



# Towards sustainable CAHWs: recommendations for VSBs, Veterinary Services, and development partners

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## Context

Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) deliver basic animal health and production services in areas where veterinarians and VPPs fall short. The sustainability of their activities is hampered by the lack of agreed criteria around their scope of work, training, modalities of supervision and remuneration, and the lack of institutional support.

As part of a joint WOA/VSF-Int project aiming at strengthening the enabling environment for CAHWs, VSF-Int developed a **Handbook for planning and managing CAHW programmes**, intended for private, public and civil society organisations as well as institutional actors.

## Methods / Description of activities

- ✓ Strengths and weaknesses of CAHW programmes were analysed through a **global literature review** (Hoots, 2022) and **field-based case studies** in 4 countries (Burundi, Cambodia, Niger, South Sudan) conducted in 2023.
- ✓ VSF-Int compiled the collected evidence on successful approaches into a Handbook. From March to June 2024, **37 CAHW experts** with experience in Africa and Asia consolidated and validated the Handbook through 2 rounds of consultations.



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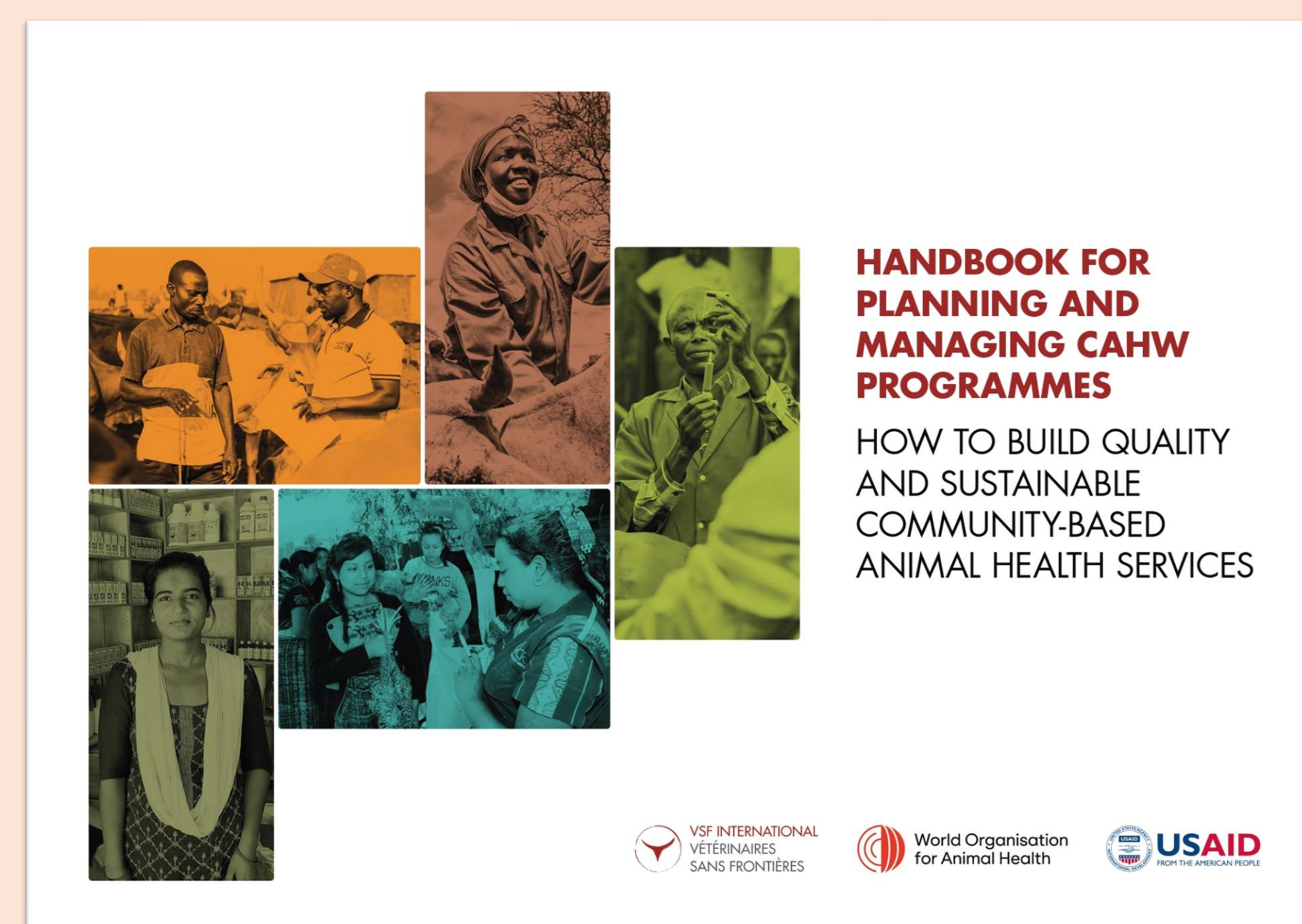
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## Results

The Handbook provides guidance based on 7 pillars, relating to the most critical sustainability factors:

1. Analysing local context and needs with communities
2. Designing the programme in a participatory manner
3. Selecting the right CAHW candidates
4. Training CAHWs appropriately
5. Planning supervision and continuing training
6. Planning access to quality veterinary inputs
7. Ensuring the financial sustainability of the programme

The Handbook also provides practical recommendations for national decision-makers wishing to officially recognise CAHWs as part of their animal health workforce.



Handbook available at:

[vsf-international.org/project/handbook-cahw-programmes/](https://vsf-international.org/project/handbook-cahw-programmes/)

## Conclusions and recommendations

- ✓ **Veterinary Statutory Bodies** should define the official scope of work and accountability mechanism for CAHWs, as well as training and licensing requirements.
- ✓ **Veterinary Services and line Ministries** should set up a national database of active CAHWs, to have a clear picture of the number and geographical distribution of CAHWs in their country and be able to plan for future CAHW training in areas where existing workforce is not meeting the needs.
- ✓ **NGOs, agencies, and their donors** should comply with national regulations regarding CAHW training and authorization to practice. Sustainable exit strategies should be designed for CAHWs to work in synergy with the existing animal health workforce.