AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES



Pan African Strategy for the Preservation of Donkey Species in Africa

2026 - 2035

All rights reserved. Reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without any prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of material in this information product for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the copyright holders.

Requests for such permission should be addressed to:

The Director
African Union – Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)
Kenindia Business Park, Museum Hill, Westlands Road
P.O. Box 30786-00100, Nairobi, KENYA
Or by e-mail to: ibar.office@au-ibar.org
Published by AU-IBAR, Nairobi, Kenya
Copyright: © 2025 African Union – Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)



Donkeys are an integral part of the socio-economic fabric of Africa, serving as critical sources of transport, draught power, and support for daily activities such as fetching water or firewood, ploughing fields or taking goods to market

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS iv

FOREWORD v

PREFACE vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT 1
BACKGROUND 1
CONTEXT: THE SITUATION OF THE AFRICAN DONKEY 2
GUIDING PRINCIPLES 3

CHAPTER 2: THE STRATEGY 4
CONTEXT FOR THE STRATEGY 4
THE STRATEGY 4
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS 4

CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION 7
STAKEHOLDERS 7
IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS 7
RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS 8
ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION 9
COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS 10
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION 10

ABIDJAN DECLARATION ON THE COMMON POSITION AND CONTINENTAL MORATORIUM ON DONKEY SLAUGHTER FOR SKINS IN AFRICA 11

REFERENCES 14

ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
AHSA	Animal Health Strategy for Africa
APAW	Africa Platform for Animal Welfare
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-IBAR	African Union Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources
AWSA	Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Communities of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICPALD	IGAD - Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ICWE	International Coalition for Working Equines
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institution
LiDeSA	Livestock Development Strategy for Africa
MS	Member States
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
NSA's	Non State Actors
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPANA	Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad
STC	Specialized Technical Committee of African Union
PADCo	Pan-African Donkey Conference
PFPA	Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine
VSF	*Vétérinaires Sans Frontières*
WOAH	World Organization for Animal Health

FOREWORD



Donkeys have been crucial players in the socio-economic and ecological fabric for millennia, particularly in Africa. They form the backbone of rural livelihoods, facilitating transport, providing draft power, food security and supporting agriculture. Their adaptability to diverse environments and their role in combating climate change foster sustainable farming practices. Through their quiet contributions, they generate income for families and promote the empowerment of women, thereby strengthening communities. Despite their vital importance, donkeys remain largely undervalued, and their preservation is essential to ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future.

In recent years, donkeys across the continent have come under increasing pressure. Threats such as the unsustainable global demand for their skin, poor animal welfare conditions, indiscriminate slaughter, and gaps in policy and enforcement frameworks have created a crisis that demands urgent, unified action. The rapid decline in donkey populations in some regions not only signals a major animal welfare concern but also poses a serious threat to the livelihoods and resilience of communities that depend on them.

The Pan-African Strategy for the Preservation, Welfare and Sustainable Utilization of Donkeys in Africa is a direct response to this growing challenge. It is a visionary, evidence-based framework developed through an inclusive, African-led process, bringing together Regional Economic Communities, governments, civil society, development partners, and communities.

It sets a common agenda to safeguard and sustainably manage donkey populations across Africa, while recognizing their unique contribution to the continent's development aspirations.

This strategy outlines clear priorities: strengthening policy and legal frameworks; promoting responsible ownership and welfare; curbing unsustainable trade and exploitation; improving data and knowledge systems; and fostering cross-border and intersectoral collaboration. It champions the integration of donkey welfare into national animal health and livestock systems and calls for harmonized regional action rooted in the principles of sustainability, equity, and resilience.

Most importantly, the strategy places the voices and needs of communities at its core. It recognizes that protecting donkeys is not only just about animal welfare, but also about preserving livelihoods, empowering rural economies, and achieving broader sustainable development goals, including those related to food security, gender equity, and climate resilience.

As we move forward, it is imperative that stakeholders across the continent commit to translating this strategy into coordinated and tangible action. Through strategic partnerships, political will, and sustained investment, we can ensure that donkeys are incorporated in policy, practice, and protection.

Let us move together, with purpose and resolve, to safeguard the future of donkeys and the communities that depend on them.

Hon Moses Vilakati
Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment

PREFACE



It is with immense pride that I present this preface dedicated to the Pan-African Strategy for the Preservation of Donkey Species in Africa. This document represents a decisive step toward the defense of our animal heritage and the support of communities that depend on this essential animal.

Donkeys have always held a central place in the traditions and economies of many regions in Africa. They are steadfast allies of farmers, contributing to food security and rural development. However, the growing demand for donkey skins threatens this precious species. Unregulated trade has led to alarming exploitation, prompting us to act proactively.

This strategy, developed in response to the historic decision of the Heads of State of the African Union to prohibit the slaughter of donkeys for their skins, aims to establish a coherent framework for the preservation of these animals. It seeks to strengthen their role in our communities while ensuring their welfare and protection.

