

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group



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**RED LIST AUTHORITY
COORDINATOR**

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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

104

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Website: <https://www.asesg.org>

Mission statement

The Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) does not have a mission statement but has developed a mandate for the Group: (1) AsESG shall provide best available scientifically grounded evidence as to the abundance, distributions and demographic status of Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) populations in all 13 range states. It shall also set forth advisory guidelines for range states and assist in capacity building in performing their own assessments; (2) AsESG shall analyse threats to wild populations and raise awareness of these by communicating both within and outside the scientific community, and also set forth standards/guidelines for management and welfare of wild and captive elephants, including but not limited to the surveillance of disease interfaces and economic activities that impact elephant; (3) AsESG shall use its advisory mandate to guide conservation and welfare issues of Asian Elephants by governments, civil society or any other relevant stakeholder.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Conservation prospect of Asian Elephant across 13 Range States improved through collaborative efforts of range countries and AsESG members.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-008 Support National Red List assessment of elephants in at least two countries.

T-009 Ascertain taxonomic status of Borneo elephants and their Red List assessment.

T-010 Map the distribution of elephants in all the 13 range states in Asia.

T-014 Communicate elephant conservation and research on Asian Elephants through the *GAJAH* journal (2 volumes per year).

PLAN

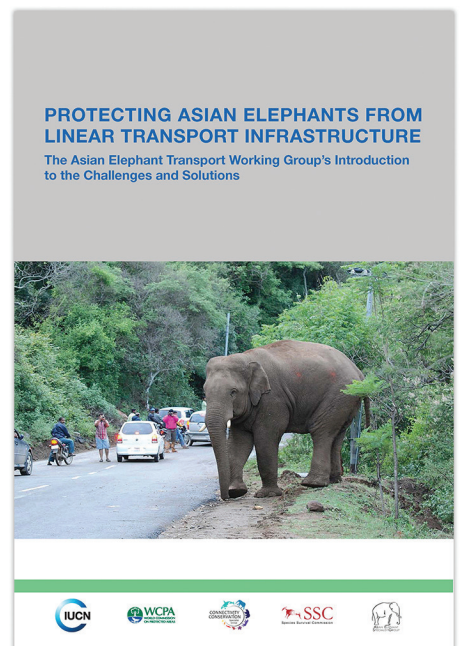
T-003 Develop National Elephant Conservation Action Plans (NECAP) on elephant conservation for all 13 range states.

T-004 Develop guidelines/protocols on select issues for the conservation of Asian Elephants in Working Groups.

T-006 Assist CITES and its Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme with Asian Elephant information and report for CITES Steering Committee meetings.

ACT

T-013 Provide technical support and a plan to the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry for the recovery of the elephant population and habitat.



Linear report cover
Photo: AsESG



Elephant herd in Thailand forest
Photo: Suphisit (AekAtom) JITVIJAK

NETWORK

T-001 Renew AsESG membership for period 2021–2025 and expand it with representatives from each Range State as well as youths.

T-002 Develop proposals and generate financial resources to support AsESG conservation activities.

T-005 Along with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), develop best practices for linear infrastructures passing through elephant habitats in Asia.

T-011 Organise two meetings (11th and 12th) of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group members in 2022 and 2024.

T-012 Assist host countries in jointly hosting the 3rd Asian Elephant Range States meeting.

COMMUNICATE

T-007 Maintain an updated AsESG website for dissemination of information on the species, resources and group expertise.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Red List

T-009 (KSR 6)

Number of new national Red List assessments published: 0

Result description: A Working Group has been formed to assess the taxonomic status of Borneo elephants and the Working Group had its meeting in June 2021.

Research activities

T-010 (KSR 6)

Map showing the distribution of elephants across 13 Range States in Asia: 1

Result description: The Working group had a review meeting with the Chair and is being expanded to work on the target.

T-014 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 1

Result description: *Gajah 53* (2021) was published and is available online at: <https://www.asesg.org/gajah53.php>.

