Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders
2017–2020

Introduction

Welcome to the leadership of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and thank you for agreeing to Chair one of SSC's expert Specialist Groups (SG), Task Forces (TF) or Sub-Committees (SC). In this document we expand on the topics covered in the "Terms of Reference for Specialist Group, Task Force and Sub-Committee Chairs 2107–2020" with the aim of sharing some of the accumulated wisdom of SG/TF/SC Chairs gained over many years. For the purpose of this document, "SSC Leaders" will be used throughout to define Specialist Group, Task Force and Sub-Committee Chairs, together with Stand-alone 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 office 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 130 SGs and TFs, Chairs have gained wide experience in processes and approaches to this complex task. The following represents some 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.

SSC Leadership

The management structure of the SSC includes:

- the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Commission (currently Dr Jon Paul Rodríguez and Ms Domitilla Raimondo respectively);
- a Steering Committee appointed by IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Chair;
- a number of Sub-Committees (currently, Freshwater, Invertebrate, Marine, Plant, Policy, Red List and Standards and Petitions) on issues needing particular attention; and
- more than 140 SG and TF Chairs, Stand-alone Red List Authority (RLA) Coordinators (as well as a number of Red List Authority coordinators under the umbrella of the taxonomic groups). For a full list, refer to 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 SG Chairs and appropriate IUCN Global Species Programme (GSP) staff on matters of mutual concern and to suggest improvements to the modus operandi of the SSC.

Support of the SSC Network

Support to the SSC network is provided by a team based both in the SSC Chair's Office and the GSP. The main role of the team is to provide general support and help to build capacity across the SSC network in order to strengthen the work of SSC Specialist Groups, Task Forces, Sub-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 liaise with IUCN regional offices, other IUCN Programmes /Commissions, Red List partners, many of the IUCN members, external organizations and institutions. Attending SG/TF/SC meetings when possible.
- **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 SG/TF/SC websites and social media channels, direct line of communication with SSC network e.g., consultations, specific media requests, manage Amazing Species website.
- **Coordination for 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 SGs on the conventions, helping with preparations for meetings, and assisting with / providing advice on interventions.

- **Conservation Actions**: implement high-level interventions on urgent conservation issues (at both Government and / or corporate levels), encourage SGs 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**: seeking partnerships e.g., with zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, to help bolster capacity and provide extra support for SGs with, for example, Red List assessments, conservation planning and facilitating priority action.
- **Administration:** assist with contracts, finances and budgets, MOUs, general provision of information (guidelines, ToRs), GIS licences.
- **Expansion of the SSC network;** assist with new SG/TF/Stand-alone RLA proposals and help new groups become established, coordinate formal appointment process with SSC Chair and Steering Committee, send out letters of appointment; assist with Chair/Co-Chair succession.
- **Fundraising**: the ability to assist with fundraising proposals is limited given workloads and the number of groups under the remit of network support. However, help will be given where possible to provide advice and guidance on funding opportunities and fundraising strategies, which may also be delivered through the creation of new partnerships,
- **Capacity Building**: we provide or assist with Red List training and, where possible, species assessments as well as offer advice on best practices to run a SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA and possible fundraising sources.

The above list is a general overview and by no means captures the full extent of the work carried out by the Network Support Team. Click here for full details of the team, including clarification of individual roles and contact details.

Appointing Specialist Group/Task Force Members

At the start of each new quadrennium, the Chair of the SSC is elected at the IUCN Congress, who then appoints / re-appoints SSC Leaders, after which they are invited to renew their own membership. This is done by each SG/TF/SC Chair and Stand-alone RLA Coordinator and should be completed as quickly as possible after the Chair's appointment / re-appointment.

Appointing SG/TF/SC and Stand-alone RLA members is one of the SSC Leader's most important and influential activities. Appointments can be as formal or as informal as the SSC Leader wishes, but typically involve a letter of invitation (please contact the Network Support Team ("Membership") for samples as guidance) sent to a prospective member of the group, with a written response (electronic or otherwise) received from proponent confirming acceptance to serve. Once accepted, the Chair should send members a copy of the document "Terms of Reference for Members of the IUCN Species Survival Commission 2017-2020" – which articulates the responsibilities of all SSC members – and member's details (full name, country, email) to the SSC Membership officer. Updates to membership details should be provided as and when new members are appointed, to ensure that new members are recorded in the main IUCN constituency relations database and therefore appear in the IUCN Union Portal.

It is important to realize that the Union Portal provides the entire IUCN constituency with access to the membership directory of SSC, and it provides the "who's who" information about the other Commissions, IUCN Members and the Secretariat worldwide. All SG/TF/SC and Stand-alone RLA members must be recorded as all SSC-wide and IUCN communications are managed via these systems.

SSC Leaders should utilize their existing members, any appointed 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 attributes / expertise 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 SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA, and should consider each such expression of interest on their own merit providing timely feedback to such enquiries. Some SSC groups find it useful to establish some 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. Assembling an international group of volunteer experts into a SG, TF, SC or Stand-alone RLA, and mobilizing their energy in support of conservation and IUCN's mission, is a substantial challenge. Differences in culture and ethnicity, resources, personal perspectives and individual goals for example can impede effective action.

There are no restrictions for appointing SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA 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 coteries 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 accorded 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 the SSC and its SGs, TFs, SCs and Stand-alone RLAs 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 SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA 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, especially those from less economically developed countries. For many groups it is also increasingly important to consider and integrate both in-situ and ex-situ conservation approaches and expertise, SGs/TFs/SCs 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 the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA membership with a view to retaining those individuals who are positively contributing to the group's activities.

Relationships within and between each SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA, the SSC and IUCN are based on mutual benefits and reciprocal advantages. SSC Leaders should examine and articulate the exchange of services and influence that membership involves.

