

## 2021 Report

# IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group



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**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
95

### Mission statement

The mission of the African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) is to promote the long-term conservation of Africa's elephants throughout their range.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

To promote the long-term conservation of African elephants throughout their range.

### Targets 2021–2025

#### ASSESS

**T-001** Compile, review and synthesise information on African elephant numbers and distribution across all range states, with a special emphasis on forest populations, within the African Elephant Database.

**T-002** Participate in the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)-Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)-Technical Advisory Group (TAG) processes.

**T-003** Publish the Red List assessments for African Forest Elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and African Savanna Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) in 2021

**T-004** Conduct Green Status assessments for both elephant species in priority regions.

**T-005** Update AfESG's position statement on the removal of African elephants from the wild for captive use out of their natural range.

**T-006** Revise the *IUCN/SSC AfESG Guidelines for the in situ Translocation of the African Elephant for Conservation Purposes* in line with the broader IUCN conservation translocation guidelines.

**T-007** Develop guidelines/criteria for prioritising sites for survey support.

**T-008** Continue to determine the genetic identity of taxonomically undefined elephant populations.

**T-009** Fulfil the AfESG's obligations to CITES.

**T-032** Update guidelines on population survey methods by incorporating newly emerging techniques for savanna and forest elephants.

**T-036** Provide a better understanding of the context and conceptualisation of sustainable use of African elephants through the consumptive and the non-consumptive uses continuum.

#### PLAN

**T-012** Enhance the functionality and capacity of the African Elephant Database and form a consortium for its technical and financial support.

**T-013** Re-invigorate the African Elephant Library, build the capacity to curate historical survey information and investigate gaps.

**T-015** Continue with the provision of technical input into the revision of the African Elephant Action Plan when called upon by the range states.

**T-016** Support strategic and action planning processes at national, regional and continental levels, including assisting with the production of National Elephant Action Plans.

**T-017** Develop updated AfESG guidelines on human-elephant co-existence (HEC), innovative new approaches based on landscape-level spatial planning, known elephant behaviours and community-based conservation approaches.

#### ACT

**T-025** Release a statement on the AfESG's position on the two species issue.

**T-030** Provide technical guidance for management of elephants as requested.

**T-031** Advise on the conservation and management of elephant range and critical habitats.

#### NETWORK

**T-026** Promote and, where appropriate, establish collaborations with relevant IUCN SSC Specialist Groups.

**T-027** Establish relevant working groups to engage with key issues that have been identified.

**T-028** Respond to emerging issues and changing priorities.

Aerial view of Langoué Bai, Ivindo National Park. African Forest Elephants frequently visit this site making it particularly vulnerable to poaching  
Photo: WCS Gabon



Observers keeping track of all animals visiting Langoué Bai and looking for unique characteristics used to identify individual elephants  
Photo: WCS Gabon



Rare sighting of African Forest Elephants mating (Langoué Bai, Gabon)  
Photo: WCS Gabon

**T-029** Hold AfESG members meeting sessions in 2022 and in 2024/2025 and, where appropriate or necessary, also hold brief inter-session online meetings.

**T-033** Fundraise for the running of the AfESG secretariat and for AfESG activities.

**T-034** Develop a community of practitioners through the HEC Working Group, exchanging information on best practice and successes and failures of appropriate tools in different contexts in Africa and in Asia.

**T-035** Create a community of young innovative local people to participate in elephant management and conservation issues.

#### COMMUNICATE

**T-021** Enhance communication within and outside of the AfESG membership on key issues about African elephants, through the establishment of a task force on communication.

**T-022** Publish in 2023/2024 an update of the 2016 African Elephant Status Report (AESR) and publish a numbers and range only AESR in 2024.

**T-023** Promote the creation and maintenance of linkages/connectivity between elephant habitats.

**T-024** Promote the *Pachyderm* biannual international peer-reviewed journal on elephants and rhinos.

#### Activities and results 2021

##### ASSESS

##### Red List

**T-003** (KSR 6)

**Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 2**

**Result description:** The Red List assessments for African Forest and African Savanna Elephants were published in 2021.

##### Research activities

**T-001** (KSR 5)

**Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 1**

**Result description:** Collection of data on population, input zones and range is ongoing for West and Central Africa, which comprises the largest Forest Elephant distribution in Africa. A review and update is underway on programmes to generate tables and maps that will separate the two species for use in the two publications; these are being tested and verified by the special task force for the report and the Data Review Working Group. The production of maps and tables is due by mid-April 2022.

