IV. Structure and Systems

Structure is the arrangement by which various organisational activities are divided up, and how efforts are coordinated. Structure is pivotal between task and process. An organisation needs to be appropriately structured for the circumstances in which it finds itself and – particularly – the tasks it has decided to carry out. It follows, therefore, that strategy should be determined first, followed by the organisational structure.

Need for Structure

Structure helps people in the organisation to work together effectively. The more effective the structure, the more effective the working relations between people and departments. Structure underpins how power and accountability, internal and external, operate within the organisation: it determines how responsibilities are allocated and enables effective participation.

Any organisation needs defined responsibilities, communication channels, agreed procedures etc. There is no ideal structure, just various options from which to chose the most appropriate. The most obvious divisions are departmental or functional groupings. Structure should indicate the pattern of reporting relationships. It can be captured in an organisational chart. Indeed, if it cannot easily be captured in such a chart, or if there are too many complexities or crossed lines in this, then the structure is too unclear to be workable in practice.

Other structural features include the cycle of staff meetings, committee meetings, information systems, rules and procedures etc.

There are some distinct NGO (non-governmental organisation) mindsets on structure: -
'We want to keep this informal. As few rules as possible.'
'We don't have a structure – everyone mucks in and we all have an equal voice.'
'Voluntary organisations have to be flexible. All this hierarchy gets in the way of this.'

There are many negative consequences of structural deficiencies including: -
  ➢ Low morale – people not knowing what's expected of them and lacking responsibility and autonomy.
  ➢ Excessive meetings.
  ➢ Late and inapproapriate decisions.
  ➢ Conflict and departmental divisions.
  ➢ Lack of coordination.
  ➢ Indequate response to changing circumstances.
  ➢ Rising costs.

Larger organisations can devolve quite a bit of responsibility, given an appropriate structure, broad strategic and policy orientation, guidelines for good practice in service delivery and budgetary controls.

A small organisation is unlikely to develop the same level of budgetary and reporting systems and controls as a larger one and nor indeed is this necessary.

Choice of Structure

The choice of structure will depend on a number of factors including the organisation's culture, function and mission, its size, its budget and the personalities involved. The options range from a bureaucracy to a collective structure. It follows that structure should not be static, but should be reviewed to take account of important strategic changes. Upsizing and downsizing should also be strategic and measured, with impact upon strategy and thereby structure taken into account.. The need to have unity and consistency of values and purpose is common to all structures.

Different types of organisation will need different structures.An organisation that has a number of different core functions may find it advantageous to separate these functions, in order to enable the different cultures and approaches needed to operate (see Chapter on Issues and Approaches). In particular, a professional manager could be employed to head up the service delivery arm, and a charismatic leader for the campaigns arm. Also, the service delivery arm could incorporate the necessary standards and controls without imposing these on the campaigns team to the detriment of creativity. However, there would need to be clear systems to achieve organisational coherence and maximum use of expertise throught the organsation.

There is often a need for a strong functional approach in certain sectors of animal protection organisations such as: fundraising, human resources, accounting and IT (Information Technology). In all these functions, considerable expertise is needed, and a striving towards professionalism.

Where an organisation is not a single-issue group, the research and dissemination of issue-related expertise will be necessary. Whether to have separate issue-related departments will depend on the size of the organisation and its strategic focus. For example, a small campaigning group may select one or two flagship campaigns and therefore not need issue-related departments. However, a large generalist international or national organisation would benefit from issue-related expertise, so departments based on issue would be more likely.

The number of people a manager can control varies according to many factors, including: the manager's temperaments, skills and abilities, the staff's temperament, skills and abilities, the nature and complexity of the work being undertaken, the time the manager has to be spend on strategy and planning as well as day-to-day supervision etc. Availability of procedures and precedents also has an impact.

A general rule is that, under ideal circumstances, no Chief Executive should have more than four to six departmental heads reporting directly to him/her. This may be more if the remit of each department head is small and the scope of their work fairly simple. Managers further down the chain of command can lead greater numbers of