We believe that the mobilization of all stakeholders from governments to civil society organizations, including the private sector is essential to ensure the success of this initiative. Through effective collaboration, we can restore the donkey population in Africa while developing sustainable practices that benefit both donkeys and the communities that rely on them.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of this strategy, especially the experts and organizations that have shared their expertise and insights. Together, let us build a future where donkeys can thrive, thus contributing to the sustainability and resilience of our societies.

Thank you for your commitment to this noble cause.

Dr. Huyam Salih

Director of African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Donkeys are voiceless to express the feeling of gratitude and appreciation to all stakeholders who tirelessly provided their energies, knowledge and expertise to the development of this strategy. On their behalf, and on behalf of the donkey dependent communities, I thank the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Heads of State and Government Session) for the Executive Decision that directed the development of this document. This document was developed under the leadership of AU-IBAR, through a collaborative and consultative process led by Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States (MS) and with support of the International Coalition for working Equids (ICWE) and a Technical Working Group.

Under the overall supervision of Dr. Huyam Salih, Director of AU-IBAR. The Technical Working Group comprised of Dr Hiver Boussini, Prof. James Wabacha, Dr Annie Lewa – Kigezo and Dr Elynn Njeri from AU-IBAR, Dr Fouad Mohammed (ECOWAS), Dr Wamalwa Kinyanjui (IGAD/ICPALD), Dr Bouzabo Patchili (ECCAS) Dr Aboubacar Nacro, Dr Diakite Djenebou, Dr Tinak Nathalie, Dr Alloya Samson, Dr Anette Kitambi, Dr Alphonse Sene, representing Member States, Prof Philip Mshelia and Dr. Camille Laure Nguekeng (academia), Dr Raphael Kinoti, Mr Emmanuel Sarr, Mr Samuel Theuri from Brooke Hospital for Animals, Dr Otieno Mtula (The Donkey Sanctuary) Penny ward and Dr Josep Subirana from World Horse Welfare, Dr Amadou Doumbia (SPANA), Dr Ulrich Bassane (VSF Belgium) and Sidy Ndiaye (UEMOA).

The support of the AUC, through H.E. the Commissioner was invaluable and fundamental to this achievement.

Lastly, I am deeply indebted to all staff of AU-IBAR and any other person who played a role in coordinating the development of this document.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

The 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Heads of State and Government Session) in the Executive Decision EX.CL/Dec.1233-1264(XLIV) "REQUESTED the Commission through the relevant technical office to lead, plan and coordinate an African common position and moratorium on the exploitation of the donkey through its slaughter in Africa for the exploitation of its skin to; Anticipate and mitigate the negative impact of the donkey skin trade to; Ensure the preservation of the species with the ultimate goal of improving food and nutrition security, Safeguarding the livelihoods of the donkey-dependent communities and to ensure its contribution to sustainable economic growth"; they further "REQUESTED the Commission through the relevant technical office to develop a Pan African Strategy for the Development of Donkeys in Africa and action plan for increased production and productivity"

The Pan-African Donkey Strategy is a response to the AU Executive Decisions for an African common position and moratorium on donkey skin trade. To achieve this, the strategy aims;

1. To secure, and increase commitment by member states to implement the AU moratorium on slaughter for the DST and protect against illegal slaughter and safeguard the sustainable livelihoods of donkey- dependent communities in Africa
2. To secure and increase commitment by Member States to protect donkeys through inclusion in the national animal resources development policies, strategies, programs, and investment plans
3. To strengthen monitoring, data collection, and knowledge sharing on donkeys and other working equids by ensuring their inclusion in national livestock censuses and data systems, and by promoting regular reporting and exchange of progress, challenges, and lessons learned among Member States—particularly in relation to the implementation of the African common position and moratorium on donkey exploitation for the skin trade and integration into national policies.
4. To improve the welfare and husbandry of donkeys, and increase sustainable and humane production practices, as well as the productivity of donkey species. This includes ensuring access to veterinary care, parasite control, wound prevention, proper handling, and equipment, alongside integration into One Health frameworks. It also encompasses end-of-life considerations, ensuring humane management and ethical treatment during the final stages of a donkey's life.
5. To spearhead development of the sustainable and welfare friendly donkey value chains, and, research on breeds and breeding programs
6. To accelerate collaboration, partnerships, and resource mobilization for a coordinated continental program on donkey conservation and management, while advancing a global advocacy strategy to promote the African common position and moratorium beyond Africa. This includes engaging with international institutions, development banks, donors, national governments, and private sector actors to build support for a global ban and ensure working equids are included in relevant policies and investments.
7. To catalyze coordinated actions that protect donkeys and the communities dependent on them, through policy alignment, capacity development, and strategic investment.

