HR GOVERNANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

OVO wants to create a transparent and inclusive management framework to increase the involvement of its volunteers in the OVO community. With more than 150 volunteers, mostly from Belgium, OVO wants to extend its involvement to people of African descent and involve young people and local representatives more in decision-making. This project focuses on human capital, including board members, volunteers and staff.

The main objective of this project is to strengthen governance structures and processes so that human capital can function optimally and actively participate in decision-making and strategic initiatives.

REALITY

OVO is currently facing challenges such as a declining sense of community among volunteers and staff. To address these issues, a more professional human resources policy and framework for staff and volunteers is needed, which includes strategies to increase diversity within the organization and a communication strategy that works to create a more collaborative culture that keeps everyone informed and engaged. A clear governance policy will also help prevent and resolve conflicts of interest in the future.

The goal is to ensure that OVO remains a vibrant and effective organization where both staff and volunteers feel valued and empowered to make meaningful contributions.

CHALLENGES

- **Lack of an overall governance policy**: The lack of clear guidelines can lead to ambiguity and possible inconsistency in decision-making. This sometimes results in conflicts of interest. We also see different perspectives and opinions among volunteers on OVO's strategy, e.g. on how strictly criteria should be applied, whether to emphasize coaching or investing, etc
- **Weaker sense of community within the organization**: Due to COVID and budget constraints, at a time when many new volunteers have joined, there have been limited

opportunities for interaction between volunteers and between volunteers and staff, which has made relationship building difficult.

- **Low volunteer satisfaction and motivation**: volunteers do not feel sufficiently involved in the decision-making process and do not feel sufficiently informed about strategic developments.
- **Lack of updated HR policies throughout the organization**: there is a need for more structure in HR management of staff and volunteers, and a demand for more diversity within the organization, resulting in more diverse perspectives in decision-making processes and bodies.   There is room for improvement for leveraging the diverse expertise available within the organization. A lack of ownership and commitment from some volunteers complicates operations. And there is a lack of clarity about the roles and involvement of various committees/committee members.

OBJECTIVES

- A **governance framework** with clarity around decision-making processes and authority.
- An **HR policy**: in line with legal provisions and outlined to advise management on how to apply it. This policy will address volunteer management, diversity and expertise management, as well as communication and information flows.
- Establishing a **communication strategy for volunteer engagement** with actions to keep everyone engaged, motivated and informed. And that focuses on OVO's mission and encourages teamwork between staff and volunteers to maximize entrepreneurial impact in Africa.

Methods

Together with a team of HR Experts (Jan Gillaerts, Leo Scheers, Hilde Deman), an **inventory of the challenges** was **made** and hypotheses for possible solutions were formulated, as well as a framework for approaching this project.

Led by team leaders with HR experience or expertise, **workshops** were organized. In these, volunteers (with profile HR experience or expertise) and external participants were invited to reflect and formulate ideas on these 5 topics:

1. Efficient meetings and information flow
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Expertise and volunteer management

4. Diversity
5. Volunteer satisfaction, involvement, communication

The findings of these working groups were presented in an **online Q&A** to which all volunteers were invited. More detailed reports (with recommendations) from the workshops can be found in the attached document.

All volunteers were then asked via a **survey** to give their input on key issues. The survey was sent to 168 volunteers to gain insight into their experiences and perspectives. There were 53 respondents, giving a response rate of 31.5%. While this is not a bad result for a survey, we need to be mindful of the fact that 115 volunteers did not feel engaged enough to complete the survey.

The purpose of the survey was to identify strategic improvements that could enhance both the volunteer experience and organizational effectiveness. The survey results provide valuable insight into the volunteer experience. While overall satisfaction is high within the group of respondents, there are clear areas of concern. By implementing improvements in communication, support, flexibility and appreciation, OVO can build a more engaged and satisfied volunteer base.

To discuss the results further in this paper, we refer to the group of respondents.

For more detailed survey results, please refer to the separate document.

Based on this input, a **policy plan** was developed and priorities were identified. An **action plan** was developed for these priorities, which can be found later in this document.

