



# By-laws of the IUCN Species Survival Commission

**As revised and adopted by the SSC Steering Committee, December 2025**

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## **Preamble**

These By-laws have been drafted in accordance with the Statutes and Regulations of the IUCN (Reg. VII, 80).

These By-laws shall guide the Commission's operations in the furtherance of the mission of IUCN, to provide effective legal foundations for conserving the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

## **1. Name**

The Commission shall be called the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC).

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1.** In these By-laws, unless the context or subject otherwise requires:
- 2.2.** Words defined or used in the Statutes and Regulations of the IUCN shall have the same meanings in these By-laws.
- 2.3.** "SSC By-laws" shall mean these By-laws.
- 2.4.** "Commission Chair" or "SSC Chair" shall mean the duly elected Chair of the Commission as per the Statutes and Regulations of the IUCN and clause 4.1.1. of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.5.** Wherever the term "Chair" appears in any provision, term or definition of these By-laws, it shall include any co-chairs, except when referring to the SSC Chair.
- 2.6.** "Commission" shall mean the IUCN Species Survival Commission.
- 2.7.** "Deputy Chair" shall mean the duly appointed Deputy Chair of the Commission as per the Statutes and clause 4.1.2 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.8.** "Steering Committee" shall mean the SSC Steering Committee as per the Statutes and clause 4.1.3 and 7.3 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.9.** "Steering Committee member" shall mean a Steering Committee member duly appointed as per the Statutes and clause 4.2.3.

- 2.10.** “Committee” shall mean a Committee of the Steering Committee, as per 4.1.4 and 4.2.4 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.11.** “Regional Vice-Chairs” shall mean SSC Regional Vice-Chair, as appointed as per 4.1.6 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.12.** “Specialist Group” (SG) shall mean a group of people, led by an SG Chair or two SG Co-Chairs, appointed to carry out long-term activities on behalf of the Commission, as per 4.1.8, 6.1 and 6.2 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.13.** “Task Force” (TF) shall mean a temporary group of people, led by a TF Chair or two TF Co-Chairs, appointed to address key emergent issues on behalf of the Commission, as per 4.1.10, 6.1 and 6.2 of the SSC By-laws. Task Forces may be “Technical Task Forces” or “Impact Task Forces”;
- 2.13.1.** “Technical Task Forces” shall mean those established to address key priority areas identified via proposals submitted to the SSC Chair or to address Resolutions from a World Conservation Congress.
- 2.13.2.** “Impact Task Forces” shall mean those established to address key strategic priority areas identified by the Steering Committee and the IUCN SSC Chair and shall be led by a Steering Committee member serving as Chair.
- 2.14.** “Stand-alone Red List Authority” (RLA) shall mean a group of people, led by a Stand-alone RLA Coordinator or two Stand-alone RLA Co-Coordinators, to implement Red Listing activities on behalf of the Commission, as per 4.1.11, 4.1.12, 6.1 and 6.2 of the SSC By-laws
- 2.15.** “Red List Authority” (RLA) shall mean a group of people, led by an RLA Coordinator or two RLA Co-Coordinators, to implement Red Listing activities on behalf of the Commission, as per 4.1.13, 4.1.14, 6.1 and 6.2 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.16.** “Action Partnership” (AP) shall mean a group of organisations convened by the SSC to address key priorities identified by the Commission, as per 4.1.15, 4.1.16 and 6.3 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.17.** “Member-at-Large” shall mean any person designated as a Distinguished Service Member, Advisory Member, Emeritus Chair, or any person included on the Roll of Honour, as per 4.1.17 and 5 of these By-laws.
- 2.18.** “Distinguished Service Member” shall mean Distinguished Service Member, as per 5.2 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.19.** “Advisory Member” shall mean Advisory Member, as per 5.3 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.20.** “Emeritus Chair” shall mean Emeritus Chair as per 5.4 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.21.** “Roll of Honour” shall mean Roll of Honour, as per 5.1 of the SSC By-laws.
- 2.22.** “Member” shall mean a Member of the Commission.
- 2.23.** “Mandate” shall mean the mandate approved for the Commission at the most recent World Conservation Congress.
- 2.24.** “Regulations” shall mean the Regulations of IUCN, as amended from time to time.
- 2.25.** “Statutes” shall mean the Statutes of IUCN, as amended from time to time.
- 2.26.** “Region” shall have the same meaning as “Region” is accorded in the Statutes.
- 2.27.** “World Congress” shall mean the IUCN World Conservation Congress as

defined in the Statutes.

