Trias is a Flemish development NGO established in 2002, resulting from the integration of the organizations ACT, Form, and Ieder Voor Allen. In 2006, Trias finalized its first strategic plan, which included a strategy on local economic development for the period 2006-2012. In 2011, it initiated a process to define the organization's strategic choices for the period of 2013-2022. The main elements of this strategy are summarized below.
1 OVERALL STRATEGY

IDENTITY, VISION, AND MISSION

Trias is a movement NGO. In Flanders, it is backed by three rural and three entrepreneurial membership-based organizations (MBOs): KVLV, Landelijke Gilden, KLJ, Markant, Unizo, and Neos. Trias is also supported by a larger network that identifies with its vision, encompassing organizations such as CD&V, KUL, ... The MBOs and the network are formally represented in the Board and General Assembly and help steer the organization. The MBOs’ characteristics and beliefs are integrated in Trias’s identity and form an important contribution to the definition of its strategic choices.

Trias’s vision is based on the belief that individuals, groups, and MBOs like cooperatives, credit and saving groups, etc. possess the strength required for self-development and joint action towards social and economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, wealth creation, and well-being. Trias’s mission is to improve livelihood security and wellbeing of family farmers (FF) and small-scale entrepreneurs (SSE) by supporting their respective MBOs. Trias also wants to stimulate worldwide exchange and cooperation between farmers and entrepreneurs.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TRIAS

Major global trends in development show the dismantling of the traditional aid system and the emergence of a new system for international cooperation; collaborative management of global challenges in a multi-polar world is key to this new system. Thus, urgent priorities for development are:

- sustainable agriculture and food security
- inclusive growth and (small-scale) private sector development
- climate change and the need to build resilient communities
- empowerment of local actors
- policy coherence for development
- innovative forms of international collaboration through peer-to-peer exchange and coalitions
- the crucial role of women and young people in development

This international development context provides opportunities for Trias, because these priorities are fully in line with its identity, vision, and mission. In addition, Trias possesses different strengths to make a contribution within this setting:

- support from social movements
- focus on empowerment of those in productive professions (farmers and entrepreneurs) for local development
- importance attached to building legitimate and strong MBOs that can influence policy processes
- ability to scale up by connecting different levels of intervention (local, national, international)
- existence of strategic partners worldwide
However, this context also creates major **challenges**. The political and financial environment for development cooperation is difficult. Mobilizing support for its work will be demanding as well. Furthermore, a relatively small Northern-based organization such as Trias needs to focus and specialize to deliver a sustainable impact on development.

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

Trias envisions a **final goal** with a timeframe of up to 20 years, that it would like to see in the lives of family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs and in their societies. To assure effective progress towards this change, six underlying **domains of change** must be addressed:

- **Family farmers and small scale entrepreneurs have self-confidence and ability to change their own life**
- **Organized family farmers & small scale entrepreneurs, especially excluded groups and poor people, improve sustainably their livelihoods, connect and act collectively**
- **MBOs contribute to an inclusive society in which men, women, young people, ... equally participate and contribute**
- **MBOs contribute to social and professional development of their members**
- **Nort/South and South/South partners collaborate to address shared challenges**
- **MBOs are active in coalitions / movements to build countervailing powers**
For Trias, MBOs are the best placed actors to assure the effective realization of these changes. **Four blocks of triggers** need to be induced to effectively allow MBOs to play that role:

- Poor people, women, and young people empower themselves, which allows for their active participation in MBOs.
- Improved and sustainable organization of MBOs.
- MBOs and their strategic partners facilitate integrated quality services to ensure increased participation in markets, especially of poor people, women, and young people.
- MBOs coordinate, dialogue, and collaborate with other actors towards a more inclusive global society.

## 2 CONTENT

### STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND WHAT SUCCESS WOULD LOOK LIKE

The long-term goal and its critical blocks of triggers have been translated into a strategic framework allowing further definition of the measurable expected impact, particularly the outcome and results for Trias’s work in the next six years.

This strategic framework also allows Trias to streamline its interventions in different regional contexts, monitor and evaluate the success of the interventions, and emphasize the coherence of the different components of its work.

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**The strategic framework 2013-2022**

**GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

Organized FF and SSE – especially poor people, women, and young people – have sustainable improvements in their livelihoods, and connect and act collectively.

**DOMAIN OF CHANGE**

1. Organized FF and SSE have improved self-confidence and the ability to change their lives.
2. Organized FF and SSE have improved access to assets and services responding to their needs and challenges.
3. Organized FF and SSE are active in coalitions and movements to build countervailing power.
This strategic framework helps to provide an answer to the question "How do we know Trias is successful in 2022?"

We will consider Trias successful only when family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs, and especially poor people, women, and young people, are better organized in more open organizations that represent them, relate to others, play a more prominent role in society, and have improved their livelihood.

