborne disease, HIV/AIDS
- ❖ Empowerment and Institution building; Natural Leaders, Cooperatives
- ❖ Technology access and choice
- ❖ Enterprise development and value chain analysis
- ❖ Micro-finance


6.4. *Partnership and External Alliances*


Vita will work in partnership at three levels:

-  **Operational partnerships:** with host governments at various levels, donors, civil society, co-operatives, and communities. Vita engages with poor and marginalised communities, their elected peoples' representatives, and their local government administrations in the Horn of Africa, by facilitating and supporting actions through which such communities are enabled to increasingly take control over the factors that influence the sustainability of their livelihoods.

Vita's operational partners will be chosen according to the country civil society context, partners' community linkages and their added value towards impact and sustainability. Vita seeks multi-annual partnerships across multiple project areas where possible, with a structured programme of partnership building and capacity building of partners.

Vita aspires to a partnership which will maximise local ownership and capacity of communities and partners to sustain, build on and replicate interventions. Vita's role will be to build the capacity of partners, participating directly in implementation at community level only to fill gaps identified with partners and with a clear exit at the end of project life.

-  **Networking partnership in Ireland, Europe, and Africa:** through Dóchas, The Livelihoods Network, Sustainable Livelihoods in Sub Saharan Africa Network, bilateral links with like-minded NGOs, our special relationship with Macra na Feirme, and the business community.

-  **Funding partnerships,** with Irish Aid, the EU / EuropeAid, United Nations, and other donor organisations.

6.5 Cross-cutting features of the Vita programme.

Key **cross-cutting features** which are interwoven into all aspects of the programme are:

- **HIV/AIDS:** Vita will incorporate awareness-raising on HIV/AIDS in all communities where sustainable livelihood development is ongoing. During 2008 and 2009, Vita will establish guidelines to ensure a response to HIV/AIDS commensurate to prevalence and exposure in partner communities.
- **Gender equality:** Vita will strengthen existing efforts to mainstream gender in the livelihoods programme through an organisational Gender Policy (allied to structured staff training both in the field and Head Office).
- **Respect for the dignity of the individual and for human rights** within a community-based development approach. This will be at the core of further policy development addressing human rights and governance, to be undertaken by Vita in the coming three years.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Vita mainstreams environmental considerations into watershed and livelihood programmes, through facilitation of community based environmental management and sanitation. This mainstreaming involves in-community focus on recovery of water tables through soil and water conservation in degraded dry lands, clearing watersheds of human defecation, the restoration of woodlands and forests, fuel wood conservation and tree planting. Vita will intensify its work to convert tree planting, community woodland restoration and carbon emission reduction into carbon credits, which will be verified by accredited international agents and traded as carbon offsets.

6.6 Programme Activities

Vita's 2008-2010 Horn of Africa Sustainable Livelihoods Programme targets 30,000 beneficiary households, including 18,000 specifically aimed at women, with a programme budget of €6.8 million, funded by Irish Aid, the Irish Public and the European Union.

The table below summarises the main projected activities intended for the three-year period

Project Activities	Total HH Beneficiaries	Female Beneficiaries	Male Beneficiaries
Hagaz Sustainable Livelihoods Project	1,779	200	150
Hamelmallo Sustainable Livelihoods Project	2,187	600	100
Adi Quala Sustainable Livelihoods Project	1,448	760	0
Forestry Fuel Wood Efficiency, Nutrition & Enterprise Development	15,200	15,200	0
Arba Minch/Hammer Sustainable Livelihoods Project	4,200	200	50
Chencha Community Led Livelihoods Project	5,000	1,000	0
Kenya pilot Sustainable Livelihoods Project	200	100	0
Total	30,014	18,060	300

In the 2008-2010 period, Vita will prepare country strategic plans for the three programme countries, during the course of which opportunities for consolidation and expansion of the present envisaged €6 million programme will be evaluated. Following a detailed risk assessment and contingency planning exercise and overall evaluation of the Vita Board of Directors will decide on the overall direction and scale of the Horn of Africa Livelihoods Programme.

