Contents

Introduction

General details of the foundation

   Legal basis

   Founding and seed capital

   Foundation purpose

   Board of trustees

   Foundation regulations

   Auditors

Activities of the foundation in the business year

   Projects

      Evidence-based poverty reduction

      Reduction of animal suffering

      Opportunities and risks of future technologies

      Promotion of the philosophy and movement of effective altruism

Asset management

Annual financial statement
Introduction

The following activity report aims to examine the activities of the Effective Altruism Foundation in the business year of 2015, and to show how far these activities accord with the purpose of the foundation.

Along with the annual accounts and the audit position, the activity report forms the annual report for the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations (ESA). The Effective Altruism Foundation falls under the supervision of ESA according to the direction of 16 September 2015.

Effective altruism is the guiding principle of the foundation: Our resources - time and money - are limited. How can we use them so that the most suffering is prevented and the most lives are saved? And what rational grounds are there anyway for investing resources in the sustained, effective reduction of suffering? EAF deals with these questions philosophically and economically, as well as from a cognitive and social psychological perspective.

In the following, the foundation name “Effective Altruism Foundation” and its abbreviation “EAF” will be used synonymously. The same is true of “effective altruism” and its abbreviation “EA”.

The activity report is divided into four sections: general details of the foundation, activities of the foundation in the business year, asset management, and annual financial statement.
General details of the foundation

The first part of the activity report goes into different aspects of the organisation. These include details on the legal basis of the activities, on the founding of EAS in the business year 2015, and on the membership of the board of trustees.

Legal basis

According to the public charter of 24.07.2015 and the entry of 04.08.2015 into the commercial registry of the canton of Basel-Stadt (published in Swiss trade office paper no. 151 on 07.08.2015, company number CHE-224.216.939), a foundation in the sense of Art. 80 ff. ZGB was established with location in Basel under the name of the Effective Altruism Foundation (Stiftung für Effektiven Altruismus) (Fondation pour l’Altruisme Efficace) (Fondazione per l’Altruismo Efficace).

Founding and seed capital

The business year 2015 marked the founding of the Effective Altruism Foundation through its founder, GBS Switzerland, on 24 July 2015. The founder dedicated seed capital at the level of CHF 100,000.

Foundation purpose

The purpose of the foundation is defined in the foundation deed of 24 July 2015, and is as follows:

*The Foundation's purpose is to improve the quality of the lives of as many sentient beings as extensively as possible, making use of scientific methods in order to do so. As a think tank it contributes to the development of fundamental understandings of effective, ethical behaviour and action.*

*In particular, it is committed to evidence-based poverty reduction, the reduction of animal suffering, the improvement of international cooperation and stability, and the promotion of responsible approaches to future technologies. It promotes the philosophy and social movement effective altruism.*

*It is active domestically and abroad.*

*The Foundation pursues no commercial interest and is exclusively not-for-profit.*
The founder expressly reserves the right to alter the purpose of the foundation, according to Art. 86a ZGB.

Board of trustees

The board of trustees is formed of the following natural persons:

- Adriano Mannino, President, without signature authority
- Lucius Caviola, Vice-president, without signature authority
- Lukas Gloor, Member, joint signature authority
- Tobias Pulver, Member, joint signature authority
- Jonas Vollmer, Member, joint signature authority
- Prof. Dr. Thomas Metzinger, Member, without signature authority

The members of the board of trustees perform their function voluntarily.

Foundation regulations

The foundation entry enables the board of trustees to pass foundation regulations, or multiple regulations, for organisational and procedural requirements. Such documents require the authorisation of the supervisory authority. In the present business year, the board of trustees passed no regulations.

Auditors

The Effective Altruism Foundation is required to audit. The board of trustees has hired the Hägi Treuhand AG (company number CHE-107.733.400), located in Basel, as independent external auditors. The report of the auditors on the annual accounts is available.
Activities of the foundation in the business year

In the second part of the activity report, the different projects of the Effective Altruism Foundation will be presented. Then four areas of activity will be used as examples to show how EAF contributed to the purpose of the foundation in the business year of 2015.

