



Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2021-2025

IUCN Species Survival Commission

As revised and adopted by the SSC Steering Committee, 4 September 2020

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Checklist of documents relevant to the Steering Committee, Leaders and Members of the IUCN Species Survival Commission

#	Documents / Category of Members	Members	Taxonomic group leaders (Chairs, Co-Chairs, RLACs)	Cross-cutting group leaders (Chairs, Co-Chairs)	Steering Committee
Governance Framework					
1	IUCN Programme 2021-2025	x	x	x	x
2	IUCN One Programme Charter		x	x	x
3	SSC Mandate	x	x	x	x
4	SSC By-laws	x	x	x	x
5	Code of Conduct for IUCN Commissions	x	x	x	x
6	Guidance on the Code of Conduct and Practices for its Implementation	x	x	x	x
7	IUCN Species Strategic Plan 2021-2025	x	x	x	x
8	Red List Partnership		x	x	x
9	Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders		x	x	x
10	Guidelines for SSC Members on Engaging in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	When engaging in CITES discussions	When engaging in CITES discussions	When engaging in CITES discussions	x
Terms of Reference					
11	Terms of Reference of the SSC Steering Committee members				x
12	Terms of Reference IUCN SSC Regional Vice-Chairs				x
13	Terms of Reference of the IUCN SSC Conservation Committees	When part of a Committee	When part of a Committee	When part of a Committee	x
14	Terms of Reference of the Chair of the IUCN Red List Committee		x		x
15	Terms of Reference of Chairs of Specialist Groups and Task Forces		x	x	x
16	Terms of Reference of the Red List Authority Coordinators		x		x
17	Terms of Reference of the IUCN SSC National Species Authority		x	x	x
18	Terms of Reference for SSC Members	x	x	x	x
19	Terms of Reference of Focal Point Ex-situ Conservation		x		x
20	Terms of Reference of Focal Point Conservation Planning		x		x
21	Terms of Reference of Focal Point Sustainable Use		x		x

1. Introduction

Welcome to the leadership of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and thank you for agreeing to chair or coordinate an SSC Group. In this document we expand on the topics covered in the Terms of Reference for Specialist Group, National Species Specialist Group, Task Force and Conservation Committee Chairs 2021-2025. The term “SSC Leaders” refers collectively to Chairs of Specialist Groups, National Species Authorities, Task Forces, Action Partnerships and Committees, together with Red List Authority Coordinators.

In the broader conservation and development community and in many global fora, SSC Leaders are held in high esteem and command a great degree of respect for the role they hold. Chairs can be very influential, representing the highest level of scientific rigour and credibility with regard to the conservation of species within their remit. This places a very high degree of responsibility and accountability on all those agreeing to take on the role of an SSC Leader.

Over several decades and across more than 160 groups, Leaders have gained wide experience in processes and approaches to this complex task. The following represents accumulated wisdom that may assist you in succeeding at this task. In addition to this document, we encourage SSC Leaders to exchange their experiences as much as possible through contacting each other directly.

1.1. SSC Leadership

The management structure of the SSC includes:

- the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Commission;
- a [Steering Committee](#) appointed by IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Chair, that includes also representatives from the Secretariat and institutional observers;
- six [Committees](#) (currently Freshwater Conservation, Fungal Conservation, Plant Conservation, Marine Conservation, Invertebrate Conservation and Red List); and
- over 300 SSC Leaders in more than 160 SSC Groups, as described in the [SSC Specialist Groups and Red List Authorities Directory](#).

The SSC encourages SSC Leaders to consult regularly and closely with the SSC Chair’s Office, other Group Chairs and IUCN Global Species Programme (GSP) staff on matters of mutual concern and to suggest improvements to the modus operandi of the SSC.

1.2. Support to the SSC Network

Support for the SSC network is provided by a team based both at the SSC Chair’s Office and GSP. The main role of the team is to provide general support and help build capacity across the SSC network in order to strengthen SSC Groups, Task Forces, Committees and Red List Authorities. The team acts as the first point of contact for any queries or information and assists with mobilizing the network to provide their expertise and knowledge as required.