The policy plan and action plan were then reviewed with some experts and OVO's Committee Operational Board.

Policy plan according to HR Roadmap:

For this plan, we based ourselves on the STO (Strategic - Tactical - Operational Management) model of Drucker and Ansoff (Harvard Business School). You will also find it presented schematically in a table below.

1. **Organizational needs at the strategic level**
   a. Mission
   b. Values
   c. Code of Conduct
2. **Organizational needs at the tactical level**
   a. Organization Chart
   b. RASCI (*RASCI: tool for mapping responsibilities and authority at the policy level (Responsible, Accountable, Supporting, Consulted and Informed)*

3. **Organizational needs at the operational level**
   a. Role descriptions
   b. Consultative bodies
   c. Decision and information flows
   d. Efficient collaboration
4. **Talent management at the strategic level**
   a. Core competencies
   b. Expertise
   c. Attract and develop employees/volunteers
5. **Talent management at the tactical and operational levels:**
   a. Recruitment process
   b. Education & training
   c. Retention Policy
   d. Expertise Management
6. **Compensation policies at the tactical and operational levels**
   a. Staff remuneration policy
7. **Motivation management at the tactical level**
   a. General career policy
   b. Performance Management
8. **Motivation management at the tactical and operational level**
   a. Procedures evaluation and performance reviews for staff and volunteers

HR Staff	Organization needs	Talent Management	Compensation Policy	Motivation Management
Strategic level (future needs)	**1.** a) b) Values c) Code of Conduct	**4.** (a) Core competencies b) Areas of expertise c) Attracting and developing employees/volunteers	**6.** (a) Staff remuneration policy	**7.** (a) General career policy (b) Performance management
Tactical (current policy and consistency)	**2.** (a) Organization (b) RASCI	**5.** a) Recruitment process b) Education & training c) Retention policy d) Expertise management		**8.** (a) Evaluation and performance reviews.
Operational (ad hoc)	**3.** (a) Role descriptions (b) Consultative bodies c) Decision and information flows (d) Efficient			

From the results of the workshops and the survey, the following topics were selected as priorities. An action plan was prepared for these priority topics. You will find the action plan for each of these topics on the following pages. A timing can be found on the last page of this document.

1. **Values (including Code of Conduct) &**
2. **Role descriptions**
3. **Rasci, decision and information flows**
4. **Talent Management**
5. **Staff remuneration (see Board of Directors 25/11/2024)**

<u>Next steps:</u>

- Approval by the Board of Directors 20/1/2025
- Policy plan communication (and survey feedback) to all volunteers: OVO update (online) 27/2
- Implementation of actions (2025-2026).
    - Regular reports will be made to the Operations Committee and annually to the Board of Directors
- Interdependencies with other projects:
    - After the elaboration of Strategy Review Project I and II, additions may happen to the action plan

1. **Theme:** Values (incl. Code of conduct) &

2. **Links to strategic priorities:** HR Policy

3. **Current situation**

- **Mission and communication**

Most volunteers have a clear understanding of our mission, as many as *87%* of survey respondents confirm this

The communication of the mission varies, different sources (website, strategic plan) give different interpretations or formulations.

- **Core values**

The management team has formulated some important core values, but these have not yet been endorsed by the Board of Directors and are not yet widely known.

- **Diversity**

There is room for growth in terms of diversity within the organization.

- **Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct is insufficiently known (42% of respondents) and not accurately described. Also, the procedure for reporting a conflict of interest is neither sufficiently elaborated nor known.

4. **Desired situation**

- **Strategic   framework**

A new strategic framework is needed where mission (cfr. Strategic Framework & Bylaws), values and vision are aligned and clearly communicated so that it is unambiguous and understandable to all.

- **Core values**

Core values are approved, known and applied by all members of the organization.

- **Visibility of values**

A charter with the values is made visible ("frame on the wall"), also on the website and in the volunteer agreement and Code of Conduct.

Onboarding

> During the onboarding process, these values and the Code of Conduct are discussed.

- **Rewritten COC**
  The Code of Conduct is being rewritten to include values and a clear procedure (including ombudsperson) for conflicts of interest, with no overlap between the COC & volunteer agreement. This Code of Conduct must be signed by every volunteer.