PLAN

Planning

T-003 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 4

Result description: Peninsular Malaysia, Lao PDR, Nepal and India are currently working to develop their National Elephant Conservation Action Plan. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sabah Malaysia and Thailand have already published their plan. Draft plans exist for Indonesia and China. Viet Nam is also working on their plan.

T-004 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 5

Result description: AsESG has produced five guidelines and is working to finalise the other plans and guidelines.

Policy

T-006 (KSR 9)

Number of documents provided to support/guide policy making: 1

Result description: AsESG submitted its report to CITES on 'Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*): Status, threat and conservation actions' for the 74th Standing Committee report on 1 December 2021.

ACT

Technical advice

T-013 (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: AsESG has drafted the plan. The same will be taken up with the Viet Nam Forest Department in 2022. The Chair discussed the plan with AsESG Working Group members and Viet Nam Forest officials on 24 February 2022 to finalise the plan and how to take this forward. Some comments/suggestions were received and will be incorporated into the plan.

NETWORK

Membership

T-001 (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 104

Result description: AsESG membership for the 2017–2020 quadrennium was reviewed and renewal of membership for 2021–2025

Elephant NH-209 in BRT Tiger Reserve, India
Photo: Sandeep Kr Tiwari, AsESG



Asian Elephant Range State preparatory meeting with all 13 Range Country officials
Photo: AsESG



The Chair at WCC
Photo: AsESG

is in progress. The Chair has confirmed 104 members (96 from last quadrennium and eight new members) from 22 countries. The Chair has also constituted a Leadership Team, consisting of Ms Heidi Riddle (AsESG Vice Chair), Dr A Christy Williams, Dr Wong Ee Phin (AsESG Deputy Chair) and Dr Jennifer Pastorini.

Synergy

T-002 (KSR 1)

Number of funding partners established and maintained: 4

Result description: The AsESG has been able to submit proposals to and generate financial resources from International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), International Elephant Foundation, African Lion Safari and Columbus Zoological Park.

T-005 (KSR 3)

Collaborate with WCPA on linear infrastructures in Asian Elephant habitat: ongoing

Result description: The Asian Elephant Transport Working group, formed jointly with members from IUCN SSC AsESG and IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, has published its first report: Ament, R., et al. 2021. *Protecting Asian Elephants from Linear Transport Infrastructure: The Asian Elephant Transport Working Group's Introduction to the Challenges and Solutions*. AsETWG (Asian Elephant Transport Working Group; IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group/IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group). <https://doi.org/10.53847/VYWN4174>. This can be downloaded at: <https://www.asesg.org/PDFfiles/Protecting.pdf>.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-007 (KSR 12)

Functional website: ongoing

Result description: The AsESG website is being periodically updated with news, publications (including journals) and other features.

Acknowledgements

The AsESG Secretariat would like to thank all the members for actively participating in discussion, assistance and contributing to the overall goal of the Specialist Group. We would like to thank the Working Group conveners and the members who have successfully completed their outcome documents. The Chair would like to convey his sincere thanks to range States for updating/preparing their National Action Plan for Conservation of Elephants and also actively participating in discussion. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Government of Nepal for hosting the 3rd Asian Elephant Range State meeting in collaboration with AsESG. The Chair would like to thank Ms Heidi Riddle, Dr A Christy Williams, Dr Wong Ee Phin and Dr Jennifer Pastorini for agreeing to be part of the AsESG Leadership team and taking the lead. The Chair expresses his thanks to the AsESG Membership Advisory Committee (MAC) and proposal endorsement committee for their proactive support. Special thanks to International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) for supporting the activities of AsESG and financial support. We would also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Asian Elephant Foundation and AZA Elephant SAFE program for the financial support extended to AsESG. The AsESG Secretariat would also like to thank Prof. Jon Paul Rodríguez, SSC Chair, and his team and the IUCN Office for extending all assistance and help to AsESG.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 14

Geographic regions: 14 Asia

Actions during 2021:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 3 (KSR 8, 9)

Act: 1 (KSR 10)

Network: 3 (KSR 1, 2, 3)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