Key areas of support:

- **Liaison:** acting as “connectors” for the SSC and most commonly with IUCN regional offices, other IUCN Programmes and Commissions, Red List partners, IUCN members and external organizations.
- **Communication:** assist with press releases, promoting the work of the SSC (internally and externally), contribute to the SSC e-bulletin, assist with the development of Group websites and social media channels.
- **Coordination of technical input:** consult and seek out expertise and input from the SSC network on documents for international conventions (e.g. CBD, CITES, CMS), IUCN publications,

- guidelines and standards, position statements, major reports and situation analyses.
- **Policy:** support SSC engagement and input into policy mechanisms (CBD, CITES, CMS, etc.), including briefing Groups on conventions, helping with preparations for meetings, and assisting with or providing advice on position or policy documents.
- **Conservation Actions:** implement high-level interventions on urgent conservation issues, encourage Groups to engage in species conservation planning (linking Red List assessments to conservation actions), help implement species-related IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations and oversee timely delivery of targets set out in the Species Strategic Plan.
- **Partnerships:** seek partnerships, e.g., with zoos, botanical gardens, and aquariums, to help bolster capacity and provide extra support for Groups with, for example, Red List assessments, conservation planning and facilitating priority action.
- **Administration:** provide advice on contracts, finances, budgets, MOUs, and other administrative documents.
- **Expansion of the SSC network:** assist with proposals for new Groups and help them become established, coordinate formal appointment with SSC Chair and Steering Committee, assist with leadership succession.
- **Annual Reporting:** support Groups in completing SSC Data system for reporting goals, activities and needs.

2. Structure of the Groups

2.1. Legal status of Groups

Under IUCN Statutes, neither SSC nor SSC groups are legal entities, and for this reason they have no rights to enter into, or sign, any legally binding agreement or document on behalf of IUCN. SSC Leaders requiring any clarification on this particular point are encouraged to contact the SSC Chair's Office.

2.2. Structures and sharing responsibility

The duties of SSC Leaders are more effective if they distribute tasks among members of the group, mindful of the fact that the ultimate responsibility for the group's activities remains their own. There is a degree of flexibility on the structure of SSC Groups and many models exist in the network. Assembling a cooperative and energetic set of advisors and assistants is always helpful and almost obligatory in larger groups. Many SSC Leaders designate Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Regional Deputies or Regional Vice-Chairs and Task Force Leaders and specific task-oriented positions for fund management, fundraising, membership management, communications, newsletter production, etc. Groups may also want to establish working groups which may be a) regional, b) thematic, c) taxonomic, or d) some combination thereof.

Many groups are also able to designate a Programme Officer, ideally either as part- or full-time paid position. This has proved to be particularly helpful for maintaining regular contact with the IUCN Secretariat and SSC Chair's Office, but especially for the daily administration of the group. Please refer to Annex 1 for sample ToRs for a Programme Officer.

As part of the internal structure of a Group, leaders are invited to name focal points for conservation planning, *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use.

	Terms of Reference
1	Terms of Reference of Chairs of Specialist Groups and Task Forces
2	Terms of Reference of the Red List Authority Coordinators
3	Terms of Reference for SSC Members

	Terms of Reference
4	Terms of Reference of Focal Point <i>Ex-situ</i> Conservation
5	Terms of Reference of Focal Point Conservation Planning
6	Terms of Reference of Focal Point Sustainable Use

3. Governance of SSC Group

3.1. SSC Groups and democracy

SSC Leaders are responsible for group governance and oversight. This might appear to be a potentially autocratic structure, but most groups develop suitably consultative, collegial and cooperative modes of governance that ensure respect, equity and effectiveness. There is no single successful model. Some Chairs are “benign dictators” and others fully representative leaders, but most have found that the authority, charisma and political adroitness of the SSC Leader is an important component of the group’s success. The SSC Chair’s office encourages transparent, consultative and participatory modes of leadership that empower all members of the group and invite regular feedback from them.