- **Diversity Policy**
  There is an actively observed diversity policy within the organization.

5. **Steps:**
   o Redefining Mission.
   o Prepare document with the values.
   o Update strategic framework (cfr. Version 2017) in consultation with operational board.
   o Establish procedure for keeping the strategic framework up to date (following strategic decisions at BoD).
   o Present new strategic framework & procedure to the Board of Directors for approval.
   o Communicate values and strategic framework through the website and in all presentation documents.
   o Procedure for conflicts of interest to be further developed and included in the Code of Conduct. This will also involve the participants in the relevant working group. The Code of Conduct must also be consistent with the volunteer agreement (incl. disclaimers), consequently the volunteer agreement will also be updated.
   o Procedure for when COC is not followed and a point of contact (ombudsperson).
   o Modify the intake form for prospective volunteers so that values are tested throughout the intake process.
   o Pay attention to the mission and values during events.
   o Establish a diversity policy/charter with clear effort commitments.

6. **What decisions are necessary, by whom?**
    - The new strategic framework and values must be approved by the Board of Directors.
    - The procedure for updating the strategic framework, the procedure in just following the Code of Conduct must be approved by the Operations Board.
    - The rewritten Code of Conduct must be approved by the Board of Directors.
7. **Budget: financial implications:** none

1. **Theme:** Role Descriptions

2. **Links to strategic priorities:** HR Policy

3. **Current situation**

   - Insufficient clarification of roles and responsibilities
     The organizational structure, as well as the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and staff could be better clarified and documented. Volunteers indicated in the survey that they do not always know exactly what is expected of them.

   - Differentiation within the volunteer group:
     Within the large volunteer group, there is currently little distinction between committed volunteers and ad hoc experts, which can affect the sense of community.

4. **Desired situation**

   - Clear and updated role descriptions are available for volunteers and staff so that everyone knows what their responsibilities are.

   - Volunteers with managerial authority

   - Awareness of mutual expectations
     Everyone is aware of their roles, responsibilities, and mutual expectations. This creates a transparent and collaborative environment.

5. **Steps:**

   - Update role descriptions

   - Link competencies to role descriptions: the competencies and skills needed for each role should be defined.

   - Differentiate between ad hoc experts and volunteers: a clear distinction should be made between the different types of involvement. This helps create a stronger sense of community and offers ad hoc experts a different status within the organization.

6. **What decisions are necessary, by whom?**

7. **Budget: financial implications:** none

ACTION ITEMS 3/5

1. *Theme:* **Rasci, decision and information flows.**
   RASCI: tool for mapping responsibilities and authority at the policy level (Responsible, Accountable, Supporting, Consulted and Informed)

2. **Links to strategic priorities:** Governance Framework

3. **Current situation**

   - **Roles and authority**

     The roles and powers of various decision-making bodies are not yet fully defined or known.

   - **RASCI**

     A RASCI for all procedures is not currently available, which creates opportunities for improvement in structure.

   - **Representation of volunteers**

     34% of volunteers (survey) do not feel represented on the Board of Directors, which leaves room for greater involvement.

   - **Communication streams**

     Communication flows can be even better tailored to the needs of recipients, leading to opportunities for more effective information transfer.

   - **Transparency**

     Decisions are not always transparent and deserve more follow-up.

   - **Loss of information**

     Information is sometimes lost because it is not always clear where people should look or who is responsible for certain communications, which presents opportunities for improving information flows.

   - **Involvement in decision-making**

     A large group of volunteers (57% of survey respondents) do not feel fully involved in decision-making.
     Of the large group of volunteers who received the survey, 53 responded.

   - **Budget and financial situation**

     Volunteers currently have little visibility into the budget.

- **Intranet**

  Nearly half of volunteers are not yet familiar with the intranet, which presents opportunities for improving access to information.
- **Internal newsletter**

  Newsletters are not yet optimally read.
- **Information about other teams**

  Volunteers are not sufficiently aware of activities in other teams, which presents opportunities for better cooperation and information exchange.