Improved livelihood will be realized by building the human, financial, natural, physical, and social capital of family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs through increased access to, use of, and control over a range of resources and assets, such as new and innovative production technologies to aid transformation and financial services adapted to the target groups. Women, poor people, and young people will benefit from this in equal amounts.
Systemic change in market systems and society will contribute to the improved livelihood. This systemic change will have been powered by stronger MBOs that strengthen the social fabric, build economic power, increase local competitiveness, influence power relations, constitute an effective counter force, and connect to local, national, and international stakeholders. The role of MBOs in inclusive economic development will be recognized more and more by governments.

KEY STRATEGIC ELEMENTS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

For Trias, the key actors in the South are small-scale entrepreneurs and family farmers. Small-scale entrepreneurs can be active in both agriculture-related activities or outside the agricultural sector (handicrafts, catering, transport, etc.). Trias pays special attention to the poorer sections of these groups, including women, poor people, and young people. However, Trias does not work with the most marginalized groups in society that are and will not be economically active, and which rely exclusively on formal or informal social safety nets. Trias also targets members of the six Northern MBOs, who are family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs.

The preferred partners for Trias in the North and the South are MBOs of family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs. Both will be taken up in the partner mixture. Trias does not limit the types of MBOs it wants to collaborate with, but applies some minimal criteria. When relevant and requested by MBO partners, Trias also engages in partnerships with other service delivery organizations (NGOs, MFIs, etc.) for reasons of efficiency.

Trias’s main strategy is strengthening MBOs. To do so, Trias takes up different roles: coach, facilitator of organizational development, financer, provider of network contacts, bridge builder, etc. Trias also invests in renewed partnerships between MBOs across borders, both North-South and South-South, aimed at mutually beneficial exchanges and increased solidarity.

Trias continues its intervention in continents and countries in the South where it has historical ties. Trias also operates in Flanders and East-Belgium, where it collaborates with its Northern MBO partners. When opportunities occur that allow for innovative approaches, Trias can expand to new intervention zones.

Specific intervention zones within these countries will be selected, taking into account the following criteria:

• the presence of a critical mass of family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs organized in MBOs
• the presence of relevant and complementary civil society organizations and public actors
• the probability of generating operating funds
• Trias will work in rural areas and in cities that are linked to those rural areas.
Trias continues to actively seek synergy and complementarity with other stakeholders. It will further invest in and capitalize on partnerships within its broad network, in a quest for increased support for Trias’s work, increased coherence and quality of approaches and vision, and increased impact at the level of the key actors.

Trias adheres to the principles of sustainable development in all its aspects and will apply these in its strategy, programs, organizational culture, and public image. This means that Trias aims to achieve a positive, long-term, and balanced impact on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions at the level of the beneficiaries, their organizations, and their society.

3 ORGANISATION

To obtain results at the level of key actors, Trias also needs to work on its internal organization and management processes.

Trias will be successful only if employees and volunteers are valued in their talents and can achieve both organizational and personal goals. Trias teams will be composed of strong professionals with strong skills, values, and engagement. In principle, local competencies are preferred over expat ones. To act as bridge between North and South and because local expertise is sometimes not available, teams will be composed of both expat (Northern and Southern) and local staff, with the majority consisting of locals.

Staff will be satisfied in their jobs, stress levels will be managed, and a good balance between professional and private life will be guaranteed. Staff will have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and competencies, and internal mobility will be increased. More volunteers will be recruited and mobilized. Committed people from the constituency of Trias and the broader network will increasingly be involved in logistics support, knowledge sharing and learning, as well as in policy and program development.

Trias will further develop its integrated HR approach, with special attention to a strategy of training and competency development, and a clear integration of the principles of diversity and inclusiveness. Staff satisfaction surveys will be conducted. Professional volunteer management will be guaranteed.

In financial terms, Trias will continue to work towards healthy and transparent financial resource management. Overall overhead cost will be kept at a stable level of less than 20%. Human resource costs will be closely monitored, and the presence of highly qualified staff will be capitalized on, where possible. Fundraising for Trias expenses will have increased to at least 30% of the total annual budget; fundraising will be guaranteed through a one-on-one relations approach. Trias will be not more than 60% dependent on a single donor, and locally available funding in the regions will have been mobilized.
Trias invests in the operationalization of a **double and integrated bookkeeping** system and will combine this with regular external audits. Trias is building internal capacities for sound financial management and will establish its own internal control systems. Financial tools will be standardized within the organization, with provision of timely and regular financial information to those concerned. Financial data will be integrated in Trias’s overall planning and monitoring system.

Trias opts for a **decentralized way of working**. The organizational structure with regional teams and central departments at head office will be retained. Notwithstanding a decentralized structure, shared corporate identity and strategy will be guaranteed. Participation and clear alignment between regions and departments will be ensured. **Internal communication** is crucial in this decentralized setting; Trias will therefore invest in quality IT infrastructure and software.