Projects

EAF started out indirectly from two Basel-based organisations, GBS Switzerland and Effective Altruism Switzerland (EACH). In connection with the founding on 24 July 2015, EAF took over parts of the current projects of GBS Switzerland (inactive since 31.12.2015) and EACH (dissolved on 13.09.2015). Finally on 01.01.2016, EAF took over all activities and projects of the two preceding organisations.

EAF was left with the following projects at the end of 2015:

- **Raising for Effective Giving (REG)** unites world-class professional poker players who want to maximise their positive impact on the world. To do this they commit themselves to donate at least 2% of their winnings – which usually means around 5-10% of their net income – to demonstrably effective organisations. As “meta-charity”, REG spreads the idea of effective donations in the poker world and beyond: there are now REG branches in professional gaming, in daily fantasy sports and in trading.

- **Sentience Politics** is an anti-speciesist political think-tank that advocates a society which grants moral consideration to all sentient beings, regardless of their species membership. *Sentience Politics* uses rationality and empirical science in order to identify and implement the most effective strategies to reduce as much suffering as possible.

- **EA Outreach** intends to make effective altruism known to a wider audience. To this end, EAF takes an active role with local and university groups across the German speaking world. In countless cities there are regular talks, discussion evenings, networking meetings, workshops and panel discussions. The content focus of these events lies in central EA concepts, like ethical, effective career choice and the significance of donations for building social movements of all kinds.

- The **Foundational Research Institute (FRI)** unites an international group of scientists, who work philosophically and empirically on a variety of EA strategies and seek to prioritise them. Specifically, FRI seeks the most effective methods for
limiting involuntary suffering in the context of future dystopian scenarios, as the (distant) future will probably contain more sentient beings than the present by many orders of magnitude. FRI supports the blog project Crucial Considerations, which offers an interdisciplinary introduction to potentially highly relevant themes in the sub-field of science and ethics.

These four projects aim to fulfill the foundation purpose of EAF as comprehensively as possible. The following sections detail different project-spanning activities in different areas of action, and explain them separately to make each of their relations to the foundation purpose clear.

**Evidence-based poverty reduction**

EAF supports the evidence-based fight against poverty. The projects which are most active in this cause area are Raising for Effective Giving and EA Outreach. In the business year 2015 the following activities were carried out amongst others:

- In 2015, GBS Switzerland, Effective Altruism Switzerland and EAF raised a total of CHF 656,185 in donations for effective charities in the field of the evidence-based fight against poverty. Towards the realisation of the foundation purpose, EAF used its own bank accounts from August 2015 onwards, and had already raised a total of CHF 339,280 by the end of the year to support charities that achieve outstanding results in the fields of the fight against poverty, the reduction of animal suffering and the responsible approach to future technologies.

- By the end of 2015, Raising for Effective Giving (REG) united over 200 of the world’s best poker professionals, who donate a portion of their poker winnings to effective charities as members of REG.

- EAF worked up a position paper on the evidence-based fight against poverty with the support of academic experts in economics, political science and philosophy, which will soon be published.

- On the occasion of a panel discussion on 10.12.2015 at the university of St. Gallen entitled “Development Aid - what is really working?”, EAF brought together parties interested in the theme of effective poverty reduction. Representatives of NGOs, ethical investment, development economics and social enterprises debated the effectiveness of different interventions, including individual donations and the Swiss development cooperation.
EAF organised eleven other events on the theme of evidence-based poverty reduction, including at the universities of Geneva, St. Gallen, Bern and Basel.

Reduction of animal suffering

EAF supports the reduction of animal suffering. The projects which are most active in this area of activity are Sentience Politics and Raising for Effective Giving. In the business year 2015 the following activities were carried out amongst others:

- In 2015, in collaboration with GBS Switzerland and Effective Altruism Switzerland, EAF was able to collect donations in the region of CHF 58,749 for effective charities in the field of the reduction of animal suffering.

- *Sentience Politics* brought about two political initiatives for "sustainable and fair food" in the city of Zurich and in the canton Basel-Stadt. These petitions shall promote plant-based foods through an improved supply of plant-based products, and thereby to reduce food-related environmental damage, limit livestock levels and support healthier nutritional decisions. The public will have the opportunity to vote on these initiatives in 2 years.