Benefits for SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA members:

- 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);
- Up-to-date information on the most important threats to biodiversity and the actions being taken to mitigate these threats;
- Leveraged and amplified effectiveness on conservation issues;
- Access and support for valuable tools such as the Red List and the Species Information Service (SIS); and

- Communication with a global network of experts within and outside their own field of expertise.

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.

Group Stuctures and Sharing Responsibility

The duties of SSC Leaders are made easier if they can delegate well-defined component 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 SGs/TFs/SCs/Stand-alone RLAs and many models exist in the network which has been created specifically to best suit the needs of the group. 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, Task Force or Working Group Leaders and specific task-oriented positions for fund management, fundraising, membership management, communications, newsletter production, etc.

Chairs may want to consider assembling an Advisory Committee/Steering Committee/Senior Advisory Body to aid in decision-making, and to provide strategic guidance and advice to the Chair. Many SSC groups have already successfully implemented this structure and have found it key to bringing a balanced approach, as well as proactively engaging a smaller representative body of the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA, to help make some of the more high-level (and often more challenging) decisions. Groups may also want to establish working / sub-groups which may be a) regional, b), thematic, c), taxonomic, or d) some combination thereof.

Many groups, especially those with SSC Leaders who are unable to keep up with very large email loads, also designate a Programme Officer, who is copied on all correspondence from the IUCN Global Species Programme. In some special circumstances, Programme Officers operate as full-time paid positions; more commonly, Programme Officers are members who operate at a part-time level. This has proved to be particularly helpful for maintaining regular contact with the IUCN Secretariat and SSC Chair's Office. Please refer to Annex 1 for sample ToRs for a Programme Officer which may help to further clarify this role in supporting a SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA. The network support team (partnerships) may be able to provide advice and assistance in finding and establishing a partnership with a suitable organisation to provide a Programme Officer for your group.

For SGs dealing with species in trade (whether they are CITES-listed or not) it is recommended to appoint a focal point with the necessary experience and interest, especially if the Chair is lacking in this experience. The GSP coordinates the input of Groups to the CITES process. Please refer to Annex 2 for further information.

It is also recommended that SGs consider establishing a working group or designating a focal point responsible for integrating ex-situ expertise and approaches as well as building partnerships with ex-situ organisations and networks, such as Taxon Advisory Groups. These relationships can lead to more holistic, linked in-situ/ex-situ conservation efforts but can also help to develop mutually beneficial organizational relationships with the zoo, aquarium and botanic garden communities.

Specialist 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. In the final analysis and at the end of any dispute, the SSC Leader has final responsibility to the group's members, the SSC and IUCN. It is beneficial to ensure that SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA members clearly understand and agree to such a governance structure at the time of appointment.

SGs, TFs, SCs and Stand-alone RLAs, including the Chairs and members, are subject to the By-laws of the SSC, including the Code of Conduct for SSC Members which is included within the SSC By-laws. SGs, TFs, SCs and Stand-alone RLAs have generally avoided additional burdensome or onerous documents detailing their procedures, rules and by-laws. However, with the increasing complexity of SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA activities and their integration into SSC and IUCN work plans, the SSC Leaders may find that developing some written guidelines to assist the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA governance process and members' expectations may be useful, though these should never be in contradiction to the IUCN Statutes and Regulations, SSC By-laws, and any other governance documents approved by the SSC Steering Committee. These should be developed by the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA Chair in consultation with members, mindful of the limited time that members can give to the Group. Chairs should not generate wasteful or excessive processes that displace volunteer efforts from productive and meaningful conservation action.

Decision-making in the Specialist Group

Decision-making in SGs, TFs, SCs and Stand-alone RLAs need to be in accordance with the general provisions contained in the SSC By-laws. The exact mechanism of decision-making within a SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA is variable, and set against an underlying reality that volunteer members will not carry out activities that they fundamentally disagree with. 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. It should also be recognized that some decisions will not be resolvable due to the volunteer nature of SSC groups and the resultant diversity of views and experience. SSC Leaders must weigh up the benefits of pushing to resolve such 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 is practically possible e.g., when issuing statements, reports, publications by the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLAs, but there will be cases where this may not 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]*".

Speaking on Behalf of the Specialist Group

Many SGs/TFs/SCs and Stand-alone RLAs and their leaders have grappled with the manner in which individual members, groups of members, the SSC Leader and the group as a whole expresses 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:

- On appointment by the SSC Chair and as noted in the "Terms of Reference for Specialist Groups, Task Force and Steering Committee Chairs and Stand-alone RLA Coordinators 2017-2020", only the SSC Leader is authorized to speak on behalf of their group, either in person or over his/her own signature and on SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA letterhead;
- The SSC Leader may delegate that authority to another member of the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA in writing;
- Individual SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA 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 SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA, the SSC or IUCN (including on SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA letterhead) unless the SSC Leader has expressly authorized it. This is to ensure consistency within the group in communicating science-based information on behalf of IUCN, the SSC and/or SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA;
- Individual SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA members may identify themselves as a member of their SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA 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;
- SSC Leaders should specify to all their members that the credibility and effectiveness of the group should not be compromised by unauthorized, deceptive or inaccurate representation on any topic and in any forum, particularly on controversial matters. SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA members' discretion and cooperation on such matters should be required as a condition of membership;
- 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, only SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA Chairs or their designees who are formal members of the IUCN Delegation are permitted to speak on behalf of IUCN or the SSC and then 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 an SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA should be in accordance with the provisions of the SSC By-laws, so please refer to these for further detail.

Motivating your Members

Motivating SG, TF, SC and Stand-alone RLA volunteers requires the identification of the goals and rewards that act as incentives to volunteers. SSC Leaders need to provide these "motivators" and minimize disincentives and recognition and praise are among the foremost incentives. Others include the 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.