staff. Once again the optimum number will depend on the scope and complexity of the task. For example, whilst a single boss could effectively manage a large team (say 30+) of staff employed in simple and uniform data processing duties, a manager of consultants/project analysts carrying out complex duties should have far fewer staff reporting to him/her (maximum six to ten).
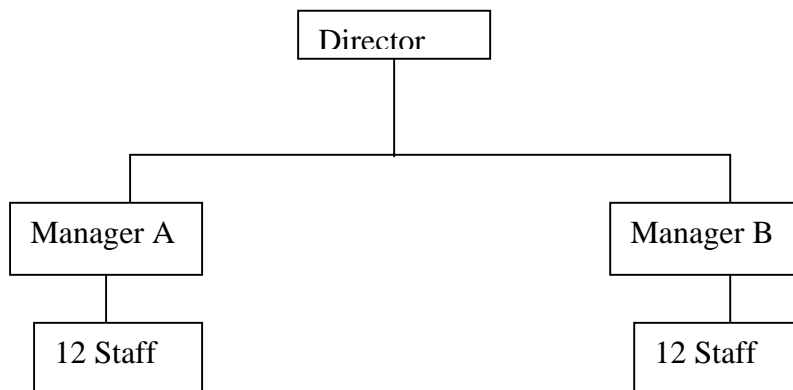
Examples of Structures

Messy Reporting Structure

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                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │   Director   │
                          └──────┬───────┘
                    ┌────────────┴────────────┐
                    │     Deputy Director     │
                    └────────────┬────────────┘
   ┌──────┬──────┬──────┬────────┼────────┬──────┬──────┐
┌──────┐┌──────┐┌──────┐┌──────┐┌──────┐┌──────┐┌──────┐
│Finance││  IT  ││Admin ││Project││Project││Project││Project│
│Officer││Officer││Officer││Officer││Officer2││Officer3││Officer4│
└──────┘└──────┘└──────┘└──────┘└──────┘└──────┘└──────┘
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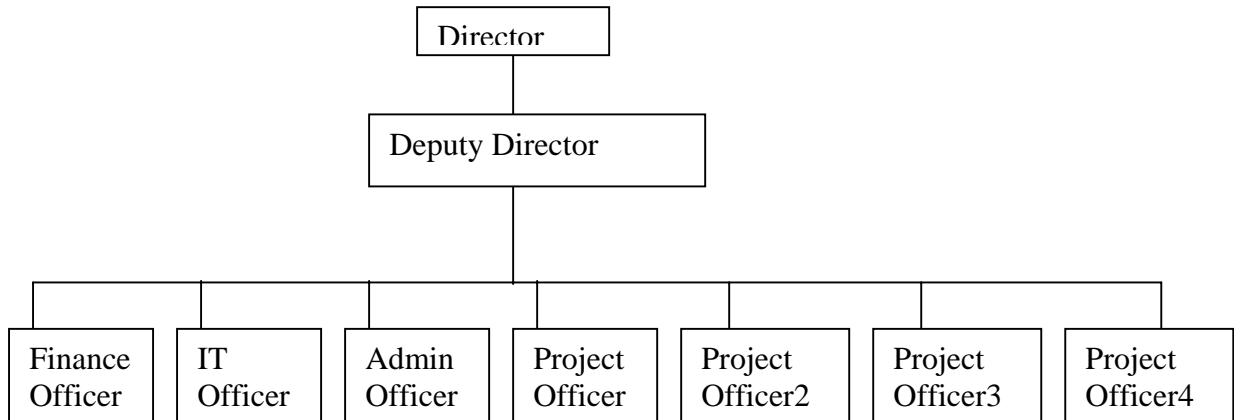
Structure for 24 workers using:

2 Managers

```
                 ┌──────────┐
                 │ Director │
                 └────┬─────┘
          ┌───────────┴───────────┐
   ┌──────────┐            ┌──────────┐
   │Manager A │            │Manager B │
   └────┬─────┘            └────┬─────┘
   ┌──────────┐            ┌──────────┐
   │ 12 Staff │            │ 12 Staff │
   └──────────┘            └──────────┘
```