6.7. Expected Results and Outcomes

6.6.1 Emerging out of the strategic review of Vita's livelihoods programme and organisational capacity, Vita's programme objectives are focused on higher level livelihood impact at community and household level. The community based approach incorporating CLTS as an entry point strategy and the FAS participatory extension structure aim at higher level outcomes (impact) of communities becoming masters of their own destiny, participating in, and strengthening their voice to influence policy at, local level. Vita's introduction of appropriate technologies and techniques address fundamental causes of poverty, dependency, drudgery and deprivation, and lead to lasting change of living conditions at household level through improved livelihood impact particularly for women, in food security (moringa, stove) health (CLTS, HIV/AIDS), natural resource management (fuel efficient stoves, forestry).

Expected outcomes in all field locations

- *Improved food security*
- *More secure livelihoods in a sustainable environment*
- *Improved access to resources by the poor (particularly women)*
- *Improved access to services by the poor (particularly women)*
- *Reduced vulnerability to disease particularly HIV/AIDS and Malaria*
- *Reduced drudgery*
- *Reduced exploitation*
- *Improved Human Rights*
- *Pro poor local governance*

6.7. Monitoring, Evaluation, Impact Assessment and Programme Quality

6.7.1. Monitoring and Evaluation

The main motivation of monitoring and evaluation in our programme structures will be organisational learning and the quest for best practice. Much of the basic M&E protocols are already being practiced in Headquarters as well as country offices, specifically the **Programme Management Cycle** (incorporating annual participatory reviews) and **Log Frame Analysis** commencing at the design phase, and using performance indicators which can be practically tracked through and after implementation.

In addition, we will progressively make use of the **Sustainable Livelihoods Framework toolkit** as a monitoring and evaluation tool, to ensure that monitoring indicators reflect the ethos of people centred development. This process includes identifying key performance indicators for objectives (impact) and results (outcomes) in the livelihood context (vulnerability, livelihood assets, institutions and processes and strategies). Equal importance is attached to describing livelihood outcomes and impact based on stakeholder self-assessment of "most significant change". These indicators and qualitative assessments are fed into mid-project or end of project evaluations to provide some evidence of successful outcomes and impact.

During 2008, Vita will develop Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for country programmes and headquarters.

6.7.2. Impact Assessment

Over time, post implementation **impact assessment** ('ex-post', say two years following project completion) will be pursued. The purpose will be to gauge the impact of the livelihood projects, and

tracking of progress against baseline situation, at three different levels:

- At households and community level, consolidation of livelihood assets and reduction in vulnerability in the general sense are fundamental impacts.
- At regional and country level, programme impact reflects in changes to livelihood structures and processes through introduction and replication of new technologies and techniques. Vita will measure impact in terms of numbers of households and communities who have adopted such innovations as drip irrigation, community led total sanitation, Moringa tree planting and cooking and improved stove installation.
- Vita will address global warming as an added value to sustainable poverty reduction at local level. For example the target installation of 40,000 stoves in Eritrea will save 200,000 tons annually through emission reduction and sequestration. This will be measured in the programme evaluation.

6.7.3. Quality Assurance

Vita Headquarters will formulate Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for dissemination and training in the country offices and will develop policies and practices for mainstreaming environment, gender, HIV/AIDS and governance in the livelihoods programme. In addition, a robust oversight mechanism will test ongoing implementation against targets and policy guidelines via a committee of the Board (“Programme Strategy and Monitoring Committee”).

6.7.4. Advocacy and Awareness Raising

During 2008—2010, Vita Headquarters supported by the country offices will develop an organizational approach to advocacy; for respect towards, and the participation of, communities and their representatives, in local development and governance. At the same time, Vita will also develop and organizational approach within our communications strategy in the Irish and European context, on the issue of promoting respect for communities, their culture, and their governments, as the masters of their own destiny.

6.7.5 Vita’s Risk Management Plan for 2008-10

Vita recognises that the region in which it has chosen to work has experienced conflict and political volatility. We cannot delude either ourselves or others into believing that we can exert any influence over the geo-political forces at macro level. What we can do (in partnership with host communities) is to anchor and embed the sustainable livelihood interventions so firmly within the local institutional ownership as to reduce that community’s vulnerability to any future macro-level disturbance. Country programme risk analysis based in log frame risks and assumptions, and measuring risk probability and impact, will be incorporated in annual participatory review exercises.

Specific organisational risks which include the difficult and tenuous operating environment for NGOs in Eritrea, communication and programme cohesion problems relating to the Eritrea and Ethiopia communications embargo, and the local unrest in Kenya and to a lesser extent Ethiopia and Eritrea, will be addressed in a comprehensive manner in the country strategic planning and organisational development planning and through the appointment of a regional organisational development professional.