Use of Logos

Use of the IUCN and SSC logos by the SG, TF, SC or Stand-alone RLA is at the discretion of the SSC Chair, and permission for use can only be granted by the SSC Chair (or someone delegated

officially by the Chair in writing). There are two broad categories of IUCN Commission logo use: representation of a Commission and association with a Commission. The SSC logo must always be used in tandem with the IUCN logo, and for this reason permission for its use must be sought from the SSC Chair's Office. The IUCN SSC logo is commonly used, for example, on SSC group websites and newsletters; invariably, requests for permission to use the logo in such cases are a given, but there may be instances in which the Chair may consider that the use of the IUCN SSC logo would not be appropriate. Note that there are strict guidelines governing the use of the IUCN SSC logo (see here for details), which must be followed. For more information on this and to obtain the logos, please contact the Network Support Team ("General").

Specialist Groups in particular are actively encouraged to develop a logo for their group – the majority of SSC SGs 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. Note that use of the logo of the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA is at the discretion of the Chair of the relevant group, and permission for use can only be granted by the Chair. Group logos should be used in tandem with the IUCN SSC logos according to the principles above and traditionally placed left to right in the following order: IUCN, SSC, SG.

There are specific guidelines for the use of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species logo and scale, and these may only be used with the permission of the Network Support Team ("Communications").

Communications

Communication of SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA activities to the SSC Chair, the Network Support Team, Chair's Office staff and to GSP staff is important. These people can ensure that your work is communicated within the IUCN network (e.g., on the Species webpages of the IUCN website and through the SSC e-bulletin which is circulated to all 10,000 or so members of the SSC, to other IUCN Commissions, the other IUCN programmes and IUCN members) and beyond the network (e.g., through local and international media). In turn, it is the duty of staff to communicate with SSC Leaders on work that is taking place within the IUCN network (e.g., other Programmes, Commissions, and the work of the members).

Many SGs and TFs have chosen to create their own websites so that they can communicate the work of their groups, and links to these are included for the associated SG/TF entry on the Specialist Group Directory pages. Some have paid to have websites created and hosted and others have been donated web-space or design (often through their host institution). There is an option to create a page on the IUCN website, for further help and advice on this please contact the Network Support Team.

Publications

SSC groups that are interested in branding a publication as IUCN or IUCN SSC should contact the Network Support team ("Communications"). IUCN has a number of useful documents to assist with this process which can be found here

Please inform the Network Support Team ("Communications" and/or "General") when a publication is ready for wider distribution so it can be publicized and made available on the appropriate IUCN SSC web pages.

Species Annual Report

Each Specialist Group, Task Force, Stand-alone RLA and Sub-Committee is required to submit a condensed annual report on their group's activities. 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 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 SGs, TFs and Stand-alone RLAs, and it is important that they are submitted in a timely manner.

The Legal Status of Groups

Under the IUCN Statutes, SGs/TFs/Stand-alone RLAs are not legal entities, and for this reason they have no rights to enter into, or sign, any legally binding agreement or document. For the same reason, groups themselves are unable to manage finances themselves (see next section). SSC Leaders requiring any clarification on this particular point are encouraged to contact the SSC Chair's Office.

Managing Finances

Although not legal entities, SSC groups may need to manage financial resources that allow the group to operate. Beyond providing vital support, money introduces 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 the SG/TF/Stand-alone RLA 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.

Groups must be accountable to individual donors. IUCN appoints SSC Leaders with the understanding that he/she 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 SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA funds, some Chairs/Stand-alone RLA Coordinators 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 SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA 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.

Host institutions and Organisational Partnerships

Host institutions and organisational partnerships can play an important and often pivotal role in providing day-to-day support to SSC Groups, its activities and the Chair. 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.

Specialist 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 and / or facilitating joint priority actions. Partnering with organisations such as zoos, aquaria, botanic gardens, NGOs, universities or other organisations 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.

The Network Support Team ("Partnerships") is available to provide advice or assistance in finding and establishing these kinds of relationships.

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 GSP. This understanding should be shared with SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA members to ensure realistic expectations. In general, the SSC Chair's Office staff and GSP staff are able to respond and work directly with the SSC Leaders, but not with individual group members (SSC has over 10,000 individual members). The SSC Chair's Office and GSP 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 approaches or day-to-day SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA administration.

As noted previously, each SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA has a designated member of staff in the Network Support Team (either in the GSP or SSC Chair's Office) 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, in terms of communications, policy work, project facilitation, fundraising,

etc., 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 GSP 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 information 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.

Dispute Mediation

On occasions, and despite a Chair'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 for SSC Members.

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 SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA 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 for SSC Members. 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.

One way to address possible conflicts of interest is to invite all members, and if necessary ask individual members, to confidentially advise the SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA Chair of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. In this case members will need to be assured that their personal interests, affairs and aspirations will remain confidential, and their activity within the group will not be compromised. Chairs should also transparently reveal their own conflicts, but they need not exclude themselves from discussion or relinquish their leadership role.

Fundraising

Most groups operate primarily on a volunteer basis. However, increased conservation impact can be amplified with operational funds. It is important for Chairs 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 SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA and, therefore, what they might require funds for.

In general, Chairs, 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. The SSC Leaders play an important role in supporting their members, albeit not necessarily in the implementation of projects or programmes *per se.* In essence, the 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 the 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.

Specialist Groups, Task Forces, Sub-Committees and Stand-alone RLAs are encouraged to seek funds to support the group's 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.

Coordination of Fundraising Efforts

There are currently more than 140 SSC structures, 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.

Fortunately 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, SGs/ TFs/ SCs/Stand-alone RLAs are requested to contact the GSP or SSC Chair's Office prior to approaching donors for funds exceeding USD100,000. 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.

SSC Leaders are reminded that, as noted under "The legal status of groups" section above, SG/TFs/SCs/Stand-alone RLAs are not legally recognized bodies, except where in exceptional cases the group has registered itself as a charity. In many cases this poses a challenge to fundraising and the group will need to submit proposals under the heading of another institution. If the group is not in a position to do this, they can contact the Network Support Team ("General") for assistance.

