



Strategy revision

- Approved by the board in September, proposal to the board January/February 2025, implementation 2025
- **Objective:** Revise OVO's strategy to better support African SMEs and address current challenges. Align all actions to the mission: support entrepreneurship in Africa
- We start with **3 key projects** to tackle urgent needs
 1. Redesign Partnerships with NGOs: Improve collaboration for mutual benefits
 2. Access to Finance Models: Develop models to improve financial support for SMEs, while improving the revenue for OVO
 3. Governance Improvement: Strengthen governance structures for better volunteer engagement



Project III Governance-HR

- **Goal:** strengthen governance structures and processes so that a diverse group of staff and volunteers can function optimally and actively participate in decision-making initiatives. We want to ensure that OVO remains a vibrant and effective organization where both staff and volunteers feel valued and empowered to make meaningful contributions.
- OVO update 21/11, survey to all volunteers (deadline 1/12)
- **Timing:** proposal to the Board of Directors end of 2024



Project III Governance-HR

- We want to ensure that all volunteers are part of this important process so that we can present to the board a governance strategy for HR that has a broad support.
- **Thank you** for showing your interest by participating in this Q&A!!
- This is a presentation of some of the **recommendations** that came out of the workshops. Based on these recommendations and your input via the survey, a policy and action plan will be drawn up to present to the Board of Directors in January.
- Communication of the results of the survey and HR governance strategy policy to all volunteers, if approved by the Board: February-March 2025
- Implementation 2025



Project III Governance-HR - WORKSHOPS

- 1/ **Efficient meetings and information/decision-making flow:**
team leader Stefanie Vanlerberghe
- 2/ **Conflicts of interest**
team Leader Luc Bonte
- 3/ **Expertise and volunteer management**
team leader: Karen Kammeraat
- 4/ **Diversity**
team leader Veron Nsunda
- 5/ **Volunteer satisfaction & involvement, communication with volunteers**
team leader Marina Cools



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 1

Efficient meetings and information exchange

Participants: Stefanie Vanlerberghe (team leader), Nathalie Schots, Alain Bernard, Laurent Cardon and Bruno van der Wielen

Scope:

- Optimize meeting structures, information flow, and decision-making within our organization.
- Creating clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of committees and working groups to improve transparency, involvement, and engagement of volunteers in key processes.

Main reflections:

Information & Advisory Flows:

Email overload is an issue; important info can be missed.

Reduce group emails and improve volunteer onboarding with clearer guidance and follow-ups.

Engagement & Reach:

Focus on increasing engagement, considering older volunteers' reluctance to use new tools.

Suggested repeating the volunteer motivation survey to better align activities with needs.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 1

Efficient meetings and information exchange

Meeting Structure & Participation:

Meeting structure is effective; improvements suggested for Q&A (combine with updates, send agendas in advance, and offer flexible time slots).

Main recommendations:

- Streamline email communication by targeting specific groups and reducing email volume.
- Enhance Q&A sessions by sending agendas in advance, offering alternative time slots, and providing session recordings for those unable to attend.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 2

Conflicts of Interest

Participants:

Tonny Vanderhoven (Investment Committee Member), Piero Mancardi (Country Coordinator Benin), Freddy De Mulder (Board Member), Luc Bonte (Ex-Chairman OVO), Marc Despiegelaere (Volunteer & Ex-Board Member), Matyas Boyen (Management Staff)

Scope:

Ensure OVO operates in a transparent, ethical, and accountable manner.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 2

Conflicts of Interest

Main recommendations:

1. Coaching and Investment

- Coaches must step back if they invest in projects.
- Update Cooperation Charter to prohibit such investments.
- Introduce milestones to detect biases early.

2. Local Organizations

- Require transparent selection processes.
- Define tasks and fees in contracts; share key details with stakeholders.
- Implement a Code of Conduct for local partners.

3. Volunteer Misconduct

- Enforce strict adherence to the Code of Conduct (CoC).
- Introduce clear expense policies and conflict-of-interest declarations.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 3

Conflicts of Interest

Main recommendations:

4. Transparency and Communication

- Map high-risk stakeholder relationships.
- Standardize agreements and clearly define roles.

5. Implementation

- Appoint a “conflict collector” (ombudsman) to manage issues.
- Conduct regular audits and training.
- Introduce NDAs during onboarding for confidentiality.

Broader Impact (to be considered when developing General Governance strategy)

- Strengthen partnerships with NGOs and sponsors through clearer roles and responsibilities
- Balance local cultural contexts with OVO's core values, including human rights advocacy.
- Address resource shortages by reallocating or recruiting additional personnel.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 3

Expertise & Volunteer Management

Participants: Bjorn Macauter, Rita Bastiaensen, Leo Scheers, Nico Masscharis, Jan Gillaerts

Scope: Strategies for effective volunteer & expertise management. Processes for recruitment, evaluation and conflict resolutions. Culture of accountability and ownership.

Main recommendations:

- Intake form is working well, is also a first filter. After signing agreement with volunteer, we lose track of functioning of volunteer. Set up a **procedure to review performance of volunteers**. 2/3 of volunteers are coaches, does that mean that country coordinators should do these reviews?
- OVO asks a commitment from its volunteers for 3 years. We should actively check after 3 years whether they want to continue/continue in the same role.
- Suggest to new volunteers to participate in some different team meetings, to see what fits them best.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 3

Expertise & Volunteer Management

Main recommendations - 2:

- Volunteers want more physical meetings, but also don't want to travel too far. Map where volunteers are located. Find a location near a central station.
- Organise another volunteers event. The combination of content, fun activities and networking was highly appreciated.
- Inform and involve volunteers more about policy, budget and challenges at the highest level (e.g. many volunteers think that OVO has a big budget). A clear structure at OVO will automatically make volunteers feel more responsible.
- Develop a valuable training program for coaches where they learn about BMC, coaching methodologies, etc. Coaches should feel this a kind of reward. Make it (at least partly) obligatory. (Question would be what to with coaches that are coaching for years).