7. Governance and Organisational Development (Strategic Objective B)

As Part of our Strategy process we must plan to develop our Governance and Organisation to allow us to achieve our 2010 objectives/results while retaining the unique attributes that have been at the heart of Vita's success to date.

We will systematically address our Board composition and *modus operandi* and develop our organisation structure, staff competencies, values, culture, systems and process (Management, HR, Finance, IT, Legal, communications, Fundraising, knowledge management/learning, evaluation etc). We plan through this process to become a model of business excellence among peer development agencies and to build a foundation for sustained growth

Vita's 2008-2010 Organisational Development Plan has three main objectives:

1. Vita's 2008-2010 Horn of Africa Livelihoods Programme aims to support 30,000 households with a budget of €6.8 million and a Vita staff complement of 60.
By 2010, Vita's organisational development plan is primarily aimed at the successful completion of the Livelihoods Programme with measurable impact and sustainability.
2. Secondly, Vita aims by 2010 to have built organisational capacity for a 100% increase in programme scale from present levels, through organisational learning, staff development and recruitment, and partner capacity building measures.
3. Thirdly, Vita's organisational development plan is intended to enable a level of partnership and confidence with Irish Aid to allow Vita to be considered for multi-annual funding under the MAPS programme.

Vita is committed to building organisational synergy, by drawing internal and external stakeholder relationships closer, including with donors, funding supporters and partners, and building a sense of common mission and common values at all levels of the organisation

Vita is committed to developing as a learning organisation – one in which individual learning, team learning and organisation-wide learning are all linked together.

7.1 Governance

- Vita's Board of Directors will be strengthened with the appointment of programme, finance, legal and fundraising professionals, each with clear terms of reference, duties and responsibilities.
- The Board of Directors will strengthen its engagement with and oversight of Vita management through revamped committees
- Vita will adopt the Dochas Code of Good Practice on Governance
- Vita will strengthen and formalise risk management processes including the development of a reserves policy and fraud policy

Some of the governance issues to be addressed during 2008 are set out in the table below:

Issue	Milestone	Timing(2008)
Board	Board adopts Guidelines from governance group covering Charities legislation, corporate compliance and rotation	December
Programme Group	Board approves new TOR of Programme Strategy and Monitoring Group	December
Oversight	Board appoints new directors to oversee organisational development, programme and fundraising with TOR	September
	Board sets out functions and monitors performance of sub-committees, CEO, functional management and consultants	December
Finance policy	Board approves policies governing fraud and strategic reserves, and risk management modalities	December
Org dev.	Board reviews performance and organisational effectiveness	April 2009

7.2 Headquarters Organisational Development

- Based on organisational assessments conducted internally as well as by Irish Aid, Vita with the assistance of an OD consultant will implement an organisational development plan between 2008 and 2010 towards the fulfillment of the Strategic Objective B set out above.
- The organisational development plan will include a diagnostic assessment of Vita's organisation and staff capacity to achieve programme objectives, from which an organizational development, performance management, systems and staff development programme will be established during 2008.
- The OD plan will include measures to apply core values in all functional departments (programme, fundraising and communications, finance), and to apply a knowledge management culture to build on Vita's unique attributes and development niche.

7.3 Regional and Country Level Organisational Development

- A management professional with regional responsibility for organisational development will be supported by Headquarters management in the application of the OD plan at regional level and in the three country programmes.
- The country strategic planning process will inform the organisational development process at regional and country level.
- The new Kenya country office will serve as a venue to host human resource development and organisational learning for the three country programmes.
- Development of formalised partner capacity assessments and partner protocols will be prioritised

7.4 Organisational learning, development education, and advocacy 2008-10

Vita is committed to integrating action research, as well as extensive documentation into programme activities in the thematic areas of participatory governance in Micro-Finance Institutions and forestry and carbon reduction. Vita will document and publish learning from our programmes and contribute to the quest for good practice. With a view to achieving depth and rigour in the action research to be undertaken, Vita has linked up with the School of Agriculture and Food Science at University College Dublin, who participate in the Programme Strategy and Monitoring Group. Vita, as an active member of Dóchas, contributes “to foster a vibrant and effective Development NGO sector in Ireland, characterised by a commitment to learn, the capacity to meet quality standards and high quality relationships with all relevant stakeholders”⁴.