Dealing with Issues of Species in Use

Among the thousands of organisms in the purview of Groups, a significant proportion are used in one form or another and more than 30,000 species are involved in current or past commercial trade. The addition of commercial considerations, which may involve millions of dollars, into conservation decisions makes the role of the SSC Leader decidedly more complex. More than most other issues, the use of wild species, whether commercial or not, is often an area that elicits polarized views and opinions, sometimes even among close colleagues. In fact, the effects of this reality may permeate every element of SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA management, from choosing members (to exclude commercial operators?); to raising money (to accept support from commercial operators or trading nations?); to decision-making, disputes, conflicts of interest and advocacy.

In spite of this, several Chairs (e.g. the African Elephant, Cetacean, Crocodile, and Shark SGs) have successfully managed effective SGs in a challenging and highly-charged environment of divisive debate. Again, while standard responses to such situations are elusive, transparency and regular communication with members, effective management of disputes amongst members, and actively avoiding personal or SG/TF/ SC/Stand-alone RLA conflicts of interest, perceived or real may be a challenging but necessary responsibility of the SSC Leader. As a general rule, SSC SGs/TFs/ SCs/Stand-alone RLAs should seek to include members with a range of views on use. SSC groups are intended to be places where experts with differing opinions can debate issues on which they disagree. IUCN has a Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Living Wild Resources. SSC members are not bound to agree with this policy, but SSC SGs/TFs/ SCs/Stand-alone RLAs should not issue, in the name of the group, statements or opinions that disagree with this policy. Any questions on this topic can be directed to the SSC Chair.

As mentioned above in the section on sharing responsibility within the group, it may be useful for a SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA to appoint a focal point for use and trade issues.

Managing Succession

As noted in the "Terms of Reference for Specialist Group, Task Force and Steering Committee Chairs and Stand-alone RLA Coordinators, 2017-2020" there are no set rules determining the number of terms for which SSC Leaders can be reappointed. However, all SSC Leaders should be seeking ways to effectively plan successions in a seamless and timely manner. Succession can be facilitated through various options, including:

- 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. Of course, other models and options may also apply, but a general point is that succession should be planned for in advance.

There is no single process formally recognized by the SSC Chairs Office for SG/TF/SC Chair/Co-Chair (Stand-alone RLAs) transitions, however, there are three general options available:

1. The Chair may simply appoint a new SSC Leader on the recommendation of the existing SSC Leader(s) (often with the wider consultation of the group members). Prior to the formal appointment being made, the name of the suitable candidate is put to the SSC Chair, Deputy Chair and SSC Steering Committee for their approval.
2. An independent succession process may be run internally in the group to seek out a suitable candidate. Members of the SG/TF/Stand-alone RLA are requested to nominate candidates suitable for the position – the criteria for which is developed to align with the specific needs for the leadership of the group in question (for sample ToRs which outline the general requirements required for an SSC Leader please refer to Annex 3). 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 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 SSC 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.

IUCN Union Portal

The Union Portal is a web-based (password protected) system which provides a platform for networking, interaction and the sharing of information and expertise across the entire IUCN Union (and is accessible to all SSC members). The Union Portal is a hub for profiling (and extracting) information, promoting events, learning about new opportunities, communicating with members of the SG/TF/SG or Stand-alone RLA as well as reaching other elements of IUCN such as members of other Commissions, IUCN Member institutions or the IUCN secretariat in regional and country offices around the world.

All SGs, TFs, SCs and Stand-alone RLA Coordinators are encouraged to use the Union Portal for the following (click here for more details):

- Manage membership (please note that this function is currently carried out by the SSC Membership Assistant in the GSP but should be available in the near future).

- Create/upload documents, news stories, consultations, events and opportunities (content that can be shared with the whole Union (public) or restricted to users affiliated to a specific group (private)).
- Create your own specific user or discussion group for a particular issue bringing in people from other commission groups, Members or the secretariat
- To be the "go-to" place for an up to date directory of people and organizations related to IUCN.
- Each group has a designated web-space for profiling information (e.g., reports, publications, newsletters), news stories, announcements, consultations, promoting events and opportunities (e.g., job openings, funding, awards, capacity building, etc).
- There are specific Union Portal groups for SSC leaders. These can be used to share information with your fellow SG/TF/SC and Chairs and all RLA Coordinators.
- Group leaders can contact all members via an emailing function on this webspace. Additional group managers can be given access to this function – just contact SSC Network Support (membership) to set this up.

Your expertise will be available throughout the network, via your personal profile, which could help in identifying opportunities for collaboration within the Union.

The One Programme

As noted above, SGs, TFs, SCs and Stand-alone RLAs are but one part of the broader Union of IUCN. This includes five other IUCN Commissions, nearly 40 IUCN Regional and Country Offices, and a number of global thematic programmes, not to mention the more than 1,000 governmental and non-governmental IUCN Members! Coordination on all aspects is crucial. SSC groups can only stand to gain by ensuring a close and open working relationship with the SSC Chair's Office and GSP, and with the IUCN Regional and Country Offices, strengthened by good communication, transparency and responsiveness. Chairs are encouraged to learn more about IUCN on the [IUCN website](#) which gives more information on many of the aspects of the organization including the 2017-2020 IUCN Programme Plan, the 2017-2020 Species Strategic Plan, the 2016-2020 Red List Strategic Plan, the regional offices, the work of other programmes and Commissions, and IUCN members. Much information specific to the Species Programme and SSC can be found on the [Species website](#).

Useful Resources and Publications

A full list of SSC resources (e.g., the SSC By-laws, SSC Mandate, IUCN Statutes and Regulations, etc) for can be found [here](#).
A directory of all Specialist Groups, Task Forces, Stand-alone RLAs and Sub-Committee can be found [here](#).
A list of all Species Publications (including IUCN SSC Policies and Position Statements, Guidelines, Standards, Action Plans, etc) can be found [here](#).
The Network Support Team details can be found [here](#).