3.2. Decision-making in the Group

Decision-making in SSC groups need to be in accordance with the general provisions contained in the [SSC By-laws](#). The effectiveness of an SSC Leader depends upon his/her skill at articulating issues, redefining approaches and integrating diverse views, so that the group can find agreement or an acceptable middle-ground on the decision they are called upon to make. Often the best that can be expected is for the SSC Leader to keep the majority of members in agreement and, in most cases, consensus is not synonymous with unanimity. SSC Leaders must weigh up the benefits of pushing to resolve conflicting issues against the possibly disruptive effects of highly divisive agendas on group cohesion. Ultimately, the SSC Leaders have to take responsibility for decisions and decision-making processes in their groups.

It is desirable to get as close to consensus as possible, e.g., when issuing statements, reports, publications by the Group, but there will be cases where this may not be possible. Under these circumstances, disclaimers may be used to indicate where: *“the views expressed [in XXX publication] do necessarily reflect those of the entire [name of group]”*.

3.3. Speaking on behalf of the Group

Many SSC Groups and their leaders have grappled with the manner in which individual members, groups of members, the SSC Leader and the group as a whole express their views in public fora, especially in the media or Conventions (e.g., CITES, CMS and CBD). A generally workable formula adopted by many groups is:

- Only the SSC Leader is authorized to speak on behalf of their group, either in person or by delegating this responsibility in writing on Group letterhead.
- SSC members or groups of members may make any statement they wish on any matter in their independent and private capacity, but they shall not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the Group, SSC or IUCN unless the SSC Leader has expressly authorized it.
- Individual SSC members may identify themselves as a member of their Groups on below their signatures, in correspondence such as emails and letters, on their résumés and elsewhere, clearly understanding that this is an indication of factual membership and is not an indication of the group’s agreement or endorsement of any statement.
- IUCN has specific rules about who has authority to speak on behalf of the organization, in public fora, including the SSC. The IUCN Statutes give the right of intervention on behalf of the

organization to the Director General or others delegated by her or him. For SSC, this means that at international meetings, Group Leaders or their designees who are formal members of the IUCN Delegation are permitted to speak on behalf of IUCN or the SSC only with the agreement of the Head of the IUCN Delegation. The SSC Chair, if present, and the Head of the IUCN Delegation (generally a member of the IUCN GSP staff) must be consulted on any planned interventions before they take place and as early as possible before the intervention is planned to be given.

As a general principle, rights to speak on behalf of SSC Groups should be in accordance with the provisions of SSC By-laws. Note that there are existing IUCN positions and policies in place for a number of issues, and all interventions need to be in line with existing policy. IUCN policy is embedded not just in formal statements (such as the [IUCN Policy on Sustainable Use](#); see also below), but also in the [Resolutions and Recommendations](#) adopted by IUCN Members. Chairs need to familiarize themselves with relevant policy prior to making any intervention on a matter of import, and should consult the SSC Chairs' office in cases where they are uncertain. Group Chairs and members may also at times be invited to sign up to petitions, appeals or other similar letters. Group Chairs or members are free to sign onto petitions in their individual capacities, but signing the Specialist Group onto such declarations is discouraged because it can inadvertently jeopardize the independence of SSC groups, and by extension SSC and IUCN.

3.4. Motivating your members

Motivating volunteers requires the identification of the goals and rewards that provide incentives. SSC Leaders need to provide these "motivators" and minimize disincentives: recognition and praise are among the foremost incentives. Others include rewards of conservation delivery at all levels, influence on events, access to powerful decision makers, professional advancement, technical assistance and social gratification. Past research has shown that members want to be more involved in activities and that they are simply waiting for guidance and leadership. Thankfully, recognition and praise are the least costly rewards in both time and resources and are infinitely divisible. Frequent expressions of appreciation and thanks from SSC Leaders keep many volunteers active and happy. In addition, staying on top of awards and other opportunities, and providing this information to group members, can provide enormous dividends.