**T-002** (KSR 5)

**Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 1**

**Result description:** AfESG Co-Chair Ben Okita participated in the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), held virtually on 28–29 June 2021, which was convened by CITES MIKE at the UNEP



offices in Nairobi. Participants were drawn from TAG sub-regional representatives, TAG Global members and Co-Opted members of IUCN AfESG and IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG), TRAFFIC – ETIS, CITES Secretariat – Science Unit, MIKE Central Coordination Unit (CCU), and Sub-regional support Unit representatives – Asia. The AfESG Co-Chair provided an update on the activities implemented by the IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group. This included activities related to estimating African elephant population size and the integration of the African Elephant Database and MIKE trend analysis, by providing names of experts who could compile current methodologies used by range states to estimate population sizes in forested areas and to determine whether the current MIKE dung survey standards ([https://cites.org/sites/default/files/common/prog/mike/survey/dung\\_standards.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/common/prog/mike/survey/dung_standards.pdf)) required an update, and to help document alternative elephant survey techniques in gallery forests/canopy forests. We also provided the names of experts who could advise on the integration of the African Elephant Database (AED) and MIKE (Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) trend analysis), including estimates to be used, means to address uncertainties in estimates and interpolation between estimates. Importantly, AfESG contributed information on the population status of the African elephants to CITES Standing Committee 74 as required of the Specialist Group as per CITES Res. Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) in operative paragraph 12(b). The report can be found in paragraphs 66 to 87 in the following link: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/74/E-SC74-68.pdf>. Rob Slotow will replace Ben Okita in representing the AfESG in subsequent meetings for three years as provided for in TAG's modus operandi where Co-chairs rotate every three years as co-opted TAG members.

#### T-005 (KSR 5)

**Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** Dialogue between AfESG, SSC and Zoo Associations took place through a Zoom meeting held on 27 September 2021. Contact with the AfESG Co-Chairs was initiated by Zoo Associations at the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES CoP18). The Zoom meeting was chaired by the SSC leadership, with the intention to start a conversation to identify possible joint activities. The SSC hopes that this engagement

will build trust between African Elephant conservationists (AfESG) and the zoo industry (Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)). The AfESG emphasises the importance of promoting and enhancing the long-term conservation of in situ populations of elephants throughout their range, as captured within the African Elephant Action Plan. The AfESG in situ to ex situ Task Force has met several times to discuss the issues related to ex situ translocation of the African Elephant. In the meeting held on 27 September 2021, it was put forward that the AfESG should initiate a process to review all evidence regarding any potential contributions of ex situ facilities to in situ conservation. The Task Force recommended developing the evidence base for in situ to ex situ in order to improve its capacity for responding to requests for movement into ex situ, in terms of whether a proposed destination is appropriate and acceptable, and if there are exceptional circumstances (based on in situ conservation, and the evidence base), and building a robust process of reviewing the existing Position Statements. The AfESG was not consulted by the CITES secretariat or National Scientific Authorities on any proposed movements in situ ex situ during 2021.

#### T-006 (KSR 5)

**Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** The AfESG in situ to ex situ Task Force has agreed to undertake a review of the IUCN/SSC AfESG Guidelines for the in situ Translocation of the African Elephant for Conservation Purposes once the Status Reports have been published, as that is currently a key task of the AfESG. Funding has been received to support a consultant in this regard.

#### T-007 (KSR 5)

**Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** The AfESG Data Review Working Group is identifying populations/ input zones that have not been surveyed since the previous status report, and, once the status reports are complete, will bring to the attention of range states key populations that should be prioritised for surveys.

#### T-008 (KSR 6)

**Number of species that have been assessed through the different tools:** 0

**Result description:** AfESG supports molecular species assessment of African elephant populations in West Africa. Given the recent

