

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) 2023 Animal Welfare Goal WAZA Animal Welfare Evaluation Process Expert Panel

At the 74th WAZA Annual Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Resolution 74.2 - 2023 WAZA Goal on Animal Welfare Evaluation Processes was passed by WAZA members. The WAZA 2023 Animal Welfare Goals says that by December 2023,

1. WAZA National and Regional Associations must have an animal welfare evaluation process in place and such a process must include specific elements approved by WAZA.
2. All WAZA institutional members must be compliant with this process.

The process for an Association to meet the WAZA 2023 Animal Welfare Goal involves the following steps:

1. A WAZA- national/regional Association member carries out a self-assessment of their Association's Animal Welfare Evaluation Process (AWEP) and prepares for a Peer-Review.
2. The Peer-Review is carried out by a Reviewer; a peer WAZA-member national/regional Association who prepares a recommendation for the Animal Welfare Evaluation Process Expert Panel.
3. The outcomes and recommendation of the peer-review process are presented to the WAZA Animal Welfare Evaluation Process Expert Panel for consideration.

The Expert Panel is tasked with the final determination and endorsement of the Reviewer's recommendation that an Association has, or has not, met the WAZA requirements of the WAZA Animal Welfare Evaluation Process. The Reviewer provides a recommendation to the Expert Panel of an Association being able to meet WAZA's criteria, and the Expert Panel makes sure that the elements and requirements set by WAZA are appropriately and exhaustively met in order to endorse (or not endorse) a Reviewer's recommendation.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the terms of reference for the Expert Panel within the WAZA Verification of an Association's AWEP regarding the WAZA 2023 Animal Welfare Goal.

Objectives

The Expert Panel will:

- a) guarantee the consistency of the WAZA process for confirmation for all Associations being reviewed
- b) confirm or deny the Reviewer's recommendation and issuing recommendation.
- c) manage any disagreement between Reviewer and the Reviewee
- d) issue a recommendation on meeting the WAZA 2023 Animal Welfare Goal to the WAZA Executive Committee

Membership

The membership of the Expert Panel shall consist of four members:

- **A representative from the WAZA Executive Office** with no voting rights on the Expert Panel (i.e., WAZA Animal Welfare and Conservation Coordinator or the WAZA Chief Executive Officer).
- **An Association Reviewer** with voting rights on Expert Panel decisions, who has been through the process as a reviewer or reviewee.
- **A WAZA Council member** with voting rights on the Expert Panel, from a different region from the one being reviewed. Ideally this person shall be consistent through verifications within

the same region, and preferably, not chairs of the Association, Membership or Ethics and Animal Welfare Committees; or WAZA President or Vice-president.

- **A member of the WAZA Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee** with voting rights on the Expert Panel, who is not on the WAZA Council and from a different region from the one being reviewed, and who shall ideally be consistent through verifications within the same region.

Appointment

The final selection for each Expert Panel will be by the WAZA Executive Committee. The WAZA Executive Office will approach people on the groups above, under section [Membership], regarding their willingness to serve on the Expert Panel. If available, a Member shall be called to duty by the WAZA Executive Office to constitute the Panel according to the former section [Membership]. Any existing conflicts of interest shall be declared to the WAZA Executive Office, who shall treat this with the utmost confidentiality.

Meetings

Members of the Expert Panel will be summoned to meetings by the WAZA Executive Office representative of the Expert Panel.

Decision of the Expert Panel

The Expert Panel has the functions and powers assigned in accordance with this document.

A decision carried by a majority of the votes cast by Members of the Expert Panel at a meeting is a decision of the Expert Panel. The Expert Panel will decide whether the Association's AWEP adequately meets the requirements and principles set by WAZA, and therefore, meets the WAZA 2023 Animal Welfare Goal.

Reporting the Expert Panel's recommendation

The Expert Panel shall report its final recommendation to the WAZA Executive Office, who will advise of the provisional outcome to the Association being reviewed and the WAZA Executive Committee, who will endorse the Expert Panel's decision.

Appealing a decision

Once the reviewee has been notified of the provisional outcome by the WAZA Executive Office, the reviewee has a right to appeal the decision of the Expert Panel. In such an event, a new Expert Panel shall be constituted, and its outcome recommendation will be unappealable.

If the dispute persists, the WAZA Executive Committee will have the jurisdiction to reassess and make the final decision on the conflicting matter at hand.

Role of the WAZA Executive Office

Support and coordination of all necessary administration for the Expert Panel to deliver on their functions will be provided by the WAZA Executive Office.

The WAZA Executive Office will stand aside from discussions and any deliberation by the Expert Panel.

Confidentiality

All materials from the WAZA Verification shall be treated by the appointed members of the Expert Panel as confidential.

Additional considerations

To guarantee the maximum consistency possible amongst the different WAZA Verifications and decisions, WAZA will consider a reduced number of individuals to carry out the roles described in the *Membership* section in the present document, *who will be assigned to an Expert Panel according to the requirements outlined in the former section.*

Associations that wish to become Reviewer Associations will need to complete an [application form](#).