



Guidelines to Proposals

of IUCN SSC National Species Specialist Groups

May 2022

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), created in 1949, is a worldwide science-based network of more than ten thousand volunteer experts in almost every country, who work towards achieving “A just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to reduce the loss of diversity of life on earth”.

As all of IUCN's six Commissions, SSC joins forces with the Secretariat and Members to build a scientific and practical foundation for the effective delivery of species conservation. SSC consists of three types of groups. **Specialist Groups**, organised either by taxonomy, geography or scientific discipline, work across the species conservation cycle conducting risk assessments, producing plans, and catalysing or implementing conservation action. Most Specialist Groups are also the designated Red List Authority for the species in their remit. **Stand-alone Red List Authorities** are groups of experts set up to oversee threat assessments, while **Task Forces** are time-bound, created in response to pressing conservation issues or a particular need, and aim to deliver on agreed outputs within a finite time frame. The SSC has a Steering Committee, and five Conservation Committees (Marine, Freshwater, Plants, Invertebrates and Fungi), that provide oversight and guidance to the SSC network, while the Red List Committee oversees the production and maintenance of the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#).

IUCN is uniquely positioned to support governments in achieving international commitments such as those of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its associated Targets, and the Sustainable Development Goals aimed at halting the loss of species. In particular, SSC has the potential to strengthen the scientific evidence base for species decision-making processes. This proposal outlines how species experts from **COUNTRY** will form the **COUNTRY Species Specialist Group (CSSG)**. National Species Specialist Groups allow SSC members who are already part of other groups to organise geographically, and also allow additional experts, especially emerging talent, to join the Commission without being previously affiliated to other SSC groups.

The purpose of the **COUNTRY Species Specialist Group (CSSG)** will be to co-ordinate expertise across taxonomic groups and disciplines to support governments and other stakeholders, and facilitate evidence-based decision making and the development of policies that will contribute towards reversing the decline of species. This group is extremely relevant within the current economic and political context within the country and the increasing risk of biodiversity loss.

Questions to be answered to consider the proposal for the creation of a new National Species Specialist Group (Feel free to use them as a framework for your written proposal within this same file).

- 1) What are the key species conservation issues facing your country?, (no more than half a page).
- 2) Explain how the activities of the group would address existing gaps and work in a complementary manner with existing structures, stakeholders and processes?, (no more than half a page).
- 3) Describe the current status of species data mobilisation in the country and to what extent knowledge products maintained by IUCN and its partners, including the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the Red List of Ecosystems, species planning guidelines and Key Biodiversity Areas are being implemented?, (no more than half a page).
- 4) What are the key activities / outputs that the group will undertake? (no more than half a page, preferably a bulleted list). These activities should be selected from the suggested activities included in the Terms of Reference for IUCN SSC National Species Specialist Groups.
- 5) Is there a unique/core group of relevant experts willing to dedicate energy and time towards furthering a conservation agenda in your country? Describe how your group will be organised and if sub-groups working on specific thematic areas or taxonomic groups will be established. Consider point b) below.
- 6) Explain how this new group would interact and work synergistically with other existing SSC group's members present in your country, (no more than half a page).
- 7) Is there an institutional source for support and co-ordination for this new group? Please explain what kind of institutional support will be provided, for example whether the potential leaders are based at a university or a government agency, (no more than half a page).
- 8) Please explain what steps have been taken to inform your IUCN National Committee (should one exist in your country), the IUCN regional office and the corresponding biodiversity government institution of your country about the creation of this new group. Describe how you will keep working in a coordinated manner with these entities.

Key aspects to be considered in the proposal:

- a) Provide a list with names, emails and affiliations, of recommended members of the new group. List which taxonomic group, realm or cross-cutting discipline (e.g. sustainable use, human-wildlife conflict, invasive species, or climate change) each member will cover, and/or to what specific SSC group the member is already affiliated to.
- b) Include as potential members, a list of specialists that might cover as much as possible all taxonomic representation (animals, fungi and plants), as well as, specialists in all or most biological realms of your country: freshwater, marine, subterranean and terrestrial (see [IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology](#)), and also members that might cover all or most of the Species Conservation Cycle components: assess, plan, act, network and communicate. If it is not possible to include such lists, indicate how it is planned to address these issues once the group is established.
- c) Describe what steps you have taken to ensure the representation of gender, geography, experience and age in the membership of the group, and explain how you will work towards filling capacity gaps by identifying emerging experts and bringing them into the group.

d) Explain how the group will be steered. This means, you need to propose the name for a Chair (or two Co-Chairs), explain the current work responsibilities of the Chair/Co-Chairs ensuring as much alignment to the required activities of the Group as possible. Estimate how much time each Chair/Co-Chair will have to dedicate to leading the work of the Specialist Group.

e) In order to facilitate managing funds for the work of the National Species Specialist Group it is recommended the group can identify a host institution. This institution will be expected to remain independent and not unduly influence the work of the NSSG.

f) All SSC groups are encouraged to designate Focal Persons (FP) (also called “focal points”) in the following matters: Conservation Planning, *Ex-Situ* Conservation, Climate Change, Sustainable Use among others. These FP are members that are familiarised or are experts on these topics, that might serve as liaison with the corresponding SSC cross cutting or disciplinary groups and wider communities in these fields: i.e. Conservation Planning SG, Conservation Translocation SG, Climate Change SG, Sustainable Use & Livelihoods SG, etc. (see the [SSC Directory](#) of Cross-cutting groups)