The strategy has been developed under the leadership of the African Union - InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AUIBAR[1]) through a consultative process that involved the Regional Economic Communities[2], Member States (MS), World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH)[3], Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO[4]), the International Coalition for Working Equids (ICWE)[5] animal welfare organizations and other key relevant stakeholders. It will be implemented through the guidance of AUIBAR. The implementation will be country led and supported by development partners.

CONTEXT: THE SITUATION OF THE AFRICAN DONKEY

The donkey is an essential animal resource that was first domesticated in Africa, making it truly African and an integral part of the continent's heritage. According to the FAO, the global donkey population is estimated to be nearly 52 million, with two-thirds found in Africa, although their distribution varies significantly from one country to another. Donkeys play a vital role in supporting the livelihoods of millions of people across Africa, contributing significantly to both rural and urban economies. They provide essential daily support to households by carrying water, firewood, agricultural produce, and goods for trade. Their contribution is particularly critical for women and children, who often rely on donkeys to reduce the burden of domestic and economic labor. As such, donkeys have a direct impact on several Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to poverty reduction, gender equality, education, and decent work. Today, it is only in Africa where the wild species of the donkey (Equus Africanus), can be found, though it is critically endangered.

The donkey in Africa, especially in rural areas, is now faced with a serious welfare and existence threat from the burgeoning demand for their skin, propelled by an unfounded traditional belief that their skins and some body parts have medicinal properties. While great investment in the research of intensive breeding of donkeys has taken place, donkey farming to meet the demand for skins is scientifically proven to be unsustainable due to long gestation periods, low reproductive rates, and high welfare risks associated with intensive systems. This approach also poses serious ethical and logistical challenges. The situation is further threatened by including cross-border smuggling between neighboring Member States. Donkeys may not show easily recognizable signs of disease or may have subclinical infection. They may act as a carrier, creating a reservoir of infection. Practicing good biosecurity and an understanding of good donkey health is essential to help prevent the spread of disease.

Despite their value, donkeys are not regarded as essential livestock in agricultural policies and programs, leading to their frequent exclusion from development strategies and investment plans. This neglect results in unsatisfactory welfare conditions, limited access to affordable healthcare, and the use of inappropriate equipment, as well as an insufficient recognition of their economic and social contributions.

[1] AU-IBAR is a specialized technical office of the African Union Commission (AUC), within the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) to provide leadership in the development of animal resources for Africa.

[2] Regional Economic Communities (REC). These are regional groupings of African states, recognized by the African Union (AU), that aim to facilitate economic integration and cooperation within their respective regions and the wider African Economic Community (AEC). The AU recognizes eight RECs: UMA, CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC

[3] World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) - An intergovernmental organisation, focusing on transparently disseminating information on animal diseases, improving animal health globally and thus build a safer, healthier and more sustainable world.

[4] The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger

[5] ICWE – is comprised of leading working animal NGOs Brooke, The Donkey Sanctuary, SPANA and World Horse Welfare and was established to work with the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and its members to implement the WOAH Terrestrial Code Chapter 7.12 on the Welfare of Working Equids.

Furthermore, there is a shortage of quality and accessible veterinary services, alongside government administrations that do not prioritize their welfare. It is crucial that these animals have access to adequate nutrition, clean drinking water, appropriate shelter, and suitable resting areas. Additionally, they must be protected from pain, injuries, and diseases while being allowed to express natural behaviors and maintain good mental states, in accordance with the principles of One Health.

An assessment conducted among 25 African countries by AUIBAR, demonstrated that donkeys now face a bigger welfare and existential threat propelled by demand for the donkey skins outstripping reproduction rates. The STC and the 37th Heads of States and Governments Summit recognized the alarmingly rapid decline in the donkey population in Africa caused by the demand for their skins for international trade and also recognized that unlike other domesticated animals, donkeys have very low reproductive rate affecting their population numbers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the strategy will be based on the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity cooperation and comparative advantage taking into account the mandates and the relationships of the different institutions involved in its implementation. Transparency and mutual accountability will also be critical and mechanisms established to ensure these principles are upheld.

The strategy recognizes the unsustainability of the donkey skin trade, both in terms of its ecological impact and its threat to livelihoods, and positions this as a foundational rationale for action. It is further grounded in the recognition that donkeys are sentient beings with intrinsic value, whose welfare must be safeguarded as a matter of ethical responsibility and sustainable development.

Emphasis will be placed on establishing solid mutually beneficial partnerships among the various stakeholders at national, regional, continental and international levels based on the scientific evidence, experiences and lessons learned from the successful implementation of previous continent-wide programmes in the livestock/ working animal health and welfare sector.



Africa needs to develop sustainable and welfare-friendly donkey value chains, and research on breeds and breeding programs to address the rapid decline in the donkey population across Africa

CHAPTER 2: THE STRATEGY

CONTEXT FOR THE STRATEGY

The strategy is aligned and contributing to the following existing policy frameworks; The WOAH Malabo Declaration, the AU Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), Sustainable Development Goals, The Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDESA), Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA) and the AUIBAR 2024-2028 strategy among other strategy frameworks adopted by the AU.