3.5. Establishing and maintaining realistic expectations

Clearly stated expectations and a definition of responsibilities allow everyone to understand their roles and limits, as well as the roles and limitations of others. It is important for the SSC Leader to understand what he/she can and cannot expect from the SSC Chair, the SSC Chair's Office and the staff of the IUCN Secretariat. This understanding should be shared with Group members to ensure realistic expectations. In general, the SSC Chair's Office staff and IUCN Secretariat staff are able to respond and work directly with the SSC Leaders, but not with individual group members (SSC has nearly 10,000 individual members). The SSC Chair's Office and IUCN Secretariat staff provide advice and assistance on subjects such as the IUCN Red List and SIS, contributing species conservation knowledge to influence environmental policy, communication, and advice for partnerships and fundraising, but in general are unable to help on individual fundraising or day-to-day Group administration.

As noted previously, each SSC Group has a designated member of staff in the Network Support Team who is assigned to the group as the SSC Leader is appointed. It is the duty of that staff person to provide help and support to the group when needed, to be the first point of contact for any queries and also act as a liaison to facilitate strong links between IUCN and SSC.

Wherever possible, the SSC Chair's Office and the IUCN Secretariat will endeavor not to overburden the SSC network with requests or communications. However, in accepting a role as an SSC Leader, you agree to your contact details being made publicly available on the SSC website associated with your specific group. There is no restriction on any external audience contacting SSC groups for infor-

mation and inputs, and indeed this is to be anticipated in your capacity as an SSC Leader. However, if at any point SSC Leaders are being inundated with requests or receive a request they are uncertain how to handle, please bring this to the attention of the SSC Chair's Office.

4. Partnerships and fundraising

4.1. Fundraising

Most groups operate primarily on a volunteer basis. However, increased conservation impact can be amplified with operational funds. It is important for Leaders to consider their own role and those of their staff (if they have any for the group), the activities they and their staff are responsible for on behalf of the Group and, therefore, what they might require funds for.

In general, Leaders, and even Groups, are not implementers of conservation projects or programmes on the ground. Implementing conservation action should largely remain the domain of individual members or groupings of members. SSC Leaders play an important role in supporting their members, albeit not necessarily in the implementation of projects or programmes per se. In essence, SSC Leaders and support staff will generally act in a support function to better enable their members to collect species information and to implement species conservation action. The role of SSC Leaders and support staff could be described as facilitation and networking at a higher level to support the conservation activities of their members in the field.

SSC Groups are encouraged to seek funds to support their operations if necessary but preferably to focus any fundraising efforts on support for priority conservation actions. At times, this may involve helping individual members or groups of members to secure funds for activities which their group has identified as priorities.

4.2. Coordination of fundraising efforts

There are currently more than 160 SSC Groups, five other IUCN Commissions, nearly 40 IUCN Regional and Country Offices, and a number of IUCN global thematic programmes. All are pursuing funds, often from the same sources, so coordination is essential! IUCN proposals have been rejected in the past on the sole basis that the donor received several proposals from different components of the organisation and deemed IUCN to be lacking in internal coordination.

The IUCN Secretariat has established contacts with many funding agencies and often is able to submit multiple proposals on behalf of IUCN. For this reason, SSC Groups are requested to contact the SSC Chair's Office or IUCN Secretariat prior to approaching donors for funds exceeding US\$ 100,000. For approaches to regional funding agencies, SSC groups are requested to contact the appropriate IUCN regional or country office. Most approaches will be cleared quickly. However, a few might require discussions with other IUCN entities and the development of joint strategies.

