

## **OIE Strategic plan: Governance**

### Increased consultation and transparency

#### **The issue**

The OIE is an intergovernmental organisation of 175 countries set up in 1924 aimed at fighting animal diseases at global level. The OIE delegates consist of the veterinary services of the member countries headed up by the CVO (Chief Veterinary Officers).

Since its strategic plan of 2001-2006, OIE has enlarged its mandate to include animal welfare and food safety. It is working on animal welfare guidelines in the area of wild animals, animals reared, transported and slaughtered for food and animals used for research purposes.

Due to the enlarged scope of work it is probably a new experience for OIE to have a variety of organisations outside the typical veterinary and animal health science bodies showing an interest in the work of OIE on animal welfare.

It is widely accepted among policy makers that good governance includes consultation with those who will be affected by the policies or standards that are being developed. Transparency and participatory policy making belong to the core principles of good governance of every democratic organisation.

This requires the OIE as a democratic organisation to address these issues in the coming years.

The undersigned organisations have now several years of working experience with OIE and would urge OIE and its members to include the issue of good governance, in particular stakeholders' involvement, in the review of its strategic plan.

### **Issues of good governance to be addressed**

#### **Consultation with stakeholders**

The OIE does not seem to have a clearly defined system of consultation with non-governmental bodies.

However, in the *Statements of mission, guiding principles and policies on animal welfare (Code/November-December 2002)* OIE states the following:

- *Its mission*

*c) consultation with relevant stakeholders*

- *its policies*

*That in addition to the use of established consultation processes, OIE will consult with NGO and industry stakeholder interests which can demonstrate a broad based approach to the issue.*

According to its website the OIE has entered in cooperation agreements with some international organisations, mostly industry, producers and government type bodies. The content of these agreements is not available on the OIE website so it is not possible to conclude what type of cooperation or consultation process is included.

It appears that the only cooperation agreement that OIE has with a civil society NGO is with WSPA.

Whereas individuals or certain working groups may have developed informal methods of consultation and own networks, **a formal process of consultation is necessary which would allow different stakeholders to provide input. The way in which this consultation is organised should be made clear to all relevant third parties.**

**This consultation policy should include provisions such as: stakeholders representations, process of consultation, access to documents and a minimum consultation time period.**

Apart from reinforcing OIE's image as a democratic organisation there are many other advantages for OIE to adopt and implement a consultation policy.

**- Valuable information**

Involving different stakeholders will bring a wealth of data, experiences and information to the organisation which are not often available to governments and scientists.

**- Economic, societal concerns of different regions in the world integrated in consideration as well as the latest available scientific and operators' good practices**

Accepting that standards should be science based one should acknowledge that social science, the way consumers and citizens feel about animals and their treatment must be integrated into standard setting. Societal values form as much the basis for policies as does science.

**- Improved acceptance of OIE's work on animal welfare**

Involving a broader base of society in OIE's work will also mean that the results will be better understood and disseminated by the various networks. This will be beneficial to facilitating implementation at local level.

**- Clarity of procedures, terms and decision making**

It would be helpful for stakeholders to have a better understanding of the decision-making process of OIE in relation to the development of the animal welfare work. Clarification is needed about the role of the Committees, how input is considered and what is the basis and the definition of the terms which are used (guidelines, standards, recommendations)

In addition an overview of future work in this area of animal welfare should be part of the next strategic plan.

## **Good practices of other international organisations**

### The European Union

The EU has developed an extensive and detailed system of participation of civil society

The basic principles are outlined in the *White Paper on European Governance (Com 2001/428 final)*

In addition the EU published *General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission' COM(2002)704*

The EU has increased input by stakeholders by organising consultation for every major policy initiative

[http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm)

In addition some parts of the Commission have their own process of consultation (see overview [http://ec.europa.eu/civil\\_society/autres\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/autres_en.htm))

With DGSANCO probably having the most developed one including a Stakeholders Dialogue group to advise SANCO on the processes to facilitate stakeholders consultation.

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/sdg/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/sdg/index_en.htm)

### Council of Europe

[http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/overview\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/overview_en.asp)

Since its foundation the Council of Europe has established working relations with non-governmental organisations. In 1951 the Committee of Ministers decided “to make suitable arrangements for consultation with international nongovernmental organisations which deal with matters that are within the competence of the Council of Europe”. This decision of the Committee of Ministers led to the introduction in 1952 of a consultative status for INGOS.

In 2003, in recognition of the increasingly active role played by the INGOS, the Council of Europe decided to change the former consultative status to one of participatory status. In November 2003, the Committee of Ministers adopted Resolution (2003)8 on a participatory status for international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). All INGOS holding consultative status were automatically given participatory status.

INGOS are invited to provide comments and can participate at the technical meetings to give input in the discussions on standards.

The COE has a specific department dealing with NGOs and Civil Society in addition to a system of observers.

On consultation with NGOs a code of good practice for civil participation in decision making was adopted in 2009 outlining the main principles of NGO participation in decision making.

[http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/Source/Code\\_good\\_practice\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/Source/Code_good_practice_en.pdf)

### Food & Agriculture Organisation

FAO has developed a system of cooperation with civil society which is open to all NGOs sharing some basic principles. The cooperation covers a formal status and partnership status.

[http://www.fao.org/tc/NGO/index\\_en.asp](http://www.fao.org/tc/NGO/index_en.asp)

### Codex Alimentarius

Codex was set up in 1963 and has a well developed stakeholders policy; it has observer status for NGOs with detailed privileges and obligations *Principles concerning the participation of international non-governmental organisations*

[http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/ngo\\_participation.jsp](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/ngo_participation.jsp)