formal recognition of two African elephant species by the IUCN AfESG and the differing extinction risk of each according to their most recent Red List assessments, several range states have expressed a need to understand and confirm the composition of elephant populations in their countries at a site level. Priorities and guidelines to undertake these studies are given in Kim and Wasser 2019. Initial candidate sites for sampling will include those with a minimum number of elephants found within the borders of the thirteen West African MoU Signatory Parties, and engagement with these range states is being facilitated through the CMS Secretariat. In order to advance the appropriate conservation and management of elephants in the region, AfESG submitted two priority projects for consideration that can be initiated with limited funding, and which will make a strong and immediate contribution to elephant conservation within these range states. These projects are also suitable to leverage additional funds: (1) proof of concept for implementation of molecular assessment of the species identity of African Elephants in select sites in West Africa, and (2) preliminary assessment of the primary elephant corridors in West Africa to identify priority areas for conservation intervention projects that will have high feasibility of success and return on investment. A number of recent discussions, engagements and publications inform this submission, including the IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) engagement with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS); signatory countries to the MoU of the West African elephant range states (meeting held in November–December 2021; UNEP/CMS/WAE/MOS3/Doc.5); internal discussions with the various AfESG Task Forces; and a past assessment of status information on West African transboundary elephant projects. These projects are also prioritised given the recent decision by the AfESG to treat African Forest (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) and Savanna Elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) as separate species; the recently published IUCN Red List assessment of both elephants; and a recognition that species identity and corridors have not yet been definitively established in some sites in West Africa. The proposed projects both address the key objectives of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP). They each seek to: (1) strengthen range states' knowledge on African elephant management, and (2) maintain elephant habitats and restore connectivity, by providing fundamental



Translocation operation when Save The Elephants were asked by KWS to fit a collar on a 'problem' bull elephant that was being moved from Tsavo West to Tsavo East. In the photo, Lydia Tiller, member of the AfESG, is taking biometrics of the elephant  
Photo: Lydia Tiller

knowledge about the identity and movement patterns of elephant populations in the region that is currently not available. This knowledge, in turn, is essential to inform conservation and management decisions concerning the future of these animals in West Africa.

**T-032 (KSR 5)**

**Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** The AfESG Data Review Working Group is incorporating new methods in its next generation of reports. There is a need for AfESG to support range countries' training in the collection of data using new techniques such as DNA sampling and further improve the collection of elephant population data consistently. Discussion within the Taxonomic Task Force and Data Review Working Group is ongoing on how to support range countries and partners to collect such information. This will entail writing joint proposals for both data collection and training in the analysis.

**T-036 (KSR 5)**

**Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** AfESG identified a person to lead this Task Force and is discussing the concept note of what it will entail to

meet this target. This concept will be taken to the AfESG in 2022 for implementation. Funding was raised in 2021 to support this task through 2024.

#### **Synergy**

**T-009 (KSR 5)**

**Number of global Red List reassessments completed:** 1

**Result description:** Despite the overall declining trend of both African elephant species, the assessments also highlighted the impact of successful conservation efforts. Anti-poaching measures on the ground, together with more supportive legislation and land use planning, which seek to foster human-wildlife coexistence, were identified as critical to successful elephant conservation. As a result, some Forest Elephants have stabilised in well-managed conservation areas in Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Savanna Elephant numbers have also been stable or growing for decades, especially in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, which harbours the largest number of this species on the continent. Status of elephant populations, levels of illegal killing and trade in ivory were submitted to the MIKE CCU in November 2021 for compilation into a joint report with the

MIKE and ETIS reports for CITES Standing Committee 74. Among the important decisions is to treat African Forest (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*) and Savanna Elephants (*Loxodonta africana africana*) as separate species, the result of the consensus that had emerged among experts and following new research into the genetics of elephant populations. Accumulating genetic, ecological and demographic evidence indicates a separation between these two subspecies. The AfESG, through its in situ ex situ Task Force, remains ready to advise the CITES Secretariat and National Scientific Authorities on movement of elephants ex situ in terms of Conf-11.20 (Rev. CoP18) and definition of the term 'appropriate and acceptable' destinations. For contributions of the AfESG on MIKE-ETIS-TAG processes, see results reported for T-002. For contributions of the AfESG on AED, see results reported for T-012.