4.3. Managing finances

Although not legal entities, SSC groups may need to manage financial resources that allow the group to operate. Beyond providing vital support, funds introduce complexities and an additional administrative burden for the SSC Leader. Firstly, there are the obvious requirements for proper record keeping and reporting to ensure that funds are not lost, wasted, misappropriated or stolen. Secondly, most countries have tax and other fiscal consequences of handling funds that need to be noted and carefully followed. It is recommended that SSC Groups find an institution or registered NGO (ideally one whose accounts are audited) to assist the group with financial management. Management of group funds is frequently offered by NGOs as a contribution to SSC, and is frequently fulfilled by a group's host institution. The SSC Chair's Office stands ready to assist in formalizing arrangements with potential hosts.

Groups must be accountable to individual donors. IUCN appoints SSC Leaders with the understanding that they will meet financial reporting requirements of donors in a professional and timely fashion. Control over the distribution of a group's funds can be a major source of friction, particularly when the level of affluence of members in different countries or regions is markedly different. Expenses, professional fees or salaries perceived as normal in one place may be perceived as absurdly high and expensive, or low and exploitive in others. Transparency and frank discussion of these issues helps defuse antagonisms and suspicions.

With regards to fair use and management of SSC Groups, some Leaders retain direct fiscal control and others deliberately buffer themselves by assigning financial management to an honorary or paid treasurer. In either case, clear separation of Group funds, personal funds and other funds is essential. For their own protection, SSC Leaders and financial officers should avoid mingling different funds, incurring debt on behalf of the group, and unsupervised or opaque fund management.

4.4. Host institutions and organizational partnerships

Host institutions and organisational partnerships can play an important and usually pivotal role in providing day-to-day support to SSC Group. In return, certain benefits may accrue to the host institution, including, for example, conferring a certain degree of status on that institution and access to SSC's conservation tools and expertise relating to guidance on conservation approaches and priorities. The relationship between SSC groups and host institutions is a key one, and vital to the proper functioning of any group – indeed, the support of a host institution/s is seen as a near prerequisite in the establishment of any group.

SSC Groups are encouraged to explore areas of common vision with (potential or existing) host institutions and organisational partners to provide not only financial and administrative hosting but also help bolster capacity and provide extra support, for example, through Programme Officer or support for Red Listing, joint conservation planning or facilitating joint priority actions. Partnering with organisations such as zoos, aquaria, botanic gardens, NGOs, universities or others in the corporate sector can lead to sustainable, long-term support. This support may be in the form of in-kind contributions, for example: access to facilities, financial or administrative hosting, staff support (e.g., Programme Officer or assistance for Red List assessments), meeting hosting or website support. In many cases, these relationships also lead to financial support to deliver on joint objectives.

However, it is important to develop clear expectations, deliverables and boundaries for these partnerships from the outset. The boundaries between the identity, operations and management of the group and that of the host institution can sometimes blur. This can lead to tensions among group members if the identity of the Group becomes inseparable from the host; it may also jeopardize the group's standing as a neutral body in certain fora if the distinction between the host and group are not clear. In cases where the Chair is employed by the host institution, it is important that the Chair is conscious of this possible tension, and ensures that there is always a clear distinction made when speaking on behalf of the group and when on behalf of the host institution. Disputes or under-delivery on partnerships can have ramifications across the wider SSC and IUCN so it is also important that the group meets the commitments of any partnerships in an effective and timely manner and communicates promptly and openly with the SSC Chair's Office if issues do arise.

Consideration should also be given to a balanced use of logos and branding in order to minimize any possible confusion between the work of the SSC groups and that of the host institution.

5. Conflict resolution

5.1. Dispute mediation

On occasions, and despite a Leader's best efforts, disputes arise that disrupt group cohesion. It remains the SSC Leaders responsibility to manage these incidents but if necessary they may call on the

SSC Chair for help. The management of such incidents should always be in conformity with the [SSC By-laws](#), including the [Code of Conduct of the Members of IUCN Commissions](#).

