



Constitution of the Swiss Animal Welfare Officer Network

1. Purpose of the Swiss Animal Welfare Officer Network (AWO-N)

- To exchange information and knowledge regarding animal welfare in animal experimentation (including breeding and housing) through persons responsible for animal welfare (thereafter referred to as animal welfare officers) of Swiss academic and non-profit institutions as well as industry in the Life Sciences (in the following text, the term "institutions" includes all of these categories)
- To promote and implement the 3Rs in the institutions
- To provide rationales in order to improve communication/ information to the public audience and scientific community regarding animal welfare in animal experimentation (including breeding and housing)
- To act as an official contact regarding animal welfare for other societies and authorities and as such, to be actively involved in working on guidelines and revisions of laws and regulations
- To provide factual animal welfare information on a publicly available website

2. Members

Swiss AWO-N meetings are open to all animal welfare officers of an institution. A maximum of two animal welfare officers per institution are eligible for reimbursement of travel costs to attend face-to-face Swiss AWO-N meetings. Institution is defined by the responsibility of the AWO position. The Swiss Network for Education in Laboratory Animal Science and the Swiss 3Rs Competence Center are considered as "institutions".

Each institution selects their representative independently.

Each institution has one vote during the assembly.

3. Working groups

Working groups can be formed to achieve the purpose and goals of the Swiss AWO-N.

New working groups are defined by the assembly. Existing working groups are ratified by the assembly.

Members of the working groups are selected on a voluntary basis. They are allowed to invite external experts to take part in the working groups.

4. Board

The board of the Swiss AWO-N consists of a Chair and a Vice Chair. Chair and Vice Chair are supported by a secretary in their tasks.

The board is elected by the assembly for 4 years. Re-election is possible for a second mandate period.

Responsibilities/ tasks of the board members:

- Chair
 - contact person representing the Swiss AWO-N
 - representative of the Swiss AWO-N in the European Animal Welfare Officer Network
 - distributes information to the assembly
 - sets the agenda for the assembly
 - leads the assembly

- Vice Chair:
 - supports and deputizes the Chair
 - keeps member and mailing lists updated (together with the secretary)

Recommendation: the positions of the Chair and Vice Chair should be filled by representatives from both, academia or non-profit organization and industry.

5. Assembly

The Swiss AWO-N meets at least twice a year.

The agenda of the assembly is sent to the members at least one week before the meeting date.

Decisions of the assembly are made by majority rule of attending voters, except for decisions upon the constitution, where a 2/3 majority of attending voters is needed. Each institution has one vote. It is not possible to delegate the vote.

Duties of the assembly:

- approves the constitution or changes thereof
- elects Chair and Vice Chair
- is the decision making body
- defines new working groups and disbands existing ones

Minutes are taken and distributed by the Swiss AWO-N secretary after they have been checked by the Chair and Vice Chair and must be approved at the next assembly.

6. Key partners

The Swiss AWO-N will closely work together with the following key partners to achieve its purposes and goals:

- Swiss Animal Facility Network (SAFN)
- Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO)
- Swiss Laboratory Animal Science Association (SGV)

- Schweizerischer Verband für Bildung in Tierpflege (SVBT)
- Other organizations related to animal welfare and laboratory animal science

Key partners do not have a representative at the assembly, nor will they be on the e-mailing list. It is the Chair of the Swiss AWO-N (or the Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair) that will communicate with the key partners.

7. Confidentiality

All information discussed or shared within the Swiss AWO-N has to be treated as confidential if classified as such.

8. Finances/ support

There is no membership fee.

The SGV supports the Swiss AWO-N financially. With this support, travel, administrative assistance and room costs are covered for the official representatives of the institutions to attend the assembly and for members of working groups (incl. experts) to attend their meetings.

Modification of the AWO Network constitution of October 8th 2015.

Bern, May 2019

Bern, September 2019

Bern, 24.3.2020 (new Swiss AWO-N logo, unified use of the abbreviation Swiss AWO-N, added non-profit organizations, added secretary)

Zürich, 21.10.2021 (adaptation of section 2 and 5, clarified some wording)