#### **PLAN**

##### **Planning**

**T-012 (KSR 9)**

**Proportion of partners onboard to support information system:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** AfESG sought the support of a software engineer through Vulcan Inc. and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation (PGAFF) funding to automate



Ivory items carved from illegally acquired African ivory continue to be openly displayed for sale in Chinese shops for Chinese customers on Myanmar's border town of Mong La beside China, as seen here in January 2020  
Foto: Lucy Vigne



the data integrity, classification of surveys and elephant population, production of tables and range maps. In October 2021, AfESG contracted a software engineer (Scott Reis) and has been working with the AED Officer and AfESG Data Review Working Group (DRWG) in reviewing and updating the automation of the analysis, updating the dropdown menu for data entry to include classifying the elephant type (based on phenotype). This work is still ongoing as the DRWG and Taxonomic groups of AfESG are refining the inputs and what is expected in the reports (output). Between June 2021 and December 2021, DRWG held four technical meetings. As indicated in the last report, various procedures and management decision processes were needed for members of DRWG and other AfESG members to contribute to and participate in the development and maintenance of the AED. For knowledge-based management, a draft training manual for data review was developed; for standards development, a draft checklist for quality assessment of surveys was developed; for project management, an issue tracking and resolution process was implemented on the Slack platform and a Gantt chart for AESR production was developed in Google Sheets. These instruments have been used to assess data gaps, enhance data quality and create a workflow for the timely production of the elephant status reports as of 2021–2022. The Forest Elephant Editing Group and AESR Group now meet every other week to ensure AED and AESR to address matters are dealt with by both teams and interns' workings are synchronised for the two processes. This has increased efficiency of work, strengthened the governance and reduced the time required to address issues. European Union through CITES-MIKE Project continued its support of ensuring the continuation of the AED in collecting, compiling, and presenting contemporary elephant data from all range States. The DRWG has worked on improving the reporting of surveys. Many of the

surveys did not report additional information such as standard errors or confidence limits, which are important requirements in not downgrading the information to guesses. Efforts are being made to gather this information from reports and contact the people leading these surveys to provide this information. AfESG is currently building an AED consortium of partners that would commit financial, technical and in-kind support for the sustainability and resilience of the AED. The consortium will provide support for the requirements of a revamped AED, such as data collection, data storage and analytical outputs, methodological and analytical improvements, survey designs or strategic advice. Collaborative working in such a consortium, where the member's strengths, capabilities, and resources are harnessed and shared, will facilitate for example the development of innovative technical solutions to challenges facing AED. It would also create a deep understanding and appreciation for the AED and

engage stakeholders on an ongoing basis, rather than only occasionally. A consortium will also help to combine different sources of sustainable funding for AED and AESR. This process received financial and technical support from Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and is ongoing.

**T-016 (KSR 8)**

**Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 2**

**Result description:** Technical support was provided to the Masai Mara Ecosystem Plan.

Co-Chairs, Mrs Salimata Kone and Prof. Emmanuel Hema, provided initial input about elephants to an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment conducted by the Winning Consortium Simandou Rail (WCSR) for the development of the Simandou Railway Project in Guinea. The railway will transport iron ore from the Simandou iron ore mine in the east of the country to a port on the west coast of Guinea for export to international markets

**T-017 (KSR 8)**

**Number of technical documents to support the development of conservation plans/strategies: 1**

**Result description:** The vision for the Human-Wildlife Coexistence (HEC) Task Force is to become the most relevant independent scientific body to advise on HEC issues in Africa. The specific goals are partitioned into three areas: (1) Advise on existing and proposed HEC interventions across Africa, assist with funding and analysis/publications for the results of specific projects; (2) Develop a range of Standard Operating Procedures that are endorsed by the AfESG Task Force members; (3) Improve our external communications through working with the Communications Task Force on a new website. This new site will be made up of 'toolboxes' of products developed over the past 20 years by members of the group. Examine the potential for a continental database of research – current and past for all ranges; (4) Re-do the AfESG website HEC section with new publications to make it as up to date as possible. Link to the IUCN online Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) library; (5) Produce a special edition of *Pachyderm* focusing on HEC; (6) Support evidence-based research on HEC and facilitate the publication in *Pachyderm*; (7) Provide Mitigation Tools and Guidelines (link to new offerings from Save the Elephants and update others from the HEC web page); (8) Develop a Webinar Series for AfESG members to listen in and contribute to, starting with 4–5 speakers presenting their fencing designs and what is working and what is not working in their field sites and then open for discussion. Suggestion for a first webinar on Carbon Credits, including how it works and what areas might be eligible; (9) Engage a consultant to do a formal review of fencing designs which could lead to a fresh policy brief for governments; (10) Collate a database on location of HEC projects across Africa, who is doing them, what field trials they are doing, and log any publications or reports into a central info database. This will also help identify hotspot sites and areas that need more capacity and funding support; (11) Assess the IUCN HWC Policy Brief when it comes out and write an addendum for AfESG on how it is applicable to elephants; (12) Examine how we can be relevant to and make recommendations for governments who are tasked with managing HEC and other developments that affect elephants.