THE STRATEGY

Vision

The vision of this strategy is – 'an Africa where donkeys are recognized both as sentient beings with intrinsic value and are thriving for socio-economic development, biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods'

Mission

The mission of the strategy is to 'Increase commitment, collaboration, investment and capacity of AU Member states and stakeholders to develop a flourishing population of donkeys and safeguard their welfare and sustainable utilization in supporting livelihoods'

Goal

The goal of the strategy is to 'provide a framework and guidelines for Member States to advance the preservation of healthy donkeys, ensuring their welfare, and safeguarding the sustainable livelihoods of the donkey dependent communities'.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

This strategy aims to achieve the following:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	EXPECTED RESULTS
1) Improve the health and welfare of donkeys	1.1. To strengthen the capacity of donkey owners and users for the humane care and responsible management of donkeys across all value chains. *This will include promoting a shared understanding of welfare standards—such as appropriate working limits, rest, feeding, healthcare, and shelter—while ensuring that efforts go beyond knowledge transfer to include access to adequate resources, services, and institutional support. A duty of care must underpin all donkey use, recognizing their sentience and the ethical responsibility to protect their welfare.*

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	EXPECTED RESULTS
	1.2. Fundamental domains of donkey welfare are improved/ Strengthened/ enhanced through education and training *This will emphasize access to veterinary care, primary healthcare, wound prevention, parasite control, humane handling practices, proper equipment, and integration into One Health frameworks.This will also include attention to end-of-life care, ensuring that donkeys are treated humanely in their final stages, with proper management, pain relief, and ethical disposal practices.*
	1.3. Animal health and disease management system and capacities strengthened and inclusive of donkey needs
2) Increase investment in sustainable donkey production and husbandry, productivity, genetic preservation and value chain development programs	2.1. Capacity of donkey owners for production and productivity strengthened *This will be done through enhanced preservation, ex situ and in situ conservation, development and management of donkeys*
	2.2. Sustainable and welfare friendly economic opportunities for donkey-dependent value-chain identified and enhanced, *Ensuring that all productivity and income-generating uses of donkeys are underpinned by minimum welfare standards*
	2.3. Access to investment opportunities by value chain actors and alternative livelihood activities for donkey dependent communities sustainable strengthened
3) Developing and harmonising holistic policies, legislation and actionable strategies for donkey preservation by Member States.	3.1. Regional policies on donkey preservation reviewed/developed and harmonized
	3.2. AU Member States implementing the African common position and moratorium on donkey slaughter for the skin trade in order to mitigate negative impacts of the trade and safeguard the livelihoods of donkey-dependent communities enhanced
	3.3. AU Member States, regional and national institutions (law enforcement agencies implementing a common position on the AU moratorium on donkey skin) capacities strengthened
	3.4 National and international level enforcement actions and Inter-agency collaborations targeting illegal movement of donkeys, with a focus on cross border trafficking and the illegal skin trade strengthened *This will be done through national enforcement plans, community-led monitoring, and targeted training for law enforcement and border officials*
	3.5 AU-IBAR and partners continue increasing global awareness on the donkey slaughter for the skin trade and work in alliance with international bodies (UNFAO, WOAH, ICWE, other agencies) to better curb the trade.
4) Undertake and disseminate relevant research on donkeys	4.1. Research on donkey sustainable management, feed and genetic resources improved
	4.2. Continuous research on the donkey skin trade, including its links to international demand drivers (e.g., ejiao). *This could include, mapping trade routes, factors influencing and sustaining it and its connection with other illegal trade, as well as its impacts on both donkey welfare and human health*
	4.3. Data on donkey populations and welfare indicators collected and research on health and welfare friendly value-added products strengthened to inform holistic policy and development programmes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	EXPECTED RESULTS
5) Communication, knowledge management, reporting and awareness	5.1 Information on donkey preservation and development shared among Stakeholders
	5.2 Knowledge on preservation and importance of donkey welfare issues among stakeholders across sectors enhanced
	5.3 Attitudes toward donkey welfare and value within local systems improved. *This will include promoting respect for donkeys as sentient beings, fostering recognition of their vital contributions to local economies, and ensuring that their welfare is actively considered in decision-making.*
6) Strengthen collaboration, resources mobilization and coordination for the implementation of the strategy	6.1 Linkages along the sustainable and welfare friendly donkey value chains explored and created
	6.2 Information on donkey preservation and development shared among stakeholders
	6.3 Resource mobilization strengthened by mainstreaming Donkey preservation and development activity in the National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs). *This will be done through encourage the establishment of national committees to design and monitor national action plans for the development and implementation of this strategy at national level*
	6.4 Mechanisms and plans to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the donkey strategy by Members States established



The variability of different colors of donkey hides in Africa

CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION

STAKEHOLDERS

The Pan African Donkey strategy envisages the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in its implementation. These stakeholders have different roles and responsibilities according to their mandate, comparative advantage and the principle of subsidiarity. Based on these guiding principles, the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in the implementation of this strategy will be defined to avoid implementation gaps and overlapping of interventions.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Based on the GUIDING PRINCIPLES, the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in the implementation of this strategy are defined to avoid implementation gaps and overlapping of interventions.

