

GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL WELFARE IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Overview

In the conception of these guidelines, it was recognised that development cooperation projects involving animals should also include animal welfare in their design and scope, in order to identify practical solutions for some of the main welfare problems that normally arise during project implementation. Therefore, through its Animal Welfare in Development Cooperation Programme, WTS initiated an investigation into animal welfare and health in projects funded by international NGOs based in Germany and Europe. We assessed important areas such as the duty of care for animals involved in the project, the level of animal welfare knowledge and training among carers, the presence of guidelines for animal care, and the protection of animal welfare from negative effects. Results showed a significant and urgent need to address animal welfare in the design and implementation of these development cooperation projects. In addition, an on-the-ground assessment of animal welfare in selected projects was carried out for the majority of the NGOs; the results suggested similar conclusions. The investigation also generated practical improvement guidelines that NGOs could benefit from in their efforts to improve animal welfare in development cooperation projects. The implementation of these welfare improvement guidelines, coupled with reliable monitoring and evaluation systems, will therefore support NGOs towards better animal welfare, through planning, routine improvements, and the adoption of good welfare practices. Clearly, the ultimate utility and benefit of these guidelines will depend upon many different actors, including international NGOs, their local partner organisations, political developments at EU, AU and regional levels, and developments in scientific animal welfare across the globe (Africa).

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Foreword

WTS is an animal welfare organisation based in Berlin, Germany with activities in several countries in Africa. Through its programme, Animal Welfare in Development Cooperation, WTS seeks to positively impact and improve the welfare of animals involved in development cooperation projects across Africa. To this end WTS has consulted with local and international NGOs, alongside animal health authorities and experts in Africa and Europe, to propose the guidelines below. They are a tool to be used by donor agencies and international NGOs in the design and implementation of development projects that involve animals.

Introduction

The sustainability of development cooperation projects is greatly threatened by a number of issues, but for projects involving animals, the most important issue is the welfare of the animals involved.⁹ In most commonly accepted definitions, animal welfare is taken to describe the physical and mental wellbeing of animals. This includes, among other things, that animals are healthy and well-nourished, that they are free from negative emotions and able to express normal behaviours.^{2, 8}

Several studies have shown the economic importance of animal welfare, stressing the necessity of welfare improvements as a means to sustainable agriculture and real improvement in the livelihoods of those who benefit from development cooperation projects.^{1, 3, 4, 5} Poor animal welfare affects the success of these projects, causing major setbacks in achieving their goals and leading to poor scores on the impact of the project among targeted communities. It is also the responsibility of project managers to ensure that animals are kept in good welfare conditions to avoid suffering. There is arguably significant interdependence between animal and human welfare, such that poor welfare of animals could have major effects on the welfare of people.⁶ For example, a project that provides communities with animals as a way of lifting them out of poverty could be negatively affected by poor animal welfare – if there is preventable mortality, social disruption, and a significantly poor quality of life of animals, the state of life for the community would be much worse than it was before.

While development cooperation NGOs/ partners vary in their capacities, resources, partnerships, and engagement in communities, the design and implementation of their projects should take pace with full consideration of the welfare needs of the animals involved. It is also imperative to address deficiencies in animal welfare existing at national, district and/or community levels, which could indirectly affect practices in the scope of the project. These deficiencies can be found in human-animal relationships, animal husbandry, animal health, animal welfare legislation, and guidelines for the well-being of animals. It is envisaged that regional, national, and global strategies and standards for animal welfare would provide a basis for tailored solutions to address deficiencies in animal welfare.

Some international development NGOs, especially those promoting organic farming, have taken action in this regard. Most, however, have put little to no effort in these activities, and some have promoted and encouraged animal husbandry systems that are detrimental to welfare of animals, environments, and the livelihoods of people. This has kept animal welfare low priority on the list of issues important for development and the socio-economic transformation of communities.