4 Managers

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                    ┌──────────┐
                    │ Director │
                    └────┬─────┘
     ┌──────────┬────────┼────────┬──────────┐
┌─────────┐┌─────────┐┌─────────┐┌─────────┐
│Manager A││Manager B││Manager C││Manager D│
└────┬────┘└────┬────┘└────┬────┘└────┬────┘
┌─────────┐┌─────────┐┌─────────┐┌─────────┐
│ 6 Staff ││ 6 Staff ││ 6 Staff ││ 6 Staff │
└─────────┘└─────────┘└─────────┘└─────────┘
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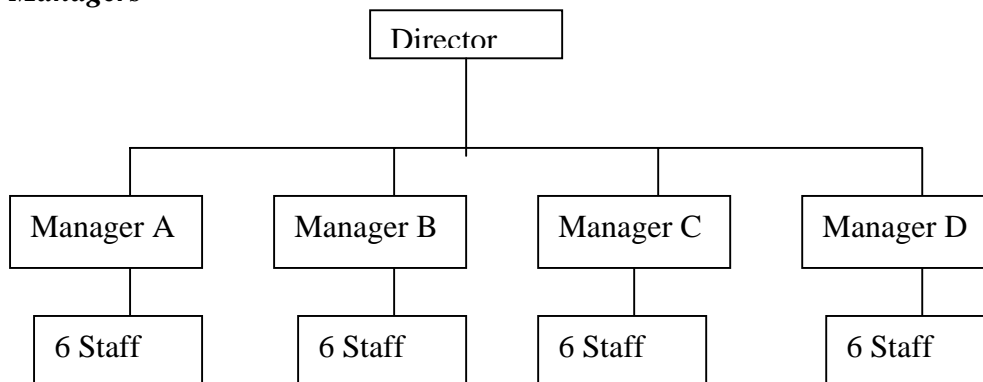
2 Deputy Directors and 4 Managers

```
                              ┌──────────┐
                              │ Director │
                              └────┬─────┘
                  ┌────────────────┴────────────────┐
          ┌───────────────────┐            ┌───────────────────┐
          │ Deputy Director 1 │            │ Deputy Director 2 │
          └─────────┬─────────┘            └─────────┬─────────┘
          ┌─────────┴─────────┐            ┌─────────┴─────────┐
    ┌───────────┐     ┌───────────┐   ┌───────────┐    ┌───────────┐
    │ Manager A │     │ Manager B │   │ Manager C │    │ Manager D │
    └─────┬─────┘     └─────┬─────┘   └─────┬─────┘    └─────┬─────┘
    ┌───────────┐     ┌───────────┐   ┌───────────┐    ┌───────────┐
    │  6 Staff  │     │  6 Staff  │   │  6 Staff  │    │  6 Staff  │
    └───────────┘     └───────────┘   └───────────┘    └───────────┘
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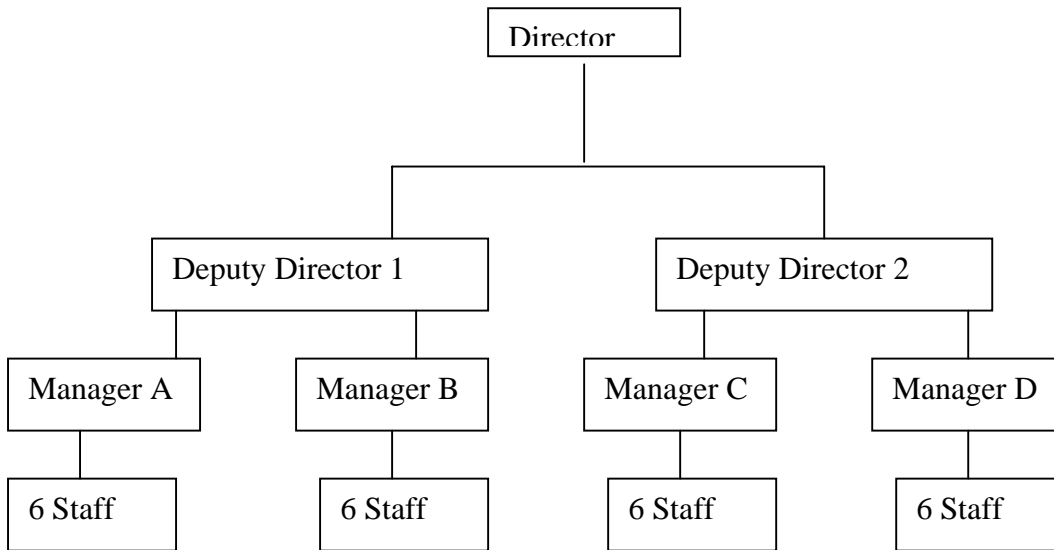
Matrix Management

4 Managers

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                        ┌──────────┐
                        │ Director │
                        └────┬─────┘
        ┌──────────┬─────────┼─────────┬──────────┐
   ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐
   │ Manager A │ │ Manager B │ │ Manager C │ │ Manager D │
   └─────┬─────┘ └─────┬─────┘ └─────┬─────┘ └─────┬─────┘
   ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐
   │  6 Staff  │ │  6 Staff  │ │  6 Staff  │ │  6 Staff  │
   └───────────┘ └───────────┘ └───────────┘ └───────────┘
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| A Project Manager | 2 of above A Project | 2 of above A Project | | 2 of above A Project | 2 of above A Project |
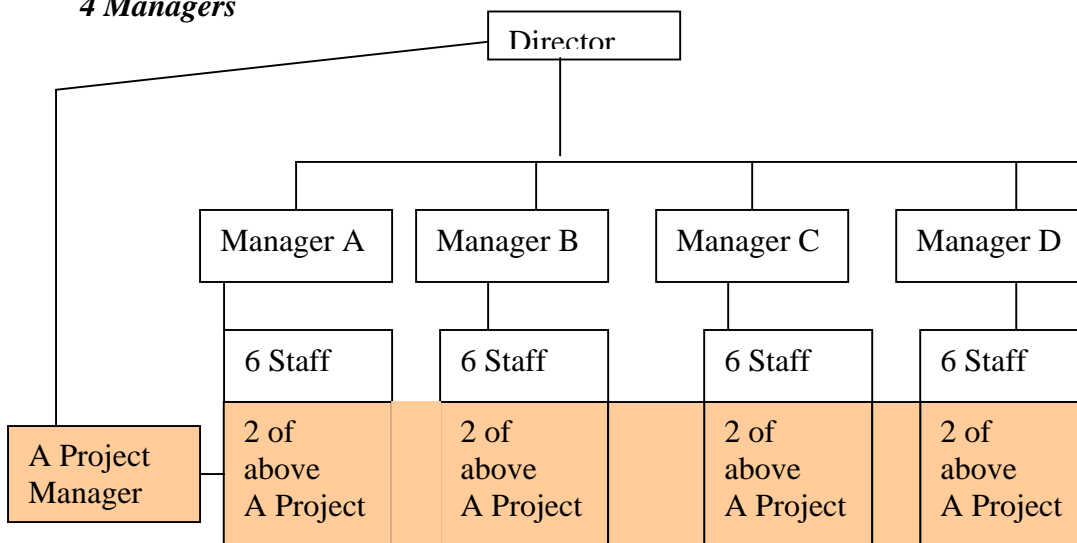
Regional Management (With Project Matrix)

4 Managers

Director

HQ Director

Region A	Region B	Region C	Region D