TheA frican Union Commission (AUC) throughA UIBAR will be in charge of the overall coordination for implementation of the strategy and will lead the governance body that will be appointed to oversee the development and execution of the implementation PLANS AND PROCESSESES. AU-IBAR will develop a continental plan of action as well as a template for regional and national action plans and reporting that are contextually relevant. AU-IBAR will also be responsible for technical backstopping of RECs, Member States and Non State Actors (NSA's) as well as monitoring implementation and reporting to stakeholders.

The RECs and other regional institutions will be responsible for the regional harmonization of institutional and legal frameworks, facilitation of regional trade of donkeys, promotion and establishment of regional infrastructure and support to MS and Regional stakeholders' organizations.

The roles of the **Member States** will be central to the successful implementation of the strategy. They will be responsible for the following; investing in supportive national infrastructures, delivery of public goods and services (livestock disease surveillance, Veterinary public health), developing and enforcing regulations, developing and monitoring national policies and strategies, supporting NSAs, creating a national environment conducive for private investment and livestock development envisaged in the national livestock policy hubs, conducting research and ensuring academic and continuous education.

The Non-State Actors and other stakeholders' organizations involved in the implementation at different levels will organize and mobilize actors, ensure the feedback of information from the primary beneficiaries to implementing agencies, conduct advocacy and awareness campaigns, build capacities of their members, deliver services and foster the integration of actors along the livestock value chains.

International organizations including FAO, WOAH, ICWE and ILRI will provide technical support, technical backstopping and capacity building for MS, RECs and AUC institutions in line with their respective mandates and comparative advantages.

International bi-lateral and multi-lateral development partners will support the implementation of the strategy at continental, regional, national and local levels in a coordinated and harmonized manner to ensure synergy and coherence of their support.

This Strategy recognizes the role and contribution of donkeys in women, youth, and marginalized groups welfare and also appreciates their efforts in safeguarding and protecting them for posterity. These groups remain underrepresented in policy planning, veterinary service delivery, decision-making forums, and access to economic opportunities linked to donkey value chains. The strategy acknowledges that achieving sustainable outcomes requires inclusive participation, equitable resource allocation, and intentional targeting of benefits.

Private Sector participation and driving force will be encouraged and facilitated at all levels through the formation of effective and working public private partnerships mediated by appropriate engagement platforms such as the existing livestock policy and strategy hubs.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- **Risks**

Even with careful planning, achieving the expected results in the strategy is not without risks, due to various internal and external factors. The possible risks identified are:

- ***Institutional and political factors.*** There is a risk that some Member States may not allocate sufficient resources or prioritize the domestication and implementation of the strategy to the level required for its success. This may hinder progress and impact the effective mobilization of resources needed for the strategy's full implementation.
- ***Security is a major concern in Africa.*** Besides general security concerns, theft, bush slaughter, and cross-border smuggling remains a threat to donkeys in Africa.
- ***Poverty and limited alternative livelihood options among donkey owners*** exposing them to markets offered by the donkey skin trade
- ***Inadequate skilled personnel and extension services*** amongst Member States to effectively provide quality and affordable veterinary care
- ***Risk of the donkey skin trade going underground in the absence of effective enforcement,*** leading to unregulated slaughter, biosecurity threats, and worsened welfare outcomes.
- ***Continued and growing demand for donkey skins.*** Annually close to 6 million donkey skins are required by the ejiao industry with an estimated rise to more than 7 million by 2027, and majority exploited from the continent of Africa. The trade is unsustainable in all its forms

- **Assumptions**

A key assumption that has been made while preparing this Strategy is that Member States and RECs will prioritize mainstreaming donkey issues in livestock strategies and other relevant development programmes.

ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

AUIBAR will endeavor to design an implementation plan inbuilt with an accountability, monitoring, and evaluation framework and report on progress to the implementation of the Pan African Strategy. Results-based management and decision making will be employed to ensure a clear and logical basis for allocating resources to expected results and their eventual attainment.

Financial accountability: this will concern tracking and reporting on allocation, disbursement and utilization of financial resources. This will be achieved by using budgeting, accounting and auditing tools. Another aspect of financial accountability will be to provide assurances that resources are used and authority is exercised according to appropriate and legal procedures, professional standards and societal values.

Performance accountability: this will refer to demonstrating and accounting for performance in terms of agreed-upon performance targets in relation to scope, quality and delivery schedule. The focus will be on service delivery, outputs, outcomes, and impacts through feedback and learning. Performance accountability will be linked to financial accountability in that the financial resources to be accounted for are intended to produce goods, services and benefits for the livestock sector stakeholders. Welfare-specific indicators will be developed and monitored across Member States. Reference will be made to Chapter 7.12 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code on Welfare Standards for Working Equids[6].