- Through a national online petition, *Sentience Politics* promoted greater transparency in relation to the ecological and animal ethical costs of the livestock industry. Amongst other things, the federal government shall take a position on how far high levels of meat production are compatible with sustainability goals, and which contributions to the promotion of plant-based foods could help the achievement of these goals.

- *Sentience Politics* worked up the bases for several position papers in the business year 2015 on potentially highly relevant themes in the field of the reduction of animal suffering. The publication of the position papers shall take place in 2016.

- Experts in the fields of philosophy and bioethics met for a panel discussion on the theme of “Animal research at the intersection of technological progress and ethics” on 24.11.2015 at the university of Bern. In the course of the discussion, regulatory proposals for animal research and arguments against animal testing were critically examined and a prioritisation of the theme in relation to other fields of animal ethics was made.

- In the area of activity of the reduction of animal suffering, EAF ran eight further events, including at the universities of Geneva, Zürich and Basel.
Opportunities and risks of future technologies

EAF supports the responsible approach to future technologies. The projects which are most active in this area of activity are *Raising for Effective Giving* and the *Foundational Research Institute*. In the business year 2015 the following activities were carried out amongst others:

- In 2015, in collaboration with GBS Switzerland and Effective Altruism Switzerland, EAF was able to raise donations at the level of CHF 237,686 for organisations which carry out preliminary research work on the opportunities and risks of future technologies.

- EAF published a position paper entitled “Artificial intelligence: Opportunities and Risks”. In this paper, EAF argued that progress in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) could lead to the development of an AI with human intelligence levels (or even higher). Such an AI holds great potential, but could also pose a global risk of catastrophic magnitude if there were systematic errors and insufficient goal definition. EAF promotes a raised awareness of these risks in research and strengthened investment in the stability of AI systems. The position paper was made public at a media conference on 12 November 2015.

- EAF carried out 6 further events to raise awareness on the problem amongst future decision makers.

Promotion of the philosophy and movement of effective altruism

EAF supports the spreading of effective altruism. The projects which were most active in this area of activity are *EA Outreach* and *Raising for Effective Giving*. In the business year 2015 the following activities were carried out amongst others:

- In 2015, and in collaboration with GBS Switzerland and Effective Altruism Switzerland, EAF was able to raise donations in the region of CHF 9,202 for external organisations which work in the field of EA movement building.

- EAF supports the formation of local EA groups across the German-speaking world. Local groups promote EA exchange in their areas and to this end organise talks and social events amongst other things. The events are public.

- In Basel, EAF organised a conference on effective altruism on 5 and 6 September 2015. The conference was the largest so far for the fast growing EA movement in the German speaking world. Amongst other things, the
programme included talks from renowned academics like the philosophy professor Thomas Metzinger, and from NGO leaders who are active in various EAF cause areas.

- EAF held 12 talks on effective altruism at universities at home and abroad. For example, Adriano Mannino, philosopher and president of EAF, gave a talk at the university of Zurich on “How to save 10,000 lives with scientific thought”. The psychologist and EAF executive director Lucius Caviola held talks on the psychology of effective altruism in Bayreuth and Munich. A comprehensive list of events in this area of activity can be found on the EAF website.

- **EA Outreach** offers donation advice to interested individuals. Strategic ethical donation aims to financially support those organisations which generate the greatest reduction in suffering per currency unit.

- At the same time, **EA Outreach** is engaged in ethical careers advice: we spend around 80,000 hours of our lives at work. This time investment is of enormous significance both from a personal and an altruistic perspective. It is therefore worth investing a lot of time in one’s own choice of career. In July 2015 the first workshop on career choice took place, and since then it has been repeated many times.
Asset management

On asset management, the foundation charter prescribes the following: “Assets must not be endangered through speculative transactions, but must also not be placed in secure gilt-edged investments.”

In the past business year EAF has comprehensively complyed with this principle. The total assets of EAF were held in the form of liquid assets. EAF carried out no other investment activities.

In the following year the foundation plans to create a comprehensive investment strategy. This strategy shall follow the principles of liquidity, capital returns, security, and risk distribution.

Annual financial statement

The annual financial statement is divided into a section on balance, an income statement, and an appendix. The auditors have checked the annual financial statement and authorised it in their report. The board of trustees authorised the annual financial statement as well as the above activity report without reservations on the occasion of the board meeting on 24.05.2016.