Annex 1: Sample Terms of Reference for a Programme Officer

Below is a list of tasks a Programme Officer may undertake for a SG/TF. This is by no means a prescriptive list and serves to guide groups as to how such a role could help to increase its capacity.

- 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 SG/TF workplan 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 new published and unpublished information on status, distribution and threats to each species,
  - updating data fields and text accounts, and running Red List assessments in the Species Information Service (SIS) database
  - Regular consultation and liaison with experts
  - Where applicable, assist with forums supporting the review process.

Annex 2: Guidelines for SSC Members on Engaging in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

This annex has four parts:

1. IUCN's history in the Convention
2. IUCN's role in CITES
3. Current opportunities for participation in CITES by Commission members
4. Principles of engagement

1. IUCN's history in the Convention

IUCN's history in CITES stretches back to 1963 when the idea for a wildlife trade convention was first proposed at the 7th IUCN General Assembly in Nairobi. Since the Convention entered into force in 1975, IUCN has been a significant contributor and technical advisor to the Convention. Indeed, several Decisions and Resolutions of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) have specifically requested IUCN's assistance in working with the CITES Secretariat and the Parties[1].

Engagement in the Convention by the different parts of IUCN (and particularly the IUCN Secretariat) has varied greatly over the years but has traditionally been led primarily by the Global Species Programme (GSP) in the IUCN Secretariat and the Species Survival Commission (SSC). The Head of the GSP, or another senior GSP staff member, has generally served as the head of the delegation at CITES CoP (and also at Standing Committee meetings), and for many years, GSP housed a Species Trade and Use Unit (formerly the Wildlife Trade programme).

SSC's engagement in CITES has been executed through its diverse assemblage of expert-based Specialist Groups. The level of involvement of Specialist Groups is varied, depending on several

---

[1] For example, the original CITES rhino Resolution 9.14 (subsequently revised) was drafted by the SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups at the request of the CITES Secretariat, presented to the CoP by a Scientific/Programme Officer from each group, and subsequently approved with minor modifications.

factors including the nature of the species under the remit of the group, the expertise and capacity of the group, and its Chair, the degree to which Conference Resolutions or Decisions request involvement, and many other factors. The African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG), for example, has been involved with CITES for as long as elephant issues have been on the agenda. Indeed, the elephant debate has shaped the AfESG as much as it has shaped CITES itself and has influenced the manner in which the group has operated since, with a close focus on the technical rather than the political. On the other hand, the Crocodile Specialist Group has operated in a rather unique manner within CITES, providing pro-active, science-based support to Parties to help them design, develop and manage their sustainable use programmes. SSC's thematic Specialist Groups have also played critical roles in the Convention, particularly through what is now the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group. The SSC Chair has often been a member of the IUCN delegation to CITES, and indeed has sometimes served as the head of delegation. SSC Specialist Group members usually form the majority in any IUCN delegation to CITES meetings.

Although IUCN's involvement in CITES has been led by GSP and SSC, other global programmes (and Commissions) have provided essential support. In particular, IUCN's Environmental Law Programme/Centre was responsible for preparing a succession of drafts of the Convention text following adoption of the Resolution at the 1963 IUCN General Assembly. It was also instrumental in developing TRAFFIC, and has, over the years, continued to provide legal advice in support of the Convention. Engagement by IUCN's regional offices has been varied; regional offices in Africa have been involved in supporting the administration of the CITES MIKE project (although not currently in any other CITES activities), while IUCN Oceania has been involved in several CITES-related activities in the Pacific Islands. Finally, global and regional communications have always played an important function in communicating awareness and policies around the Convention.

TRAFFIC, as the wildlife trade programme of IUCN and WWF, fulfills a vital and complementary function in providing policy and technical support to the Convention. TRAFFIC was originally established as an SSC Specialist Group in 1976 ("Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce"), one year after the Convention came into force, to provide information and assistance to aid decision-making in CITES. IUCN and TRAFFIC have always maintained a close working relationship, and since 1987 have jointly produced the *Analyses of the Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices* (or CITES Analyses, for short)[2].

A detailed review of IUCN's past and present engagement in the Convention can be found **here**.

Note that IUCN engages with CITES not simply because *it should* (as it touches on major issues of species conservation), but also because CITES is a key part of the IUCN work programme. IUCN's priorities as concerns CITES for the current IUCN quadrennium are indicated in the Species Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

2. IUCN's role in CITES

Today, IUCN is classified / accredited as an International Governmental Organization within CITES, and is widely viewed within the Convention as a provider of credible and unbiased scientific and technical advice (especially in support of the *IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses of the Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices*, formulation of Non-Detriment Findings, the Review of Significant Trade process, etc). IUCN offers a unique array of scientific and technical expertise to CITES, and can bring the diverse perspectives of its worldwide membership to bear on complex issues before CITES Parties, at global, regional and national levels. IUCN has played an important role as a convener (through, for example, Range-State Dialogues and workshops), and in capacity building and awareness-raising.

---

[2] http://www.traffic.org/cites-cop-papers/CoP15-IUCN-TRAFFIC-full-Analyses-English-web.pdf

However, there have been calls from within IUCN for the Union to consider a more vocal role in the Convention. Following what many considered a contentious 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Doha, Qatar, IUCN's Council requested a review of the Union's activities and processes in support of the Convention (not just at the CoP, but also inter-sessionally) to help "identify better IUCN's niche" in the Convention. Since the CoP was perceived by some as a culmination of IUCN's waning ability to influence decision making in the Convention, part of better defining this niche related to whether or not IUCN should take a more formal "position-oriented" stance in CITES, including on listing proposals and agenda items at meetings. The premise for this proposition was that IUCN could yield more influence and achieve better success within the Convention by not maintaining a stance of such staunch neutrality on issues for which there is sound science available. This premise has two likely shortcomings:

1) First is the assumption that by taking more of a strong advocacy role within CITES, it could yield more influence. In fact, this is not assured and majority opinion within IUCN SSC (and indeed from a number of voices outside) holds the view that the opposite would be likely: the neutrality of the *IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses* almost certainly would be jeopardized; IUCN's role as a credible source of information, expertise and assistance which are founded on impartiality would be neutralized with likely strong erosion of support from Parties; and Parties would move to seek out other sources of independent information and advice, with no guarantee that they could be assured of finding the right information in the process. In short, IUCN may risk vacating a niche that few others have the credibility to occupy, for a space already populated by many others and with little obvious evidence of conservation benefit;

2) Second, a move to become more position oriented could result in unexpected complications for IUCN in terms of constituency management, given that many IUCN Members (both government and NGO) might not necessarily agree with the positions taken. In fact, IUCN has not necessarily been entirely neutral in CITES; for example, Position Papers produced by IUCN for some CITES CoPs have presented a position on a pre-identified set of agenda items, albeit not those of a more controversial nature[3]. However, the further Position Papers ebb away from a position of neutrality, and the more an IUCN delegation acts in support of these positions, the greater is the risk that IUCN Members may come to question IUCN's role. Although comparisons are made with IUCN's slightly more position-oriented role in the CBD, the two Conventions are not the same: both are legally binding, but CITES wields the unique authority to impose sanctions or punitive measures on Parties for failing to take action.

For now, the best way to articulate IUCN's role in the Convention is one of treading a delicate line between being formally neutral, while informally trying to steer things towards particular conservation outcomes that it feels are warranted on the basis of the scientific evidence available and often collated by IUCN in its knowledge products, particularly the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Because this line is so fine, because CITES protocols are easily inadvertently infringed, and because the SSC is filled with the diversity of passionate and dedicated people that it is, the line is sometimes easily crossed. Acquiring the skills of treading this line carefully comes with experience, and even the most experienced are not infallible.

3. Current opportunities for participation in CITES by Commission members

CITES Committees[4] *and Conference of Parties*

SSC members may have the opportunity to participate in the formal meetings of the Convention in a variety of ways, as highlighted below. In such meetings, the only circumstance in which SSC members are able to represent the interests of IUCN is in those instances indicated below.

---

[3] The recommendations in the "Position Paper" produced for CITES CoP15 (Appendix II) were limited to the CBD post-2010 plan, indicators, IPBES, CITES and livelihoods, NDFs, and criteria for inclusion of species on the Appendices. IUCN has never produced recommendations on listing proposals based on the Analyses (although TRAFFIC does), and, indeed, the Position Paper at CITES CoP15 failed to even *encourage* Parties to heed the scientific evidence presented in its own Analyses.
[4] See http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/sc.php and http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/ac_pc.php

Table 1. Opportunities for participation by SSC members in formal CITES meetings noting circumstances under which members may formally represent the interests of IUCN

Meeting	Participation	Authority to speak on behalf of IUCN*
Standing Committee (SC)	As an invited representative on the IUCN delegation	Yes
	As representatives of Parties that are members of the SC, or as delegated observers sent by Parties not members of the SC	No
	As invited observers by the Chairman of the SC	No
Animals and Plants Committee (AC/PC)	As elected members (or alternate members) of the AC & PC	No
	As the elected Chairman or Vice-Chairman of either AC & PC	No
	Representing a Party as an observer	No
	As an invited observer by the Chairman of either AC & PC (TRAFFIC staff usually attend as observers)	No
	As an invited representative on the IUCN delegation	Yes
CITES CoP	As a representative of a Party to the Convention	No
	As a representative of a non-governmental or other intergovernmental organization	No
	As an invited representative on the IUCN delegation[5]	Yes
	In a formal capacity within CITES at CoP (e.g., as Chairman of Committee I or II).	No

* Pending endorsement of the Head of the delegation

Inter-sessional processes

Inter-sessionally, IUCN Commission members may participate in CITES in any one of a number of activities, and opportunities to do so may be both reactive or proactive;

- A SG chair, or SG member, may be contacted by the CITES Secretariat (or a contractee of, such as UNEP-WCMC) to review documents, provide expert advice or undertake contracted work related to CITES decisions. In recent years, SSC members have contributed to formal processes, such as the Review of Significant Trade (RST) and the Periodic Review process;
- IUCN Commission members may participate in CITES inter-sessional working groups. IUCN representation on inter-sessional working groups is coordinated by the SSC Network Support Officer in the GSP with SG chairs, or members, acting as focal points for different issues;
- SG members may also become involved in a range of CITES-relevant activities that are not necessarily directly requested by the CITES Secretariat or originate in CITES technical meetings. These include activities related to capacity building and non-detriment findings which are usually conducted with Parties;
- SGs may report incidents or cases of non-compliance to the CITES Secretariat, including direct observations of illegal trade or concerns regarding other non-compliance.

In all cases above, it is the duty of the Specialist Group Chair or designated CITES focal point in the SG to notify the relevant IUCN Secretariat focal points in the Global Species Programme before-hand. See the Principles below (Communication).

4. Principles of engagement

The following guiding principles:

- espouse the critical role that Specialist Groups have played in the Convention since its very inception, and their value as one of the most cost-effective mechanisms for advancing the conservation of different species groups;
- recognize that Specialist Groups operate in all sorts of different ways and that levels of experience in CITES vary tremendously;

---

[5] For example, in the case of the AfRSG, the Scientific Officer attended CoP 15 as part of the IUCN Delegation, while seven other AfRSG members attended representing range States and non-governmental and international governmental organizations.

- *are neither* intended to be prescriptive *nor* to impede the work of Specialist Groups;
- *are* intended to help SG Chairs and members, especially those new to CITES processes, understand how they can simultaneously push for scientifically sound conservation outcomes in CITES yet also remain conscious of the need to avoid conflicts of interest or jeopardizing IUCN's unique role.