Political accountability: this will focus on institutions, procedures and mechanisms that will ensure that governments, RECs and stakeholders deliver on commitments made for the realization of this strategy.

Member states are encouraged to use the framework included in Chapter 7.12 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code, which supports government to develop and implement policies and regulations related to the welfare of working equids, such as donkeys, so that they can ensure that stakeholders, including donkey owners, trainers and other professionals adopt responsible practices that prioritize the well-being of donkeys. ICWE has also produces a range of guidance on enhancing the welfare of donkeys. Such ss the Working Equid Veterinary Manual[7] among others.

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

The understanding and awareness of the donkey and donkey related issues will be amplified to the various stakeholders during the implementation of the donkey strategy. Advocacy messages will be developed from evidence-based and solution-oriented interventions and best practices being undertaken across Africa and other significant regions. These should include references to the welfare risks of the donkey skin trade, the socio-economic value of donkeys in rural livelihoods, and the need for global cooperation to tackle international demand and trafficking.

[6] *https://www.woah.org/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahc/current/chapitre_aw_working_equids.pdf*
[7] *https://www.thebrooke.org/our-work/working-equid-veterinary-manual#:~:text=The%20Working%20Equid%20Veterinary%20Manual%20is%20a%20practical%20veterinary%20handbook,treatment%20and%20approaches%20to%20prevention.*

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Resource Mobilization for the donkey strategy will be undertaken at three levels namely: Continental (AU-IBAR) level, Regional (RECs) level and Member States (MS) Level. Collaborations, partnerships and linkages with donor community, civil society organizations, private sector and institutions will be established and strengthened.



Donkeys play a crucial role in crop production across Africa, and this contributes significantly to the rural food and nutrition security, rural socio-economic growth, livelihood support, the Gross Domestic Product of African Union Member States and thus the Sustainable

ABIDJAN DECLARATION ON THE COMMON POSITION AND CONTINENTAL MORATORIUM ON DONKEY SLAUGHTER FOR SKINS IN AFRICA

Adopted at the Second Pan-African Donkey Conference (PADCO-2)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire – 27th June 2025

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers in Charge of Livestock and Animal Production from, Cameroon, Chad, , Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda, and on behalf of all Ministers in charge of livestock from African Union (AU) Member States, Chief Veterinary Officer (CVOs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Civil Society organization (CSOs), Representatives of international organizations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations International Coalition for Working Equines (ICWE), during the Second Pan African Donkey Conference convened by the InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire 26th – 27th June 2025

2. Guided by the following;

   2.1. The Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.1471(XLIV) of African Union adopted in February 2024 in Addis Ababa, which directed the Commission to institute and coordinate an African Common Position and Moratorium on the slaughter of donkeys for their skins and to develop a donkey strategy.

   2.2. The communication dated 2nd September 2024, Ref. DIR/AU/STRC/13/0924.01, from the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) to African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and Animal Welfare Organizations informing them of the Executive Decision to ban the slaughter of donkeys for their skins, and urging them to support and prioritize its implementation

   2.3. The commitments in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, particularly Articles 3 and 4 on the Objectives of the Union, including the promotion of sustainable development at the economic, social, and cultural levels, as well as the protection of the environment and protection of human and peoples' rights and the promotion of social justice to ensure balanced economic development;

   2.4. The decision of the 4th STC [EX.CL/1310(XL)] which CALLED UPON AU Member States to increase their commitment to protect all animals, including wildlife and other living species to ensure that any use of natural resources, including terrestrial, ocean, sea and marine resources, is ecologically sustainable and humane, as well as the use of sustainable farming practices.

   2.5. The Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA) 2015 - 2035, which seeks to transform the livestock sector by energizing its under-utilized potential and promoting inclusive growth, food security, as well as resilient livelihoods through sustainable animal resources management.

3. Recalling the Malabo Declaration (2014) on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, that stressed the significance of enhancing conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources including, livestock through coherent policies and governance and institutional arrangements at national and regional levels;

4. Noting the Kampala CAADP Declaration (January 2025) on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agri-food Systems in Africa;

5. Upholding the principles and commitments of the Animal Welfare Strategy for Africa (AWSA), jointly endorsed by the AU, FAO, WOAH, and Member States in 2017, which aim to coordinate cross-country / cross-regional animal welfare improvement efforts and forging partnerships to address the production and productivity of animals and actors in the animal resource sector;

6. Cognizant of relevant frameworks, protocols and strategies adopted and being implemented by Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that align with donkey / livestock production, welfare, protection and sustainable use;

7. Acknowledging the 2022 Dar es Salaam Declaration on Donkeys Now and the Future, which underscored the vital contribution of donkeys to rural livelihoods, the threat of donkey's skin trade, the inadequate investment, low donkey reproductive rates, poor welfare standards, cross-border trafficking, and the absence of dedicated national policies to enhance their production and productivity;

8. Determined to preserve the donkey, safeguarding its populations, promote its welfare and sustainable utilization in Africa, as well as protecting the vulnerable communities that rely on them;

9. Recognising evidence that underpins the worrying state of donkeys in Africa, that threatens their existence with the negative consequential impact on GDP, biodiversity, livelihoods and Africa's heritage; Compounded by the complex interlinkage between external factors (demand for ejiao) and local context in Africa (poverty, unemployment, and a lack of alternative livelihoods support).