	6 Staff	6 Staff	6 Staff	6 Staff
HQ Project Manager A	2 of above A Project	2 of above A Project	2 of above A Project	2 of above A Project
HQ Project Manager B	2 of above B Project	2 of above B Project	2 of above B Project	2 of above B Project
	2 Support staff	2 Support staff	2 Support staff	2 Support staff
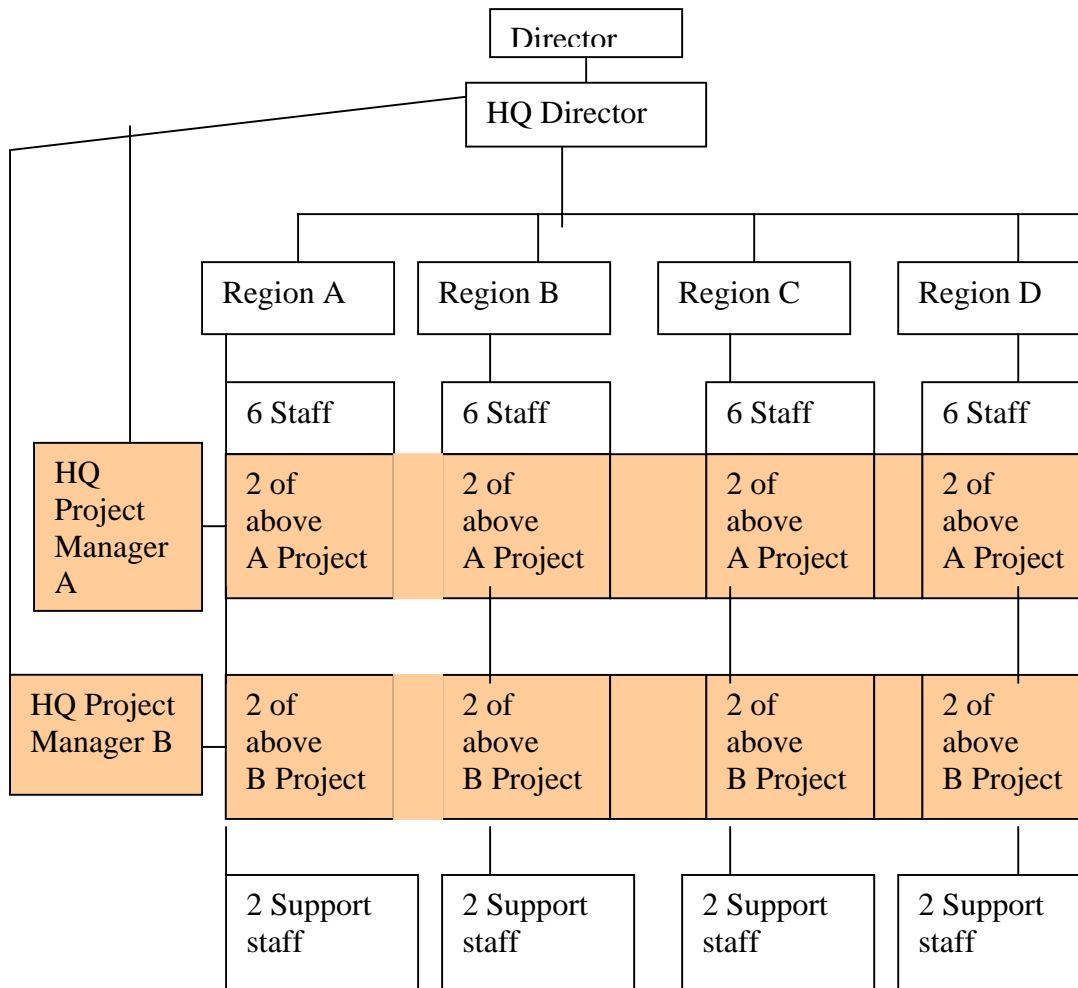
There is an ongoing debate about whether to organise work around different functional, departmental or geographical areas – particularly in cases of complex international organisations. In practice, most have a combination of the two, in a format similar to matrix management. For example, both the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) have functional departments in their headquarters office, but they also have regional and/or national offices, which liaise with the appropriate headquarters functions. In any organisation with international offices, the location and role of offices is an important part of strategic and structural choice e.g. Will offices be regional centres or national? Will they network with existing regional/national organisations or not? Will they be service delivery, campaigning, educational and/or fundraising? Other key considerations are to whom these offices will report, how they link into headquarters functions, and the degree of autonomy they are granted. In general, the management trend is towards greater decentralisation – but this may or may not be appropriate for every organisation.

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An international campaigning organisation will need to take into account the international political environment for animal protection when determining its structure. As can be seen in the chapter on the 'International Animal Protection Lobby', the political environment is becoming global. However, the forces of globalisation are creating strong regional trading and political blocs that will gain increasing power and coherence in the international political arena (e.g. the EU, NAFTA, ASEAN etc.). Thus, a regional structure is very convenient and appropriate for international campaigns organisations. The same would be true of international educational or service provision organisations where influential political partners (or potential partners) had regional offices (e.g. FAO, UNESCO etc.). If an international organisation seeks broad outreach in its work, it is impossible to manage this well (in a culturally appropriate way, and maintaining control and oversight) directly from headquarters.