4. **Desired situation**

- **Clear RASCI and communication flows.**

  A Rasci with information flows is available. Decision processes and authority are clearly defined. Discussions are held with stakeholders about the governance framework
- **Effective communication strategy**:

  Communication flows are tailored to the needs of recipients and with an internal communication strategy that promotes collaboration and keeps everyone involved.
- **Reporting decisions**:

  A record is made of important decisions: for important topics, records are kept of what decisions were made and what was communicated.
- **Diversity in decision-making bodies**

  There is more diversity in the Board of Directors and other decision-making bodies.
- **Efficient meetings**

  Meetings are more efficient and better prepared with clear agendas. Pre-reads are sent out well in advance.
- **Active use of intranet**

  The Intranet is well known and actively used. Volunteers are informed and documents are shared through the Intranet.
- **Information about the organization**

  Volunteers are aware of what is going on throughout the organization, not just their team.

5. **Steps:**
- **Information flows**
  - Establish a RASCI for all procedures and communicate it to those involved. Clearly communicate decision-making processes and authority to all volunteers.
  - Establish a cascade of information flows (based on the RASCI) and communicate them.
  - Inform all stakeholders via OVO updates, intranet and during recruitments.
  - Communication of the budget by the management team at the beginning of the year (after Board approval).
  - Organize an OVO update on financial matters (follow-up projects e.g.).
- **Communications**
  - Develop an internal communications strategy and comprehensive communication plan that uses survey feedback to adjust newsletter layout and content.
  - Encourage the use of Intranet.
  - Communication primarily via internal newsletter and emails (in the survey, 67% of respondents indicated a preference for these channels).
  - Update, communicate and raise awareness of e-mail etiquette policies, with a point of contact for quality assurance.
- **Meetings**
  - Prepare meetings by sending out agendas and pre-reads in a timely manner so that participants are prepared.
  - Focus on discussions and decisions and less on information sharing.
  - Develop a format for meeting reporting.
  - Organize a training course on "leading meetings".
  - Encourage face-to-face meetings where discussion is needed.
  - For meetings where people participate offline and online, use accommodations that are suitable for this purpose (for example, the meeting room at OVO's offices, which should be booked well in advance).
  - Provide opportunity for volunteers to participate in meetings of other teams, cross-team meetings to promote knowledge sharing.
- **Decision processes**

- Clear structure of powers committees (including member selection criteria).
- Develop a format for volunteers and staff to give ideas.
- Develop a format for a clear track record of decisions and communication about them.
- For decisions, the management team communicates who was involved in preparing this decision.
- Those volunteers who did not respond to the survey will be questioned about why.

6. **What decisions are necessary, by whom?**
   Powers of committees to be approved by the Board of Directors.

7. **Budget: financial implications:** none

1. **Theme:** <u>Talent Management*</u>

    * Talent management includes the strategies and processes that organizations implement to attract, develop and retain the right people. It focuses on maximizing the performance of employees (or in this case volunteers) through training, development and evaluation.

2. **Links to strategic priorities:** HR Policy
3. **Current situation**
    - **Expertise and competencies**
      We have a large group of volunteers with much expertise and diverse skills, which provides a strong foundation for our organization.

    - **Retention**
      There is room for improvement in the sense of community among volunteers, which can strengthen cooperation.

    - **Integration of new volunteers**
      New volunteers sometimes experience difficulties finding their way within OVO. We see opportunities to better guide them in their introduction to the organization.

    - **Training requirement**
      New business coaches among volunteers sometimes need more knowledge and training to their role as coaches more effectively. Developing an agreed-upon coaching methodology can help.

    - **Feedback mechanisms**
      The lack of evaluation moments for volunteers means that valuable feedback is not always available.

    - **Ownership**
      The sense of ownership among volunteers can be strengthened.

    - **Training offer**
      There is room for improvement in training offerings.

    - **Diversity**
      In recruitment, even more attention to diversity can be better, which can enrich the group of volunteers.

    - **Distinctions in volunteer engagement**

The survey shows that 68% of volunteers consider themselves active volunteers. 11% consider themselves ad hoc experts but would like to be more involved.