⁴ Dóchas Strategic Plan 2005-8

Based on the strategic objectives and the challenge of shared learning and networking identified earlier in the strategic plan, Vita will seek to develop during 2008 and 2009 an initial development education strategy commensurate with the scale and focus of the livelihoods programme. Subject to resources being available, Vita will commission external academic professionals to support the organisation in documenting and publishing action and field research, and disseminating findings and materials to our development partners and donors in Ireland, including universities and schools.

7.5. Finance

Accountability is a core value of Vita.

Vita will strengthen bi-directional reporting, i.e. both to communities and to institutional donors and fundraising constituencies in Ireland. Vita conducts annual independent audits of all projects in partner countries, including all funds of Irish Aid. In-country and headquarters audits will be enhanced in the 2008-2010 period through strengthened relationships with auditors who are well established and with specific exposure to the non-profit sector and accounting transparency and best practice. Vita's organisation-wide financial system will incorporate an accounting software package, on-line banking and monthly management accounts.

Vita will upgrade the quality of financial management and reporting during 2008-2010 through the implementation of annual Finance Work Plans which set out specific measures identified in Vita and Irish Aid organisational assessments. These plans will be given operational effect during 2008 under the supervision of the recently appointed Finance and Administration Manager, to further upgrade the finance function in Vita.

As part of the Programme Implementation Guidelines, Vita will adopt measures to improve donor visibility and acknowledge the funding and partnership of Irish Aid in the programme countries, to other donors, and in Irish fundraising, communication and advocacy. A Financial Procedures Manual prepared by Vita Dublin, and harmonised with the Eritrea and Ethiopia Field Offices finance manuals, will be in operation from 2008.

9. Funding (Strategic Objective C)

Based on the funding objective, an annual fundraising plan will be completed throughout the 2008-2010 period, to address Vita's programme co-funding commitments under the three year programme plan. The domestic fundraising target for Vita for 2008-2010 is €7.5 million. These funds will co-fund the contribution of our institutional donor partners for the Horn of Africa sustainable livelihoods programme, as well as cover Vita Dublin administration costs and overheads and build a reserve fund.

The table below summarises the proposed 2008-2010 Fundraising Programme (Figures are Net):

Fundraising Source	Note	Total	2008	2009	2010	2010 %
Irish Public	Retail & events(net)	1,850,000	450,000	600,000	800,000	21%
	Corporate (net)	2,300,000	300,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	27%
Irish Aid	2007 + block grant	3,560,000	1,670,000	920,000	970,000	27%
Other Institutional Donors	EU and others	1,625,000	200,000	500,000	925,000	25%
Total		9,335,000	2,620,000	3,020,000	3,695,000	100%

The broadening of Vita's Irish fundraising base into the corporate and philanthropy sectors will allow Vita to establish an ongoing independent source of committed and uncommitted funds, to complement the present retail and events fundraising programme. Vita will also look to the European Union, bilateral donors and

Vita will endeavour to ensure that fundraising costs will not exceed 30% of income from any fundraising source or activity.

Vita will take practical measures articulated in the annual Fundraising Action Plans to ensure that the values of accountability and respect are rigorously applied in fundraising activities.

The fundraising plan will focus on Irish domestic fundraising as follows:

Retail Fundraising

Direct marketing campaigns including e-marketing to Vita's data base of contributors

Thematic campaigns through Macra na Feirme, Banulacht and other established networks

Events, shows and exhibitions

Corporate and Institutional Fundraising

Bringing Irish private sector funding, expertise and added value to the livelihoods programme

Partnering Irish companies including employee funds, marketing campaigns and corporate grants linked to social responsibility, with projects in thematic areas such as environmental renewal, forestry, agriculture and cooperative building

Communications Plan

Vita will focus on establishing a long-term organisational image, ethos and ethics consistent with the programme strategy and approach, and the core organisational values of respect and accountability. As a signatory to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Messages and Images, Vita will strictly adhere to the standards and ethos of publicity and fundraising promotion which would reflect our programming values of respect for people and their fundamental rights, and a spirit of partnership and mutual learning.

Vita's communication strategy will reflect its position as a small niche organisation working with communities for the sustainable development of their livelihoods. Public awareness raising in general, will form a large part of the communications approach. This will include building direct linkages between our partners and constituents in Ireland and communities and partners with whom we work. The partnership and funding contribution of Vita's institutional donor partners, particularly Irish Aid, will be acknowledged where relevant in all communications.