5.2. Avoiding conflicts of interest

While SSC Leaders are asked to serve in their individual, technical capacities and not represent institutional interests, it is possible that Group members may still operate from deeply personal or institutionally-held views. Conflicts can become acute when financial and economic rewards are involved. SSC Leaders need to be aware of potential conflicts of interest that may drive members' and their own actions. The management of conflicts of interest should always be in conformity with the SSC By-laws, including the Code of Conduct of the Members of the IUCN Commission. It is especially important that SSC Leaders, when intervening on any controversial issue, clearly state whether they are acting in their personal/professional capacity or that of an SSC Leader. The SSC Chair's Office is able to provide and archive conflict of interest declarations on behalf of SSC Leaders, and strongly encourages them to submit them.

6. Succession plan

6.1. Managing succession

SSC Leaders are encouraged to keep an eye out for emerging leaders, and groom them so that they can integrate into effective and seamless succession plans. Mechanisms for achieving this, include:

- bringing future leadership into senior roles within the group (e.g., appointing a Deputy Chair);
- an existing Chair sharing the leadership with a Co-Chair for the duration, or part, of an IUCN quadrennium to foster understanding and learning of the duties and responsibilities of the position;
- establishing a working group or task force within the group to encourage expressions of interest both internally and externally to take on the future role of Chair.

Although there are no set term limits for SSC Group leaders, after serving two terms, the SSC Chair's Office is required to conduct a democratic consultation with Group members, to enquire about their support to the renewal of the Leader to a third or additional terms. Positive support of Groups members is a requisite for reappointment.

There is no single process formally recognized by the SSC Chair's Office for SSC Group transitions, however, there are three general options available:

1. The SSC Chair may propose a new SSC Leader on the recommendation of the existing SSC Leader (preferably with wider consultation of group members). Formal appointment requires approval by the SSC Steering Committee.
2. An independent succession process may be run internally in the Group to seek out a suitable candidate. Members are requested to nominate candidates, following a set of criteria agreed previously (for sample ToRs which outline the general requirements required for an SSC Leader please refer to Annex 2). The names of the proposed candidates will be screened by a panel of members (typically selected by the existing SSC Leader(s)) and a recommendation provided for approval to the SSC Chair, Deputy Chair and SSC Steering Committee.
3. The office of the SSC Chair convenes a process with an independent panel (usually selected from the SSC network) to seek a new Leader. Once a suitable candidate has been selected, the SSC Chair, Deputy Chair and SSC Steering Committee must confirm their approval of the appointment before it is formally made.

7. Appointing members

At the start of each new quadrennium, the Chair of the SSC is elected at the IUCN Congress, who

then appoints or re-appoints other SSC Leaders, after which they are invited to renew their own groups membership.

Appointing Group members is one of the SSC Leader's most important and influential activities. Now this must be done directly by the Leader through an invitation sent through the IUCN Commission System and requiring the acceptance by both the Leader and the new member including IUCN membership conditions.

SSC Leaders should reach out to existing members, deputies, vice-chairs, taxa or regional coordinators and other knowledgeable sources to identify potential new members. The SSC Leader should assess carefully an individual's interest in being a part of the SSC and the specific group, their willingness to contribute and their personal qualifications before making appointments. SSC Leaders should also be receptive and open to requests from outside the current SSC membership to become a member of a Group, and should consider each such expression of interest on their own merit by providing timely feedback to such enquiries. Some SSC groups find it useful to establish simple criteria for membership, since they often deal with many such requests. In such cases, criteria should be made openly accessible, for example on a group's website. Nevertheless, it is extremely important that group membership is balanced geographically (especially range countries of a group's species), by age, gender, expertise and institutional background.

There are no restrictions for appointing Group members. Some groups consist of a small and exclusive ensemble of highly-specialized researchers; others are large, inclusive groupings of diverse interests and expertise. There is an obvious trade-off between group size and logistical effectiveness. While experience has shown that smaller groups sometimes tend to be more effective, lasting conservation action in the international sphere almost requires that groups be more than small coterries of like-minded colleagues. Diversity of experience and perspective is often the core of a group's effectiveness, although managing this diversity may be a challenge. A good rule of thumb is that the larger the group, the clearer and more rigorously defined the structure and operations need to be. The degree of autonomy of the internal sub-groupings within a group requires careful balancing and management between efficient decentralization, effective operation and the SSC Leader's statutory final responsibility.

