

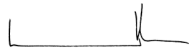
4 May 2011

Dear Members of the Independent Review Panel,

We are writing in response to the feedback given by the Panel following your review of our GRI report 2009/2010. We appreciate the Panel's comments and found them to be both constructive and informative. The entire reporting process has provided us with an opportunity to consolidate our efforts and identify areas for improvement.

Our reply to the Panel's specific comments can be found in an annex to this letter. More generally, we note that the Panel considered our report to be weak on certain aspects of diversity, with the exception of gender. All of Oxfam's programmes have a gender and diversity strand, and we have addressed this in our reply to your comments on indicator NGO4. Internally, Oxfam is committed to diversity and inclusiveness, as these core values drive our mission and help us to attract and retain the best possible staff. Again, we have addressed this in our reply to your comments on indicator EC7.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Hobbs
Executive Director
Oxfam International

Annex

“1.1 Strategy and Analysis/Statement from the most senior decision-maker of the organisation.”

Comment: Missing information on strategic priorities; on broader trends; key events/achievements/failures during the reporting period; on views on performance with respect to goals/objectives; and an outlook on the organisation’s main future challenges.

This information can be found in our Annual Report 2009/2010, a copy of which is available on our website at www.oxfam.org/en/about/annual-reports. In future, we will include this information in the GRI report itself.

“2.8 Organisational Profile/ Scale of the reporting organization.”

Comment: Missing information on scope/scale of activities.

The Secretariat does not collect data centrally on the numbers of supporters across the Confederation. At present, each Affiliate gathers supporter data for their organisations. We consider this to be an area for improvement, and will set about developing systems to gather this kind of information centrally.

“NGO1: Involvement of affected stakeholder groups in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.”

Comment: Missing information on how feedback from stakeholders has reshaped policies/procedures.

In developing methodologies for measuring the success of our development programmes, we have sought feedback from affected stakeholders, in this case staff members. A consultation process has given staff the opportunity to comment and this has led to the revision of existing policies and the development of new ways of working.

“NGO2: Mechanisms for feedback and complaints in relation to programs and policies and for determining actions to take in response to breaches of policies”

Comment: Missing information on mechanisms for determining what actions are required in response to complaints.

We consider this to be an area for improvement. We are committed to making our complaints procedure more accessible and will undertake a review of our current systems.

“NGO3: Systems for program monitoring, evaluation and learning (including measuring program effectiveness and impact), resulting changes to programs, and how they are communicated”.

Comment: Missing information on adjustments made as a result of the mechanisms in place; and on how these have been communicated.

Our Measures of Success criteria include mechanisms that will allow us to report favourably on this issue in future. Oxfam staff are now required to “grade” themselves on their adherence to our Program Standards and assess the effectiveness of their relationships. They are also required to indicate a plan for improvement with a clear timeframe for implementation.

“NGO4: Measures to integrate gender and diversity into program design, implementation, and the monitoring, evaluation, and learning cycle.”

Comment: Missing information on policies/ tools related to all types of diversity (ethnicity, age etc.).

Our Program Standards include deliberate attempts to listen to people and social groups that may be facing discrimination in the places where Oxfam works. Oxfam promotes a collaborative and iterative process to inform our programming decisions, with efforts to explicitly identify those groups that may face particular vulnerability (including those people whose gender, ethnicity, age, or HIV prevalence may marginalize them).

Our values explicitly promote broad diversity in our relationships as we work closely with partners and allies (Program Standard 6), while respecting their autonomy. Oxfam strives to ensure that the people that we work with play a central role in our monitoring, evaluation and learning cycles (Program Standard 9). We also use empirical data to improve our work and to demonstrate results. We are currently reviewing our social accountability efforts, and diversity will be one consideration in the process of identifying future actions.

“EC7: Procedures for local hiring and proportion of senior management hired from the local community at locations of significant operation.”

Comment: The organisation indicates that it has no policy with regards to this.

The Secretariat’s policy is to recruit locally, wherever practical. For more specialist posts that require international experience we recruit both locally and from the global market which may or may not result in local hiring.

Whilst the Secretariat does not currently have a diversity policy in place, in our practices we are committed to diversity to attract and retain the best possible staff. For example, our recruitment toolkit reminds recruiting managers of their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity during the recruitment process and throughout the employment relationship. To demonstrate this commitment we will put in place a diversity policy to strengthen our practices.

Following the Oxfam International Executive Director’s request to make further progress in this area, diversity will be discussed by Affiliate HR Directors who will meet as a group in May 2011. As a member of this group, the Secretariat will work to further progress our own diversity practices in line with the Confederation.

“EN16: Total direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions by weight.”

Comment: Missing information on emissions divided in direct and indirect emissions. The organisation indicates that this data is only available for parts of the offices and reports accordingly.

The Secretariat does not measure direct emissions, nor do we own company vehicles. At the time this report was produced, we were not measuring gas usage for heating, but have since started recording this information. The indirect emissions we report can be divided into Scope 2* - electricity usage; and Scope 3* - air and commuter travel, paper purchased and waste disposal.

There is a lack of data for our advocacy offices, which is something we are working to remedy. We hope to have a measure of similar emission factors for the 2011/2012 reporting year.

*Scope definitions as per the Greenhouse Gas Protocol standard.

“LA1: Total workforce, including volunteers, by type, contract, and region.”

Comment: Missing information on contract status for employees; and on type of contract for volunteers.

All core Secretariat staff are on permanent contracts. Staff in funded posts are on fixed term contracts. For clarity, volunteers in this instance mean interns who are brought in under internship agreements. It has not been practice for the Secretariat to take on any other type of volunteer due to the nature of the roles within the Secretariat.

“SO1: Nature, scope, and effectiveness of any programs and practices that assess and manage the impacts of operations on communities, including entering, operating, and exiting.”

Comment: Missing more detailed information on how the mechanisms in place work; missing information on the number of operations to which the mechanisms apply; on whether the mechanisms have been effective; and on how feedback has led to further community engagement.

Under the Single Management Structure project, Oxfam has recently developed guidance for our Affiliates on how to enter and exit from development programmes responsibly. Going forward we will monitor and review adherence to these guidelines. This learning, in addition to feedback from the communities where we work, will be used to inform our strategies going forward.

“PR6: Programs for adherence to laws, standards, and voluntary codes related to ethical fundraising and marketing communications, including advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.”

Comment: The organisation indicates that it does not collect data on the number of complaints or breaches of standards and therefore cannot report on this.

The Secretariat does not officially collect data on the numbers of complaints received by our Affiliates, although they do communicate complaints to us. We consider this to be an area for improvement, and will set about developing a formal system for the collection of this type of information.