**Policy****T-015 (KSR 9)**

**Number of documents provided to support/guide policy making: 0**

**Result description:** We supported the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP). The AEAP outlines the actions that must be taken in order to effectively conserve elephants in Africa across their range; it was adopted in March 2010 at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Doha, Qatar. AfESG provided technical input in 2019 to the review process of the AEAP and is keen for continued involvement in providing technical support. AfESG has established a task force for continued engagement with the review and implementation process of AEAP.

**ACT****Conservation actions****T-030 (KSR 10)**

**Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 4**

**Result description:** AfESG, through Dr Mohammed Yayha, the Senior Programme Officer, was involved in assisting in the development of the Kenya Masai Mara Ecosystem Plan. The Plan is undergoing review and will soon be presented to communities and the public for further inputs before it is legislated as a plan for the period 2021–2031. Some members of the AfESG have also been involved in developing National Elephant Action Plans (NEAP). Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) has been leading the exercise and in Ethiopia, Gabon, Chad, Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia and Malawi the plans have been finalised. The exercise of developing plans is ongoing in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, South Africa and in Kenya. Kenya Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI) in August 2021 requested the AfESG's advice on translocation of 13 elephants from the United Kingdom to Kenya. The AfESG in situ to ex situ Task Force will provide advice to WRTI based on international guidelines (*IUCN/SSC AfESG Guidelines for the in situ Translocation of the African Elephant for Conservation Purposes* and *IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations*) and also personal experiences and knowledge that will be needed for a successful translocation and rewilding. The Task Force developed a checklist that might guide this translocation if it takes place.

**T-031 (KSR 10)**

**Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 2**

**Result description:** Decision 13.99 of the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP13) encourages the Signatories to the West African Elephant MoU to consider replacing their Work Programme with the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) and to implement the MoU through the AEAP and the African Elephant Fund (AEF) structure. Furthermore, COP13 encourages the Signatories to meet and decide on the future of the MoU. AfESG was invited by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) to the Third Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*), held virtually 30 November–1 December 2021. The meeting was chaired by Ghana and deputised by Senegal. The AfESG secretariat met with the CMS secretariat and the West African elephant range states, and made a presentation on the status of West African elephants, the implications of the two species recognition, and recent Red List reassessment ('African forest and savanna elephants treated as separate species: Implications'). The signatories agreed to amend the MoU to align its contents with AEAP, but maintain the original purpose of the MoU, which is to conserve and protect transboundary elephant populations and their habitats in West Africa. The Red List assessments provide species-specific lists of range states, based on the best current information. Legislative nomenclature varies by country. The two-species listing will assist range states in harmonisation of nomenclature in national legislation, and focus attention on the differing management and conservation issues faced by the two species.

**Policy****T-025 (KSR 10)**

**Number of position statements addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 1**

**Result description:** A statement on the AfESG's position on the two species issue was released.

**NETWORK****Capacity building****T-027 (KSR 2)**

**Number of task forces and working groups established: 8**

**Result description:** AfESG is planning to have its 9<sup>th</sup> members meeting in September 2022. This four-day technical meeting will provide a platform for its members and invited stakeholders and partners to promote the long-term conservation of Africa's



elephants throughout their range. The meeting aims to: (1) share knowledge on the status and threats to the two African elephant species with an emphasis on the Critically Endangered Forest Elephants (*L. cyclotis*); (2) discuss and initiate practical solutions to address emerging conservation challenges, particularly on human elephant co-existence and potential impacts of climate change; (3) review current methods/practices and consider new ones to monitor, manage and conserve elephants; and (4) seek stakeholders' views and input into AfESG work for future consideration. The AfESG Taxonomic Task Force is to develop supporting documentation for the economic, political and conservation implications of the two-species listing of the African Elephant. It will further recommend support for range states in addressing the implications identified. The proposed enhancement of the African Elephant Database (AED) should support such future plans in terms of providing current information on elephant population, elephant types (Forest, Savannah or hybrid) and range. It is envisaged that this information will be accessible in terms of downloading the tables and maps. The AfESG has a total of 90 members for the 2021–2025 quadrennium (50 approved and 40 pending) and eight Task Forces: Human–Elephant Coexistence, African Elephant Taxonomy, Sustainable Use, Movement of elephants from in situ to ex situ, African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP), African Elephant Library (AEL), Communication, African Elephant Database (AED), and Data Review Working Group.