Hereby declare and adopt the following Common Position and Moratorium:

10. Adopt the AU-IBAR led Pan African Strategy for the Preservation of Donkey Species in Africa 2026 - 2035, and recommend it for endorsement by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC-ARDWE) and for adoption by the AU Heads of State and Governments for implementation by member states.

11. Adopt an Africa wide moratorium on the slaughter of donkeys and export of live animals for purposes of donkey skin trade and Urge AU Member States to;
    11.1. Domesticate it and align their livestock and related policies, laws, administrative regulations, ministerial directives and institute sustained crackdown on the illegal donkey skin trade.

11.2. Not to issue new licenses for donkey slaughterhouses and encourage them to suspend and revoke operations of existing donkey slaughterhouses.

11.3. Embrace cross border collaboration and to strengthen surveillance of land and maritime borders, targeting informal crossings used for donkey smuggling.

12. Further Urge AU-IBAR to;

12.1. Develop a monitoring and reporting matrix detailing legal, institutional and efforts,

12.2. Propose a biennial reporting mechanism for AU Member States to track to track and assess the implementation of the moratorium and the Pan-African Donkey Strategy for the Preservation of Donkey Species in Africa

12.3. Prepare a report every two years, to be presented to the Specialized Technical Committee (STC-ARDWE) and the AU Assembly for review and further guidance.

13. Request that the AU Commission and Member States to communicate the Abidjan Declaration to stakeholders on the donkey skins demand side and raise awareness on the impact of the trade to the African people

14. Request the AU Commission, RECs, and Member States to mobilize financial and technical resources in collaboration with development partners, FAO, WOAH, ICWE and other animal welfare organizations towards the implementation of the Pan-African Donkey Strategy including the establishment of the Africa Donkey Welfare and Preservation Program at the AU-IBAR.

15. Request AU Commission, Member States and Government to co-adopt the World Donkey Day (May 8th) as a day dedicated to celebrate and reflect on the significant contribution of donkeys to humanity

16. Considering that;
    a. African States are engaged in concerted strategic actions on the preservation of their donkey herds and in a moratorium on the progressive ban of donkey skin exports, in line with the socio-economic and environmental impacts observed,
    b. African Union through its competent bodies (AU-IBAR) is facilitating continental dialogues on the sustainable management of donkey resources and promoting a common African position on the trade in donkey skins,
    c. Africa share a desire for bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation anchored on sustainability, ethics and mutual benefit models serving as a vector of shared prosperity rather than increased vulnerability, and in the spirit of upholding joint commitments on sustainability, biodiversity, and equitable development.

We further call for:

i. A diplomatic dialogue with countries importing donkey skins and live donkeys including the People's Republic of China, in a win – win partnership framework at national, regional and continental levels, to
ii. Progressively limit imports of African donkey skins and live donkeys, and support the assessment of their impact and promote sustainable alternatives in the ejiao industry.
iii. Support the implementation of Pan African Strategy for the Preservation, Welfare and Sustainable Utilization of Donkey Species in Africa (2026-2035) and support it in the framework of cooperation that considers natural resources, animal welfare and the needs of rural African communities.
iv. Support to research on alternative and innovative sustainable solutions, for the Preservation, Welfare and Sustainable Utilization of Donkey Species.

Adopted in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 27 June 2025.