Membership of SSC Groups remains a privilege and a valuable professional accolade that should be protected by careful attention to all appointments. The SSC's strength is in quality and not quantity. Equally, the SSC does not tolerate exclusivity and encourages diversity and representation in membership. Each Group member should be a strong contributor to ensure that the reputation and respect accorded the SSC and its members is not devalued. However, it is important also to balance experience with the need to build professional capacity and encourage the contribution of younger experts or in some cases non-experts that are key stakeholders. For many groups it is also increasingly important to consider and integrate both *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation approaches and expertise.

SSC Groups are encouraged to build relationships with relevant networks from the *ex-situ* community – for example by including membership representation from relevant zoo or aquarium Taxonomic Advisory Groups (TAGs) or Botanic Gardens taxonomic networks. The start of each quadrennium, when all members will need re-appointing, is an ideal opportunity to review membership with a view to retaining those individuals who are positively contributing to the group's activities.

Benefits for SSC Group members, include:

- Professional honour, peer recognition, and personal and professional satisfaction;
- An ability to influence policy and decision making within the group, the SSC and IUCN, as well as internationally through policy fora that IUCN engages in, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

- and Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- Leveraged and amplified effectiveness on conservation issues;
- Communication with a global network of experts within and outside their own field of expertise, and
- Reduced registration fees for attending certain IUCN events (e.g., World Conservation Congress).

Benefits for the SSC and IUCN in general:

- Expert advice and cutting-edge information to contribute to global conservation targets;
- A global profile for the cumulative expert knowledge of all SSC members;
- Direct access to experts who provide data for biodiversity assessments and Red List indicators;
- Direct communication to IUCN governmental and non-governmental members;
- Technical support for IUCN's thematic and regional programmes;
- Participation and contribution to SSC and IUCN work plans and policy work; and
- Enhanced support and recognition for IUCN's activities and technical contributions.

8. Annual commitments and reports

8.1. Annual Species report

Each Specialist Group, Task Force, Stand-alone RLA, Action Partnership, National Species Specialist Groups and Conservation Committee is required to submit a condensed annual report on their group's activities through the SSC Data process. The reports will then be consolidated into a main Species Annual Report which will provide a complete summary of the work of the SSC Network, including the SSC Chair's Office and the GSP.

These yearly reports are necessary and extremely well received, both internally and externally. Not only do they provide an overview of the incredible diversity of work being carried out across the SSC network and help to profile all of its noteworthy achievements, but they are one of the most important ways for the SSC to convey its value to current and potential donors. Regular reporting is also a requirement of the Terms of Reference for all SSC Group Leaders, and it is important that they are submitted in a timely manner. Timely provision of this annual report through the SSC DATA Information System is an essential duty of the Leader and therefore is one of the considerations for the leadership renewal process.

8.1.1. SSC DATA

SSC DATA is our systematic process of monitoring the activities carried out by the SSC Network to effectively understand our conservation impact. SSC DATA is key to know how the SSC groups are doing, what targets they are pursuing and what they accomplish each year.

As result of implementing the new SSC DATA, we have identified the following anticipated benefits:

- A more friendly platform
- A more versatile data reporting platform
- Real-time reporting
- Targets are entered into the system before the quadrennium starts
- Speed up process of preparing single-group reports
- Speed up process of preparing Species Report of SSC & GSP
- Integrated management tool:
 - Coordination in real-time among group collaborators

- SSC Groups and Chair's Office will easily track target progress
- Availability of real-time results analysis (e.g. main trends)
- Facilitates sharing group information among SSC Leaders
- Improves real-time support to SSC group targets

All groups need to upload their targets for each quadrennium into SSC DATA, and report annually on the progress for each target.

How to use it?