The guidelines below provide a direction towards mainstreaming animal welfare in development cooperation projects implemented by NGOs in developing countries. These guidelines further strengthen the need for partnership among international NGOs and stakeholders (project beneficiaries) to identify gaps and deficiencies in animal welfare, develop plans to address them, identify needed resources, and develop and share the best practices and tools. This multifaceted approach is critical to the success of development cooperation projects, so that they can achieve intended objectives and have a real impact at community, national, regional and global levels.

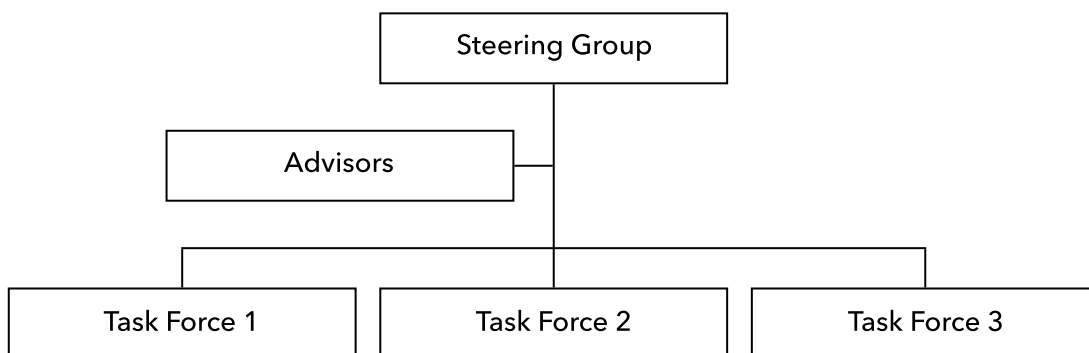
Goal

Over the next three years, WTS envisions the adoption of these guidelines by relevant international and local NGOs, in order to actively foster good animal welfare practice during the design and implementation of development cooperation projects involving animals.

Target

By 2030, more than 50% of European NGOs with projects in Africa will have positively regarded this initiative and adopted the use of these guidelines. They will have strengthened their capacities to ensure that their projects propagate good animal welfare practice and have a sustainable impact among their target communities.

Proposed governance structure for institutionalisation of the guidelines



Steering Group

The Steering Group will facilitate regional and global collaboration among international NGOs towards the institutionalisation of the guidelines. This group will provide strategic direction and guidance whilst tracking the progress and commitments of international NGOs in propagating good animal welfare practice in their projects. This group will have members sourced from NGOs operating at a regional and global level, with expertise in industry demands for animal welfare and experience in fostering development through collaboration.

Advisors

The purpose of the advisors is to focus discussions towards specific prioritised agendas in the scope of these guidelines, highlight measurable approaches NGOs can adopt to accelerate, monitor and evaluate, and provide a mechanism by which NGOs can make specific commitments. Advisors will be drawn from major donors and funding agencies that support projects involving animals.

Task forces (1, 2 & 3)

Task Forces will be formed according to task at hand, with the purpose of advancing Steering Group-determined priorities, objectives, and measures of progress and impact. They will be composed of representatives from NGOs and categorised depending on the nature of work with animals that they are involved in. Categories will include, for example, working animals, animals given to farms or households, animals used in research, organic farming, transport and slaughter, or in-service and pre-service training for animal health professionals and paraprofessionals.

Scope

These draft guidelines specify the requirements applying to domestic animals commonly involved in development cooperation projects, that is, cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry and camelids. The areas of Action For Improving Animal Welfare (AFIAWs), developed from consultations with project managers at a range of NGOs, include: animal welfare training; husbandry; health of animals; movement of animals; policy and legislation; research, communication and advocacy; and monitoring and evaluation. These areas will form the themes in the development of these guidelines.

Terms and definitions

ANIMAL: means a mammal, reptile, fish, bird, or bee.

ANIMAL WELFARE: means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.

CERTIFICATION: the action or process of providing an animal carer/manager with an official document, attesting to a status or level of training in specified aspects of animal welfare.