The conservation imperative

- The primary objective of any Commission member's engagement in Convention processes is to ensure a positive outcome for the species concerned. Achieving this requires a delicate balancing act between, on the one hand, targeted, respectful, and open discussions that may be held in the corridors or in informal meetings between members and Party delegations, and, on the other hand, more guarded, science-based neutrality (which need not be free from suggested recommendations *per se*) in *formal* (plenary or break-out) sessions or in any written statements;
- **Specialist Group Chairs are reminded to help Specialist Group members understand the distinction between engaging in one's individual capacity compared with doing so on behalf of the Specialist Group. The latter is only possible where authority to do so has been granted by the Specialist Group Chair. See Communication.**

Communication

- While a number of Specialist Group Chairs have extensive experience in the CITES arena, others may not or they may have group members who are more adequately suited to dealing with CITES-related matters. In such cases, Specialist Groups dealing with species in international trade are encouraged to consider nominating an individual to serve as a "CITES focal point" on a quadrennial basis. This focal point would be the named entry point for communication between the IUCN Secretariat focal points and the Specialist Groups, in much the same way as such a person is specifically tasked with filling this role for Red Listing;
- It is the duty of the Specialist Group Chair or designated CITES focal point in the SG to notify the relevant IUCN Secretariat focal points in the Global Species Programme when (and before):
    - o The Specialist Group intends writing directly to the CITES Secretariat in the name of the Specialist Group on a sensitive or controversial matter[6] (e.g., a Specialist Group may receive information relating to non-compliance or enforcement that they wish to bring to the attention of the Convention);
    - o The Specialist Group is involved in preparing documentation or reports as may be called for in a Conference Resolution or Decision;
    - o The Specialist Group or Specialist Group members have been involved in drafting a proposal to amend a CITES Appendix (this has bearing on IUCN's role in the Analyses). SG Chairs are reminded that the "Welcome to the IUCN Species Survival Commission" document (effectively, the Terms of Reference for SSC members) specifically asks SSC members to "…*inform SG Chairs and the GSP when they are asked to contribute to proposals to amend the CITES Appendices for CITES CoP meetings (assisting Parties in this regard, who submit the proposals)"*. Notifying the SG Chair and GSP should be done as early as is practically possible"
    - o The Specialist Group is approached formally by the CITES Secretariat on any issue (as above, SG members approached in an individual capacity must notify SG Chairs and the GSP);

---

[6] Note that such a notice should invariably be made by the Chair of the Group, and if not the Chair then with the Chair's knowledge and consent. See also "Speaking on behalf of the Specialist Group" in "Guidelines for IUCN SSC Specialist Group and Task Force Chairs"

    o   The Specialist Group is approached by a Partner or external organization asking for the input, comments or advice of the SG on a potentially sensitive or controversial matter (see *The Obligations of others* below).

CITES procedures

- For those new to CITES, the bureaucratic and operational procedures of the Convention can be challenging. However, it is critical that they are strictly adhered to – IUCN has no exemption. Members attending formal meetings should be sure to familiarize themselves with the Rules of Procedure (CoP[7]; SC[8]; AC[9]/PC[10]).
- Note that only Parties can submit formal documents for meetings. However, some Specialist Groups are formally mandated or contracted to produce documents or reports in advance of meetings. For example, AfRSG, AsRSG and TRAFFIC are jointly mandated by CITES Parties to submit a report on rhinoceros status, trends and trade to the CITES Secretariat prior to each CoP, pursuant to Resolution 9.14.
- Information Documents for meetings may be submitted at any time for CITES meetings, subject again to the relevant Rules of Procedure (but see below). The submission of any such documents or proposals to the CITES Secretariat must be coordinated with the Global Species Programme (see also *Input to meetings*, below).
- Specialist Groups wishing to have representation[11] on the IUCN delegation at a forthcoming meeting, should make their intentions known to the IUCN Secretariat focal points **at least 90 days** in advance of the meeting in order for the IUCN Secretariat to send the necessary request letters to the CITES Secretariat well before registration deadlines.

Input to meetings

- Information Documents that Specialist Groups want to submit to meetings of CITES, either through a Party or through the CITES Secretariat (or directly via IUCN), must be sent to the IUCN Secretariat focal points as soon as possible and **no later than two weeks** in advance of a meeting in order to allow adequate time for review. The Head of Delegation may reject Information Docs for a variety of reasons, including if the forum is not considered appropriate or the document requires significant revision (with inadequate time available);
- The IUCN Secretariat focal points, which coordinate the IUCN Delegation's overall preparations for meetings, will send out requests for input on agenda items in advance of meetings. Where Groups that will not be represented on the IUCN Delegation wish for the IUCN Delegation to convey information to the meeting concerning matters relevant to the species in the remit of the Group, this should be transmitted to the IUCN Delegation **at least two weeks** in advance of a meeting.

Serving on an IUCN delegation

- Commission members participating in an IUCN Delegation are subject to the IUCN Secretariat Procedures for IUCN's Policy Work[12];
- The Head of the Delegation is responsible for all formal communications on behalf of IUCN, approving statements and press releases, and delegating responsibility to delegation members to speak on certain issues.
- Formal interventions may be made by delegates where discussed with, and agreed by, the Head of Delegation. Interventions made by delegates in a *formal* hearing should be respectful, firm, succinct, and grounded in scientific facts. In a formal intervention, the use

---

[7] http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/E14-Rules.pdf
[8] http://www.cites.org/eng/com/sc/rules.pdf
[9] http://www.cites.org/eng/com/ac/19/E19-02.pdf
[10] http://www.cites.org/eng/com/pc/E-PC-RoP.pdf
[11] Invariably, representation is by the Chair, the CITES focal point, or the Group's programme officer.
[12] http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/global_policy/ (last version 7th May).

of wording that draws attention to facts and evidence, rather than promulgates or argues for a particular line of action, should be the norm (e.g., phrases like "draw attention to" may be better than "urges…"), in line with IUCN's general "policy relevant" rather than "policy prescriptive" approach;

- Delegates are encouraged to provide, upon request, technical and science-based information to Parties and Observers relating to the Agenda Documents during informal discussions, and to assist participants understand IUCN's scientific contributions (e.g. explain the rationale in the Analyses or about Red List criteria);
- It is the responsibility of all members of the delegation to ensure that the Delegation Head is kept reliably informed on all potential matters of controversy relating to their particular focal area.