REFERENCES

	Document Name	Weblink / Reference
Background and context		
1.	Decisions of the Forty Fourth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council	https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/43741-EX_CL_DEC_1233_-_1264_XLIV_E.pdf
2.	Under The Skin - The Donkey Sanctuary	https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/under-the-skin-report-english-revised-2019.pdf
3.	Mapping the trends of Slaughter for the donkey Skin trade across some Countries in Africa August 2023	• Philip Wayuta Mshelia, Department of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria • Mshelia, P.W. (2023). Mapping the trends of slaughter for the donkey skin trade across some countries in Africa. In Report of the Pan-African Donkey Conference 2022 (pp. [page 32-33]). Pan-African Donkey Conference Secretariat. https://panafricandonkeyconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/REPORT_PADCO-2022_PAN-AFRICAN-DONKEY-CONFERENCE_opt.pdf
4.	117th Congress (2021-2022): Ejiao Act	https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5203/all-info
5.	Donkey skin trade	• Carder, G., Ingasia, O., Ngenoh, E., Theuri, S., Rono, D., & Langat, P. (2019). The emerging trade in donkey hide: An opportunity or a threat for communities in Kenya?. Agricultural Sciences, 10(09), 1152. • Goodrum, F., Theuri, S., Mutua, E., & Carder, G. (2022). The donkey skin trade: challenges and opportunities for policy change. Global Policy, 13(2), 304-309. • Skippen, L., Collier, J., & Kithuka, J. M. (2021). The donkey skin trade: A growing global problem. Brazilian Journal of Veterinary Research and Animal Science, 58, e175262-e175262.
6.	Working equids and their welfare status in disaster risk management: Invaluable support to resilience and recovery in Nicaragua	• Brooke Latin America and Caribbean, Nicaragua. (2022). Working equids and their welfare status in disaster risk management: Invaluable support to resilience and recovery in Nicaragua. In Brooke Annual Research Review 2022 (pp. 12–13). https://www.thebrooke.org/sites/default/files/Downloads/Brooke-Annual-Research-Review-2022.pdf
7.	The economic contribution of working equines in Senegal	• Diop, M., & Fadiga, M. L. (2021). The economic contribution of working equines in Senegal. Brooke. https://www.thebrooke.org/research-evidence/socio-economic-contribution-equids-senegal
Strategic Objective 1: Improve the health and welfare of donkeys		
8.	Agenda 2063 - the Africa we want	https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/Agenda2063_Popular_Version_English.pdf
9.	Invisible helpers: Voices from women	https://www.thebrooke.org/research-evidence/invisible-helpers-voices-women

10.	Socioeconomic contribution and/or impact of disease	• Asteraye, G. B., Pinchbeck, G., Knight-Jones, T., Saville, K., Temesgen, W., Hailemariam, A., & Rushton, J. (2024). Population, distribution, biomass, and economic value of Equids in Ethiopia. Plos one, 19(3), e0295388. • Bonsi, Marta, Neil E. Anderson, and Gemma Carder. "The socioeconomic impact of health problems of working equids in low-and middle-income countries: A scoping review on the female-gender perspectives." CABI One Health 2023 (2023): ohcs202300023. • Bonsi, M., Anderson, N. E., & Carder, G. (2023). The socioeconomic impact of diseases of working equids in low and middle-income countries: A critical review. Animals, 13(24), 3865. • C.L. Nguekeng , T.B.A. Hako1 , J.S. Motsa'a , A.N. Tangomo, F.A. Fonteh & C.T.,2022. Keambou:.Socio economic and technical characteristics of donkeys in the far northern region of Cameroon. Applied Animal Husbandry & Rural Development 2022, Vol.15, 19-31. https://www.sasas.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Nguekeng-2022-Vol-15-1.pdf • Shah, S. Z. A., Nawaz, Z., Nawaz, S., Carder, G., Ali, M., Soomro, N., & Compston, P. C. (2019). The role and welfare of cart donkeys used in waste management in Karachi, Pakistan. Animals, 9(4), 159.
Strategic Objective 2: Increase investment in sustainable donkey production and husbandry, productivity, genetic preservation and value chain development programs		
11.	AU-IBAR Strategic Plan 2024-2028	https://networks.au-ibar.org/download/high-level-coordination-meetings/file/8487/0/AU-IBAR%20Presentation.pdf
12.	Invisible Livestock	https://www.thebrooke.org/sites/default/files/857-TBR%20Inv_Livestock_Web_v1b.pdf
13.	UNDER THE SKIN - The Donkey Sanctuary	https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/under-the-skin-report-english-revised-2019.pdf
Strategic Objective 3: Developing and harmonising holistic policies, legislation and actionable strategies for donkey preservation by Member States.		
14.	Animal Health Strategy for Africa	FAOLEX Database https://faolex.fao.org
15.	Harmonization of Livestock Policy in the East African Region	https://fic.tufts.edu
Strategic Objective 4: Undertake and disseminate relevant research on donkeys		
16.	Effective linkages between science and policy	https://www.sciencedirect.com
17.	Filling knowledge gaps to strengthen livestock policies	https://www.sciencedirect.com
18.	Disaster Risk Management	• Carder, G., & Kelman, I. (2025). Working equids supporting women's disaster risk management. Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal, 34(2), 293-299.
Strategic Objective 5: Communication, knowledge management, reporting and awareness		
19	Knowledge Management, Communications and Visibility	https://www.au-ibar.org/what-we-do/thematic-areas/knowledge-management-communications-and-visibility
Strategic Objective 6: Strengthen collaboration, resources mobilization and coordination for the implementation of the strategya		
20.	Resource Mobilization Strategy	https://www.sadc.int



African Union – Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources
(AU-IBAR)
Kenindia Business Park
Museum Hill, Westlands Road
PO Box 30786-00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 (20) 3674 000
Email: ibar.office@au-ibar.org
Website: www.au-ibar.org