1. Once you go to the new SSC DATA system url (<https://iucnsscddata.org/>), you will need to register as a new user, click on: "Are you a new user? Register here".
2. Complete the information requested (name, email, and password).
3. Subsequently, you will be asked to choose your group from a dropdown list, starting by selecting Group Category. Once you have selected your group name, please click the "Join" button.
4. After a successful registration, you will receive an email from the system (make sure to check your spam folder). You must wait to be accepted by a group leader or administration team member.
5. Once your request has been approved, you will receive an acceptance email notification with the link to get into the system. To log into the system, use the email and password you entered to register.
6. Below are two tutorial videos for Registration and Login to guide you:
 - User's Register with email: <https://youtu.be/KGUwT85Tg24>
 - Login with acceptance email: https://youtu.be/d_sq0gyYXwc

9. Communications

SSC Groups are actively encouraged to contribute to communicating the work of the SSC both across the IUCN network and through external channels. For example, platforms for profiling the work of SSC include:

- [Biodiversity](#) and [SSC](#) web pages provide regular, fresh and substantive content. The [IUCN Style Guide Writing for Web](#) helps SSC members develop ideas for publication.
- [Species E-bulletin](#) and [SSC Quarterly Reports](#), offer space to reflect and discuss conservation issues, and inform the network about activities and opportunities. They are distributed to all SSC members, other Commissions and Programmes, and IUCN Members.
- To make the general public aware of conservation and tap into audiences active on social media, such as younger generations, SSC also maintains social media accounts in [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Linkedin](#) (see [IUCN Social Media Best Practice Guidelines](#) for recommendations on how to use these resources).
- Media offer both a channel and an audience. They demand newsworthy content of consistent quality. Feel free to reach out to SSC and GSP communication officers to help organise media coverage (see [Guide to Media Relations](#) for details).

Group leaders are encouraged to bring to the attention of the SSC Chair's Office Communications Officer any news or events, to explore the best way to share in communications channels.

9.1. Groups logos

SSC Groups are encouraged to develop a logo for their group – the majority have already done this (often with help from creative members!), and collectively they form a very powerful communication tool for the SSC network. Individual logos are an excellent way of promoting and raising the profile of the group and giving it a strong identity. General guidelines for the use of Commission and SSC Groups logos may be found [here](#).

Annex 1: Sample Terms of Reference for a Programme Officer

Tasks a Programme Officer may undertake for an SSC Group.

- Communication: social media, newsletter, website, general enquiries, reporting.
- Manage and help to build the group's membership.
- General administrative support.
- Assist with fundraising:
 - Help to identify target donors and suitable opportunities for joint fundraising activities.
 - Prepare outreach and fundraising documents.
- Assist in general development of the Group's work plan and help with its delivery.
- Assist with Red List Assessment process as required, examples include:
 - Digital distributions maps and the information required to create these.
 - Collating, synthesizing and analysing newly published and unpublished information on status, distribution and threats to each species,
 - Updating data fields and text accounts, and loading red list assessments to the Species Information Service (SIS) database.
 - Regular consultation and liaison with experts.
 - Where applicable, assist with forums supporting the review process.

Annex 2: Sample Profile for an SSC Leader

SSC Leaders hold sole responsibility for group governance and oversight. For that reason, the role demands leadership skills that may encompass some of the attributes below. Again, this list only serves to outline the more obvious skills required and each group needs to consider the kind of leader that best suits its specific needs and dynamics.

1. To have strong research or conservation experience.
2. To be an excellent communicator, personable and able to encourage active engagement.
3. To be actively carrying out research or conservation projects.
4. To have proven experience and abilities in conflict resolution.
5. To hold different views and forge a coherent way ahead, especially on difficult and contentious issues.
6. To have proven skills for leading groups.
7. To have a good rapport with group members, as well as national policy makers and authorities.
8. To have the political and diplomatic skills needed in order to represent the Group when required
9. To have experience in linking scientific research with policy development and formulation.
10. To be creative and open-minded.
11. To have the time and availability to invest in volunteer work.
12. To have fundraising skills.
13. To know what is going on in the field, be able to engage with policy makers, and to 'knock on doors' and have meetings.