Another distinction between international organisations is that some are international throughout (e.g. WSPA and IFAW), whereas others are essentially national organisations with an international department of wing, that works internationally using the parent organisation's skills and experience (for example, the UK's RSPCA and the HSUS (Humane Society of the United States). These are clearly structured differently, with the latter linking into key functions of the parent organisation.

Approached to Coordination

There are various approaches to coordination, which are more or less necessary depending on structure and remit. These include: -
> Rules, programmes and procedures
(procedures for dealing with routine activities)
> Remits and referrals
(who needs to be consulted and levels/extents of responsibility)
> Setting targets and goals
(These set achievement aims but allow flexibility of method.)
> Creating slack resources
> Creating self-contained tasks
> Investment in vertical information systems
(Central coordination and direction cannot occur unless those in charge have full information)

The systems employed should be the minimum necessary to achieve the task effectively, in order to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy. They should, however, be universally known and accepted, to make their use simple and seamless rather than obstructive. Lack of systems can be both disruptive and time-consuming e.g. no uniform system of document distribution leading to nobody knowing who else has received copies of the paper (and possibly sending these on again) and not knowing whether the copy they receive is for them alone etc. The same is true of e-mail systems, where much time can be wasted through constantly copying to a wide number of recipients. Systems and rules can in effect minimise workloads and reduce systemic irritations. They should, indeed, be designed for this purpose.

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A staff manual of procedures is recommended. This can be compiled and given to all staff and new staff members. The process of compilation is an excellent opportunity to examine and consult on existing systems, with a view to simplifying these and ensuring that systems are well known – and supported/followed - throughout the organisation.

> Choose always the way that seems the best, however rough it may be. Custom will soon render it easy and agreeable.
> *Pythagoras*