**T-034 (KSR 2)**

**Number of people trained in conservation action:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** The HEC working group has started developing ideas for revising the website and adding a section on HEC, writing a proposal for a post doc to review the literature and data on HEC and also support the processes of developing alternative solutions such as providing technical expertise and guidance on landscape and national land use plans.

#### **Membership**

**T-029 (KSR 2)**

**Number of members meetings held:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** Discussions on the 2022 AfESG members meeting have started and are planned to take place after the CITES meeting in 2022. Proposed dates: 12–16 September 2022. Theme: Forest and Savannah Elephant conservation and emerging challenges. Time:

a maximum of 3–4 hours per day is suggested and the times should be optimal for participation of all members in Africa and for those on other continents. The meetings will have both plenary and group sessions.

#### **Synergy**

**T-028 (KSR 4)**

**Number of emerging and relevant issues addressed:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** The AfESG secretariat has been evaluating the Terms of Reference of the task forces and also developing a priority list based on emerging issues. Various meetings have been held with chairs and members of the task forces. The annual meeting to be held in September 2022 will prioritise the issues and build up programmes to address these issues.

**T-033 (KSR 1)**

**Number of funding partners established and maintained:** 8

**Result description:** AfESG has extended activities to fundraise by extending its network. The Co-Chair of AfESG, Dr Ben Okita, visited the United States in September 2021 and met senior officials of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-US), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), US-Fish and Wildlife Service and the White Oak Conservation. Various pledges have been made by the various organisations. AfESG is in the process of signing agreements with some of these organisations including holding a series of meetings with the US-Fish and Wildlife Service for a structured engagement going forward. Locally, AfESG has consulted with both African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and WWF-International. Discussions are ongoing with Save the Elephants (STE) on the continued support. IFAW has committed to US\$ 50,000 every year. AWF made a commitment to incorporate some of our needs into their annual budgeting starting this year. WWF-US committed to a one-off donation of US\$ 25,000, to which WWF International added US\$ 10,000. More potential donors will be approached to form a funders circle for AfESG. Vulcan Inc/ Paul G. Allen Family Foundation is supporting AfESG with a total of US\$ 571,000 until 2024 to revamp the African Elephant Database (AED), African Elephant Status Report (AESR), and governance of the AED. We leveraged on PGAFF support to reallocate some of the CITES-MIKES US\$ 75,000 per year support towards AfESG's CITES mandate to hire a part-time Senior Programme Officer (SPO), Dr Mohammed Yahya, with effect from 1 October 2021.

## **COMMUNICATE**

### **Communication**

**T-021 (KSR 13)**

**Number of print communications materials distributed in relation to specific taxonomic groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** A summary of the Red Listing of the two species and what it means for conservation and management at the local and national levels will be translated into French, Portuguese and Swahili (the number of Swahili speakers, be they native or second-language speakers, is estimated to be approximately 200 million) to reach a large population of people living with elephants.

**T-021 (KSR 13)**

**Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups:** 2

**Result description:** The AfESG has established a Communication Task Force that is led by Dr. Lucy Vigne, which aims to promote communication and networking within AfESG and between AfESG and other entities. Two webinars were organised during this reporting period. The first, on 5 August 2021, was about the 2021 IUCN Red List assessments for African elephants, and the second, on 9 December 2021, was about the history and recent background to the two-species decision. The AfESG also has a Twitter account. The Task Force is also embarking on developing an independent AfESG website. The Communication Task Force is working in collaboration with the Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force to lay out the structure before presenting to all the other task forces. The Red List reassessment team lead by Dr Kathleen Gobush presented the reassessment results and processes through a webinar to the AfESG members on 5 August 2021 and provided a communiqué to the members on how they dealt with questions from the participants. A petition was however filed with the IUCN SSC Standards and Petitions Committee challenging the new listing of the Savanna Elephants. The team started engaging the petitioners in October 2021 as per the formal petition process, which may last for up to fifteen months.