4. **Desired situation**

- **More professional onboarding process** for new volunteers.
- **Optimal guidance for new volunteers**
  - Volunteers are welcomed and informed with a welcome brochure.
  - one-on-one mentoring
    Implementation of a system of one-on-one mentoring. More than 30% of volunteers indicated that they see this as valuable, and 6% of respondents were willing to become mentors themselves).
  - Follow-up meetings for new volunteers after 6 months (25% of survey respondents favor this).
  - Develop training program for new volunteers.
- **Professionalization of coaching**
  - Mandatory basic training for coaches (in the survey, 88% of respondents said they see this as a necessity)
- **Framing of volunteers**
  - There is a vade mecum where volunteers can find all the information needed to perform their duties.
  - Workshops and trainings, both offline and online
- **Evaluations**
  - We are developing a format for evaluating volunteers (who, how, when) and a procedure for the exceptional cases where it is necessary to end cooperation with a volunteer
  - Personal interviews with volunteers who wish to do so about their role, functioning and expectations as volunteers. (68% of respondents said they appreciated this)
- **Diversity** as an ambition in recruitment.
- **Volunteer Meetings**
  - The survey revealed that volunteers would like to meet more often.
  - Most (72%) volunteers prefer locations that are easily accessible by public transportation, with a preference for Brussels, Leuven and Antwerp.

- Taking into account the responses of volunteers in the survey, we should organize as many meeting times as possible in the afternoon on weekdays (except Wednesday and Friday).
- Volunteers prefer conferences, discussion sessions and training sessions
- **Optimize expertise** within OVO.

5. **Steps:**
   - Review onboarding process and integrate and organize one-on-one mentoring (and train mentors for this purpose and provide necessary framing).
   - Develop a mandatory training module for new business coaches on their responsibilities.
   - Establish training program for new volunteers.
   - Attention to events such as conference, reflective discussions and trainings.
   - The volunteers who indicated in the survey that they would like to be more active contact.
   - Establish a format and platform for expertise management.
   - Develop/update vademecum for each team.

6. **What decisions are necessary, by whom?**
7. **Budget: financial implications:** none

1. **Topic:** Remuneration policy
2. **Links to strategic priorities:** HR Policy
3. **Current situation**
   - Permanent staff salaries are not benchmarked and there is no remuneration policy.
4. **Desired situation**
   - At the 25/11/2024 Board meeting, a request was made to establish a benchmarked salary policy.
5. **Steps:**
   - Benchmark for wages within the industry.
6. **What decisions are necessary, by whom?**
   - Board must approve the policy.
7. **Budget: financial implications:** none

Theme	Phase/ Action points	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
General	Governance policy	Board 20/1			
Values (Code of conduct)&Strategy	Core values and mission	Approval board 24/3?			
	Code of conduct			Matyas	
	Procedure Code of conduct			Matyas	
	Conflicts of interest procedure			Matyas	
	Update volunteer agreement			Rita&Anne-Lise	
	Communication new strategy	OVO updates	OVO updats	OVO updates	OVO updates
	Diversity Charter				Karen
Role descriptions	Update role descriptions with competencies		team		
	Distinguishing ad hoc experts and volunteers	Anne-Lise			
Rasci, decision and information flows	Rasci information flows and decision processes	Björn			
	Structure powers committees	Björn			
	Track record of decisions and communications	Björn			
	Communicating Rasci		team		
	OVO update on budget	Karen			
	Communication Strategy	team			
	Encourage intranet use			Anne-Lise	

	Customize internal newsletter	Rita			
	Email etiquette policy update and communication		Anne-Lise		
	Format efficient meetings and reports, especially team projects			Nathalie	
	Cross-team meetings	team			
Talent Management	Fine-tuning the onboarding process		Rita		
	Organizing 1-on-1 mentoring for business coaches	Nathalie			
	Training module for business coaches			Nathalie	
	Training program for new volunteers			team	
	Format/platform expertise management		Anne-Lise		
	Vademecum Team Projects		Nathalie		
Remuneration Policy	Benchmark study	Björn			