COMPETENT: having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to implement good animal welfare practice successfully.

FEED: means any material (single or multiple), whether processed, semi-processed, or raw, which is intended to be fed directly to terrestrial animals (except bees).

INFECTIOUS: means the entry and development or multiplication of a pathogenic agent in the body of humans or animals.

RESTRAINT: means the application to an animal of any procedure designed to restrict its movements.

VACCINATION: means the administration of a vaccine, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the Terrestrial Manual, when relevant, with the intention of inducing immunity in an animal or group of animals against one or more pathogenic agents.

VETERINARY LEGISLATION: means laws, regulations, and all associated legal instruments that pertain to the veterinary domain.

General principles

These guidelines focus on the application/use of good animal welfare practice during the design and implementation of development cooperation projects that involve animals, to ensure sustainable impact among targeted communities.

The general principles for the welfare of animals involved in development cooperation projects shall ensure:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst, by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from discomfort, by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease, by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour, by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress, by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

Additionally, the following principles shall be applicable to animals given to households to raise for food, sale, or multiplication, and to animals used in research studies:

1. Control measures employed at the farm level to ensure a safe and suitable environment prior to receipt of the animals.
2. Good animal welfare practices and good hygiene practices shall be applied and practiced.
3. Due to practical limitations on the use of welfare quality® protocols in production systems outside of Europe, the carer's animal welfare assessment shall at least determine the controls necessary during husbandry and their stringency.
4. Contingency plans should be in place to mitigate animal suffering in the event of failures to observe good welfare practices arising during the implementation of the project.

1.0 Training

Generally, the scope and duration of training needed for animal handlers, users and/or carers will be agreed and guided by specific task forces and will largely depend on the extent of use and involvement with a specific type and group of animals.

- 1.1 At every premise/household, there shall be a member of staff/household who has been trained in animal welfare and who is responsible for safeguarding animal welfare.
- 1.2 Training of animal carers or managers should include, but not be limited to, understanding of animal suffering and sentience, animal needs and interests, animal freedoms, animal friendly transport and slaughter, speciesism, and animal protection legislation.
- 1.3 All people responsible for animals should be competent through formal training or practical experience, in accordance with their responsibilities. This includes understanding of and skills in animal handling, nutrition, animal waste management, drainage and disposal, reproductive management techniques, behaviour, biosecurity, signs of disease, and indicators of poor animal welfare such as stress, pain and discomfort, and their alleviation.
- 1.4 There should be regular training for animal handling and care personnel and this should be followed by their registration and certification/licensing from the line authorities within a specific country. Alternatively, projects should set up their own standardised certification process that ensures carers have the skills and understanding of the needs of animals.
- 1.5 All important skills and knowledge of animal management should be carried out and concluded before animals are brought on site and, thereafter, refresher sessions can be planned and executed when necessary.

2.0 Husbandry

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 There should be standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the care and management of animals at farms, households, and those kept for research purposes. The SOPs will be developed and approved consultatively by the task forces concerned with a particular group of animals.
- 2.1.2 These SOPs should provide for measures for preventing negative outcomes for animals (such as wounds, lameness, pain, and disease) and specify who is responsible to ensure these measures are observed.
- 2.1.3 The SOPs should also present well set out plans to promote good welfare for animals.
- 2.1.4 The SOPs should also provide follow-up mechanisms in the case of project beneficiaries, to ensure adherence to good welfare practice and minimise negative affects on animals.

2.2 Systems

- 2.2.1 Intensive livestock production systems that focus on maximising benefit from animals while neglecting their welfare needs should be discouraged in ongoing projects and not reproduced in new projects.

2.3 Good feeding

2.3.1 Water

- 2.3.1.1 Precautions shall be taken to ensure that animals do not consume or have access to contaminated water, feed, or any environmental contaminants likely to cause disease.
- 2.3.1.2 An adequate supply of potable water with appropriate facilities for its storage and distribution shall be available.
- 2.3.1.3 Water should be available depending on species needs, age and physiological requirements of the animals.