**2.28.** Words that refer to singular numbers also include plural numbers.

### **3. Mandate of the Commission**

The Commission shall conduct its activities in accordance with its Mandate as established by the 2025 World Congress. The Mandate of the Commission includes the following vision, goal, objectives and programme areas for the period 2026-2029:

#### **3.1. Mission**

In the intersessional period of 2026–2029, the Species Survival Commission (SSC) enables IUCN to influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity of biodiversity, and to ensure that the use of species is equitable, sustainable, and non-detrimental to the survival of species, through:

- the provision of knowledge on the status and trends of species;
- developing policies and guidelines;
- facilitating conservation planning; and
- catalysing conservation action.

#### **3.2. Vision**

A just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on Earth.

#### **3.3. Objectives**

For the intersessional period 2026–2029, the SSC, working in collaboration with IUCN Members, National and Regional Committees, other Commissions, and the Secretariat, will pursue the following key objectives in helping to deliver IUCN’s “One Programme” commitment:

- a. Network:** Enhance the SSC network and its alliances to help achieve global biodiversity targets.
- b. Assess:** Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.
- c. Plan:** Develop collaborative, inclusive, and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies for species within and beyond their natural ranges.
- d. Act:** Convene and mobilize conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.
- e. Communicate:** Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance global conservation impact.

#### **3.4. Programme Areas**

The specific working priorities of SSC are derived from, and focused on, the IUCN Programme Areas, under which, SSC has Key Species Results (KSRs):

- KSR 1. Develop new and strengthen existing partnerships and sustainable funding mechanisms.
- KSR 2. Enhance the capacity of the SSC network and its partnerships.
- KSR 3. Enhance collaborations across and beyond IUCN to accomplish species conservation results.
- KSR 4. Collaborate with governments, IUCN members, and other stakeholders to achieve the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets.
- KSR 5. Improve biodiversity and conservation knowledge.
- KSR 6. Expand the coverage, quality and content of biodiversity assessments: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Impacts of Crimes that Affect the Environment, Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa, Climate Change Vulnerability, Assess to Plan, Green Status of Species, Species-focused Key Biodiversity Areas, *Ex-situ* Conservation Assessments, and other assessments undertaken by the SSC network.
- KSR 7. Strengthen the Red List Index as a biodiversity indicator, at global and national scales.
- KSR 8. Strengthen and expand species conservation planning efforts at local, national, regional and global scales.
- KSR 9. Strengthen species conservation in national, regional and global policies.
- KSR 10. Enhance biodiversity conservation action through the implementation of effective, collaborative and practical approaches.
- KSR 11. Catalyse sustainable use practices to improve governance for people and nature.
- KSR 12. Strengthen IUCN's species theme as a strong and credible source of biodiversity information for target audiences.
- KSR 13. Increase visibility of conservation efforts for different taxa and species through strategic, innovative communications that attract new audiences.

Under these KSRs, each SSC group, as well as the SSC Chair's Office and the IUCN Secretariat, will establish a set of measurable time-bound targets to be attained by the end of 2029, and will name a focal point responsible for each target. The indicators for these targets will be integrated to provide a measure of SSC's progress and impact as a whole. These KSRs, indicators and targets will be published on the IUCN Species Strategic Plan 2026-2029. The SSC Chair's Office will be responsible for monitoring and reporting results, while working with the Secretariat, and where relevant with IUCN Members and partner organisations.