Serving on a non-IUCN Delegation

- As noted above, Commission members serving on a non-IUCN Delegation (for example, on the Delegation of an observer organization or of a Party) do not have authority to speak on behalf of IUCN, at least not formally (they, of course, have authority to speak on behalf of their respective Delegations);
- In informal settings, Commission members should use their discretion in deciding when it is appropriate to speak on behalf of the Specialist Group, but should endeavour to make clear the distinction. Commission members are reminded that it is only appropriate to speak on behalf of the Specialist Group, when the Specialist Group Chair has expressly given delegated authority to do so.

The CITES Analyses

- The CITES Analyses have the potential to influence Parties' decision-making before and during the CoP and are therefore one of IUCN's most critical products;
- To maintain the scientific rigour and neutrality of the Analyses, IUCN's approach is to ensure that the process is ring-fenced from external subjective influences. Possible conflict of interest may arise due to Specialist Groups members (in their individual capacity or other) having been directly involved in supporting Parties to draft or review proposals for amendments to CITES Appendices (or indeed been directly responsible for initial drafting the proposals). **In such cases, it is the responsibility of such members and the SG Chair to disclose to the *Analyses* review team any potential conflict of interest in order to ensure independent, non-biased review**;
- The Chair or CITES focal point should assist the Analyses team in ensuring necessary impartial, unbiased, scientifically rigorous input from relevant Specialist Group members and identifying group members that would be able to review the draft Analyses, and to ensure that reviews are done in a timely and expedient manner. Note that the *CITES Analyses* must be completed within 60 days of the CoP (leaving a total of 90 days for the reviews to be conducted).

Assisting with listing proposals

- Specialist Groups may sometimes be called upon, or invited by Parties, to help review or possibly even draft a listing proposal for a forthcoming CoP. In such reactive cases, it is the responsibility of the Specialist Group Chair or CITES focal point in the group to manage Specialist Group member engagement with the relevant Party or authorities. As noted above, it is then **the responsibility of such members and the Specialist Group Chair or CITES focal point to disclose to the *Analyses* review team any potential conflict of interest in order to ensure independent, non-biased review (although members involved in these early stages need not be excluded from later review).**
- Specialist Group members may sometimes, of their own volition, develop a listing proposal for a particular species. In such proactive cases, the only appropriate course of

action is for the member to act in their personal / institutional capacity. Recognizing that the SG may subsequently become officially involved either pre-submission (e.g., if asked to review a draft proposal by a Party) or post-submission (in the Analyses), it is the responsibility of Specialist Group members to inform Specialist Group Chairs and the CITES focal point in the group, and the *Analyses* team if contacted, how they have been involved in such a process.

The obligations of others

- A number of Partner organizations may fulfil functions relative to the Resolutions of the Convention that require expert input or the input of Specialist Groups or individual Specialist Group members (e.g., UNEP-WCMC often undertakes to handle the Review of Significant Trade). Key collaborating Partners, such as UNEP-WCMC, are aware of the need to keep IUCN Secretariat focal points and Specialist Group Chairs informed on all communications; others may not be, and as noted above it may be prudent to notify the IUCN Secretariat focal points if you are approached by an external organization on a potentially sensitive matter.

The obligations of the IUCN Secretariat

- The IUCN Secretariat is responsible for overall coordination of the Union's engagement in CITES. The IUCN Secretariat has assigned focal points to serve as the primary liaison with Specialist Groups (and indeed with other IUCN Programmes and Regional Offices). It is IUCN's responsibility to ensure that said focal points are clearly identified to Specialist Group Chairs.
- It is the responsibility of the IUCN Secretariat focal points to:
  - Ensure and maintain good communications with Specialist Group Chairs, or their designated CITES focal points, on all CITES matters, including notifying Groups of any CITES-related matters relevant to species within their remit whether or not on the formal agenda of a forthcoming meeting;
  - Extend to Specialist Groups a formal invitation to serve on the IUCN Delegation at forthcoming meetings;
  - Ensure IUCN's general compliance with CITES procedures, and to assist Groups, and in particular any individuals new to the CITES process, with understanding and complying with CITES procedures;
  - Coordinate IUCN's preparations in advance of formal CITES meetings;
  - Involve and consult Specialist Groups in the *CITES Analyses.* In such cases, the Analyses team will interact with one person in the Specialist Group, either the CITES focal point or the Specialist Group Chair (who should recommend suitable Specialist Group members as potential reviewers to the *Analyses* team). It is the responsibility of the *Analyses* team to seek a disclosure of any conflict of interest from that Specialist Group member directly (advised, where able, by the Chair or CITES focal point).
- IUCN Secretariat focal points may not present, or purport to be presenting, the views of a Specialist Group without the permission of the Group.

CITES resources

The CITES website maintains a comprehensive set of resources relating to CITES processes and procedures. Some useful links include:

CITES Virtual College: https://eva.unia.es/cites/
CITES Terminology: http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/terms/index.php
The Evolution of CITES handbook (9th edition; by Willem Wijnstekers):
http://www.cites.org/common/resources/Evolution_of_CITES_9.pdf

Annex 3: Sample Profile for an SSC Leader

As already mentioned previously, SSC Leaders hold sole responsibility for group governance and oversight of their groups. 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 and/or conservation experience on the species falling under the SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone RLA remit.
2. To be an excellent communicator, personable and able to encourage active engagement (e.g., from the group's members).
3. To be actively carrying out research and/or conservation projects on such species.
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 SG/TF/SC/Stand-alone when required
9. To have experience on 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 (i.e. reply to emails/Skype conversations/organize meetings, commission work, coordinate document writing with group members, etc.).
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.