2.3.2 Food

- 2.3.2.1 Forage, feed, and fodder for animals shall be present in adequate quantities and of appropriate quality. It shall not present a risk of transferring, directly or indirectly, infectious agents, pesticides residues, other toxins, or any other agent.
- 2.3.2.2 Feed should be available depending on species needs, age and physiological requirements of the animals.

2.4 Drainage and waste disposal

- 2.4.1 Adequate drainage, waste disposal systems and facilities shall be provided. They shall be designed and constructed so as to ensure infection prevention and control. For example, drainage ending into a soak pit to carry waste water and liquid waste shall be provided; a pit for depositing litter and refuse may be provided; and compounds/yards should be kept clean through daily sweeping and monthly disinfection with calcium hydroxide or other.

2.5 Animal housing facility

- 2.5.1 Animal housing shall be designed to be comfortable for animals and not adversely affect their physical and mental health.
- 2.5.2 Animal housing shall be kept clean and maintained in a manner that does not result in any health risks to the animals, owner/carer, or community.

3.0 Animal health

3.1 Disease

- 3.1.1 The health of animals shall be maintained at all times, with the following objectives: available vaccinations are given in time; infection prevention and control is ensured; diseased animals or herds shall be isolated to prevent the transmission of disease to healthy animals; the occurrence of pathogens in the group/herd will be monitored for early warnings of potential dangers and serious disease; sick animals are treated promptly in a manner that arrests the progression of disease in specific animals and the group/herd.

4.0 Movement of animals

- 4.1 The transportation and movement of animals shall be in accordance with the principles of animal welfare.
- 4.2 Animals that are likely to be hostile to each other in a group situation shall not be mixed during transportation.
- 4.3 The desire of some animals to control their individual space shall be accounted for in the transportation process.
- 4.4 There shall be a sufficient number of personnel, who shall be patient, considerate, competent and familiar with the transportation requirements and behaviour of the animals to be transported/moved.
- 4.5 Generally, upon arrival at the destination, at the overnight stop, or during breaks along the journey, animals must be fed and watered sufficiently and given adequate rest.

5.0 Policy and legislation

- 5.1 Animal welfare policies and legislations existent among targeted communities play a critical role in the concern for animal welfare and the extent to which animal needs can be met. NGOs operating in these communities should work with existent community governance structures to provide assistance for operationalising, revising, updating or developing guidelines, bylaws, policy, and any other form of legislation that will foster good welfare practices for animals in their projects.

6.0 Research

- 6.1 There is need to support 'best practice' pilot projects and the implementation of best practice.
- 6.2 There should be a functional animal welfare and ethics committee at regional, national, and institutional levels. It shall review and recommend good animal welfare practice prior to commencement of all research projects (field, experimental studies) involving animals.

7.0 Communication and advocacy

- 7.1 There should be routine collection of data on the status, evolution, and socio-economic impact of animal welfare on communities, which shall be provided accurately and timely as information and advice for governments and technical and financial international partners.
- 7.2 Data collection should be carried out in addition to NGO monitoring and evaluation activities and, where two or more NGOs operate in the same area, this should be a joint effort. If technical capacity to execute this activity does not exist within the NGO, it is the NGOs responsibility to outsource services to a competent person or body to execute this on their behalf.

8.0 Monitoring and evaluation

- 8.1 An animal welfare performance evaluation system shall be developed using results-based management frameworks and processes. It should be built and capacitated as the backbone of project implementation and in achieving the expected results. This will be fostered by a specific task force that develops standard assessments, control mechanisms, and reporting protocols or procedures.

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Imprint

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<https://welttierschutz.org/foundation/animal-welfare-in-the-development-cooperation/guidelines>

For more information please contact:

Dr Ssuna Paul
ssunapaul57@gmail.com

Karin Siegmund
ks@welttierschutz.org

info@awecca.org

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