**T-022 (KSR 13)**

**Number of print communications materials distributed in relation to specific taxonomic groups:** Ongoing.

**Result description:** For knowledge-based management, a draft training manual for data review was developed; for standards development, a draft checklist for quality assessment of surveys was developed;

L-R: Azzedine Downes, President and CEO of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW); Vivek Menon, Chair IUCN/SSC-AfESG; Ali Kaka, IUCN Council; Ben Okita, Co-Chair IUCN/SSC-AfESG on a collegiality meeting and thank you to IFAW for their recent commitment to support some of the AfESG's activities  
Photo: AfESG archives

for project management, an issue tracking and resolution process was implemented on the Slack platform and a Gantt chart for AESR production was developed in Google Sheets. These instruments have been used to assess data gaps, enhance data quality and create a workflow for the timely production of the elephant status reports as of 2021–2022. The Forest Elephant Editing Group and AESR Group now meet every other week to ensure AED and AESR to address matters are dealt with by both teams and inner workings are synchronised for the two processes. This has increased efficiency of work, strengthened the governance and reduced time required to address issues. The AfESG Co-Chairs and DRWG agreed to structure the AESR as two separate reports for forest and savannah. This decision was based on earlier work of AfESG teams biologically reassessing the risk of extinction of the two African elephant species using much available data and according to the IUCN Red List Guidelines, and also based on the recognition that the African Elephant is mainly made up of Forest, Savanna and hybrid populations as well as unknown. Both the AfESG DRWG and Taxonomic group have been working closely on including the separation of species in the database, developing criteria for categorising these species for each input zone, range and also designing new tables for accounting for these two species at country, regional and continental levels. The AfESG plans to publish three reports, a Forest, Savanna, and synthesis report. The Forest and Savanna reports will target the technical and scientific group and the synthesis will target decision and policy makers. The Forest report launch is planned for September 2022 and the Savanna and synthesis reports in 2023. Where possible, the launch of these reports will be planned to coincide with global conservation occasions or meetings.

**T-023 (KSR 13)**

**Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 1**

**Result description:** Regarding assessment of primary elephant corridors in West Africa, IUCN AfESG convened a workshop in 2006 which led to the development of action plans for the management of the following historical elephant corridors in the West African region: Sahel Burkina-Gourma Mali (at the border between Burkina Faso and Mali); Nazinga-Parc National Kaboré Tambi-Red Volta Ecosystem (between Burkina Faso and

Ghana); Bia-Goasso-Djamakourou Forest Reserve (between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire); Taï-Sapo National Parks (between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia); Ziam-Wenegesi Forest Reserve (between Guinea and Liberia); Parc W-Pendjari National Parks (primarily between Burkina Faso and Benin). Under the supervision and the technical assistance of the IUCN AfESG, these actions plans were implemented with relative success in some corridors. A number of transborder frameworks for the management of these corridors were put in place. A range of field activities were carried out jointly by the concerned countries with the support of a large number of partners including local and international NGOs in the region and local communities. The goal of this assessment is to carry out a rapid study to understand the status of the international corridors used by elephants to move across these transboundary landscapes as relevant for meeting their biological need to access forage and water for survival and population persistence. IUCN AfESG capacity and resource limitations to date have prevented a robust evaluation of the status of each action plan and its implementation. At this time, a rapid assessment that evaluates action plan implementation, progress, obstacles and challenges would be ideal to take stock and help shape recommendations or decisions about future work, its prioritisation and communication.

**T-024 (KSR 13)**

**Number of print communications materials distributed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: Achieved.**

**Result description:** The *Pachyderm* biannual international peer-reviewed journal on elephants and rhinos was promoted.



## Acknowledgements

The European Union, through the CITES MIKE project, WWF International, WWF-US, Save the Elephants and International Fund for Animal Welfare are thanked for their financial support during this reporting period. We also thank Vulcan Inc./the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation for their systematic and continued financial and technical support for AED and African Elephant Status Reporting. We thank IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Offices for managing finances, technical reporting and contracts. The IUCN Global Species Programme, especially Richard Jenkins, Ackbar Joolia and Jafet Nassar, are thanked for their continued support and strategic advice. Rose Mayienda and Mohammed Yahya of AfESG secretariat are thanked for tirelessly supporting the running of AfESG. All the AfESG members are thanked for their continued support, commitment and contribution to the Group's mission. We hope to achieve more success in the 2021–2025 quadrennium.

## Summary of achievements

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 30**

**Geographic regions: 15 Global, 15 Africa**

**Actions during 2021:**

Assess: 10 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 4 (KSR 8, 9)

Act: 3 (KSR 10)

Network: 5 (KSR 1, 2, 4)

Communicate: 5 (KSR 13)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**