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 3

Expertise & Volunteer Management

Main recommendations – 3 Expertise management

- Hard to find the best solution. Expertises are on paper and in a database, but does the person fit with the company that needs the expertise? You really have to know the person.
- OVO should ask itself: why do we want expert management? To make the experts happy or for the entrepreneurs? (I've had few requests for expertise from entrepreneurs)
- Organisations like Exchange and PUM have systems for expertise management. Maybe better to cooperate with them in this regard?



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 4 Diversity (1/5)

Participants:

Grace MOKAM (Student – Volunteer), Hicham Djibril MAILELE (Student – Volunteer), Benoît IRADUKUNDA (Country Manager Rwanda), Johan GEYSEN (Volunteer) – Karen PEERSMAN (Staff OVO), Véron NSUNDA (Volunteer – Team Leader)

Scope:

- Exchange and sharing out participants ideas, feelings on their understanding of Diversity and their experience of Diversity within OVO
- Proposals on the most appropriate Diversity approach within OVO
- Formulation of recommendations and solutions to setting up Diversity culture.
- Suggestions of questions for the survey to be addressed to all volunteers



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 4

Diversity (2/5)

Main recommendations (8):

D1. Decision making process

- Involve African people in the staff and as business coaches: they know the context and best understand entrepreneur's perspectives and needs
- A seat for people from Africa or African descent at the table in the Board
- Option: setup an advisory board e.g. to provide advices to the Board, observe and assess progress on Diversity

D2. Attitude

- Important to be aware of bias and be self-critical
- OVO makes assumptions, but it is the people in Africa that know best
- Boost camps: introduction could be done by people of the country of origin
- Policy: Create openness, safe space to talk about diversity. It is a challenge for some African people to speak up. It would be good to have a cultural expert on board
- Find a way of keeping the item on the agenda



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 4

Diversity (3/5)

Main recommendations (8):

D3. Hiring

- Quota: No positive discriminations, but send out the message that OVO embraces Diversity
- Organize open hiring sessions AND make sure the opportunity is known in the right target groups
- Activate our network to making OVO more diverse AND work actively with alumni students
- Engage former African entrepreneurs to join as coaches or participate in other positions within OVO
- Streamline process who seats in the board

D4. Communication

- Make sure we use words in our communication that reflect the equality and respect and take into account cultural differences
- Communicate inclusively (I ..., We...)



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 4 Diversity 4/5)

Main recommendations (8):

D5. Trainings

- On bias, stereotypes, and intercultural differences
- Make these open to all volunteers
- Make sure to include people from African descent in the preparation of the workshops on biases and diversity

D6. Capitalization

- Keep capitalizing on the cultural, societal and economic differences between North and South as an engine to promote diversity and mutual understanding of diversity.
- This is what OVO actions like ST4A realizes among entrepreneurs North and South today. It is OVO's DNA and a unique flywheel for many stakeholder groups of OVO.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 4 Diversity 5/5)

Main recommendations (8):

D7. Quantify Diversity

- o Suggestion: Take SYMMETRY as a core principle to quantify diversity at OVO. Applying it as measure for EVALUATING DIVERSITY within OVO

D8. Care for the YOUNGEST stakeholders: students and alumni.



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 5

Volunteer involvement, satisfaction & communication

Participants: Marina Cools, Bettie Elias, Marcus Geers, Annita Beysen (excused), Jan Flamend, Marc Josz, Rony Inslegers en Anne-Lise Passelecq

Scope:

- Evaluation of the existing communication channels
 - Evaluation of existing communication channels & identify gaps in information flow between the OVO management and volunteers
 - Suggest other channels
- Find a strategy that includes regular updates, feedback opportunities and opportunities to voice concerns.

Main reflexions:

- Communication channels:
 - Sufficient number of (digital) communication channels
 - Many volunteers get information only from their team, important to go over the 'borders' and get a broader view of all OVO activities/teams



Project III Governance-HR - Workshop 5

Volunteer involvement, satisfaction & communication

- Community building:
 - People feel more connected with the organization through personal interactions & face-to-face meetings
 - Need for better visibility of activities beyond specific teams
 - Stimulate interaction with African people

Main recommendations:

- Improving communication:
 - New volunteer welcome brochure and personal onboarding
 - Regular updates on OVO activities in team meetings
 - Create a feedback system, including surveys and a shared Dropbox for ideas
- Increasing volunteer engagement:
 - Explore ways to increase welcoming of new volunteers (eg welcome brochure, introductory video)
 - Categorize volunteers based on engagement - enables working in smaller groups to increase interactions
 - Conduct yearly digital follow-up with volunteers to ensure ongoing satisfaction and engagement



Project III Governance-HR Next steps

- Next steps:
 - survey to all volunteers (November)
 - Processing the various policy recommendations and actions proposed from the workshops and survey & translating them into an action plan (core team: Anne-Lise, Rita, Jan and Karen)
 - Proposal to the Board of Directors (January)
 - Implementation and actions (2025)