#### **4. Membership**

##### **4.1. Categories of SSC membership**

There shall be 18, non-mutually-exclusive, categories of membership in the SSC:

- 4.1.1. Chair of the Commission (also Chair of the Steering Committee)
- 4.1.2. Deputy Chair of the Commission
- 4.1.3. Steering Committee member
- 4.1.4. Committee Chair
- 4.1.5. Committee member
- 4.1.6. Regional Vice-Chair

- 4.1.7. Specialist Group Chair
- 4.1.8. Specialist Group member
- 4.1.9. Task Force Chair
- 4.1.10. Task Force member
- 4.1.11. Stand-alone Red List Authority Coordinator
- 4.1.12. Stand-alone Red List Authority member
- 4.1.13. Red List Authority Coordinator embedded with a Specialist Group
- 4.1.14. Member of a Red List Authority embedded with a Specialist Group
- 4.1.15. Action Partnership Chair
- 4.1.16. Action Partnership member
- 4.1.17. Member-at-Large

#### **4.2. *Procedures for the appointment and reappointment of members***

Membership in SSC is by explicit invitation of the Commission Chair, the Chair of a Specialist Group, Task Force, Committee or Action Partnership, or a Stand-alone Red List Authority Coordinator. Once appointed, members of the Commission are part of the Commission until they resign or are removed, in accordance with the Statutes and Regulations. Commission members may resign at any time. The Commission's leadership, in turn, shall be reconstituted after each World Congress. SSC members in these different categories are appointed and reappointed as follows:

- 4.2.1. The Chair of the Commission is elected by the World Congress.
- 4.2.2. The Deputy Chair of the Commission is appointed by the IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Commission Chair.
- 4.2.3. Steering Committee members are appointed by the IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Commission Chair.
- 4.2.4. Committee Chairs are normally members of the Steering Committee and are therefore appointed by the IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Commission Chair.
- 4.2.5. Where the Committee has Co-Chairs, the Commission Chair may nominate only one of them for Steering Committee membership. Committee Co-Chairs who are not members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the Chair of the Commission.
- 4.2.6. The IUCN Red List Scientific Committee is counted as an SSC Committee, although it is technically constituted under the auspices of the Red List Partnership.
- 4.2.7. Regional Vice-Chairs are appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee.
- 4.2.8. Specialist Group Chairs are appointed by the Commission Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee, and with the Chairs of other IUCN Commissions where such Specialist Groups are cross-Commissional in nature.
- 4.2.9. Task Force Chairs are appointed by the Commission Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee, and with the Chairs of other IUCN Commissions where such Task Forces are cross-Commissional in nature.
- 4.2.10. Stand-alone Red List Authority Coordinators are appointed by the Commission Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee, and the IUCN Red List Scientific Committee.

- 4.2.11. Coordinators of Red List Authorities embedded within Specialist Groups are appointed by the Commission Chair on the advice of the Chair of the Specialist Group within which the Red List Authority is embedded, and in consultation with the Steering Committee and the IUCN Red List Scientific Committee.
- 4.2.12. Action Partnership Chairs are appointed by the Commission Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee.
- 4.2.13. The members of any Committee, Specialist Group, Task Force, Action Partnership and Stand-alone Red List Authority shall be appointed by their respective Committee, SG, TF, and AP Chair, or RLA Coordinator, acting based on delegation from the Commission Chair. This process also applies to the appointment of Committee, SG, TF, AP and RLA Officers (such as Deputy Chair, Vice-Chair, Section Chair, Programme Officer, etc).
- 4.2.14. Any Committee, SG, TF or AP Chair shall consider applications for membership based on the potential member being a specialist either in species conservation or any other field that contributes to their respective group and the network at large and shall not unreasonably withhold membership without reason, on discriminatory grounds or for personal reasons.
- 4.2.15. The Chairs of any Committee, Specialist Group, Task Force, or Action Partnership, and the Coordinators of a Stand Red List Authority may remove any member of their Group, when: 1) members are inactive or unresponsive to repeated attempts to reach them using the contact information provided by members in the Commission System; 2) members are repeatedly disruptive to the group or offensive to other members, such that meetings are unable to proceed; 3) according to the Group Leader, the member changes career path and is no longer active in the Group's remit, 4) the member is deceased or lacks the legal capacity to participate 5) they have violated the Code of Conduct outlined in Section 8.
- 4.2.16. The Members-at-Large (encompassing Persons designated as Distinguished Service Members, Advisory Members, Emeritus Chairs, or named to the Roll of Honour) shall achieve that status in accordance with section 5 below.

#### 4.3. ***Vacancies Among SSC Group Leaders***

- 4.3.1. When the position of a leader of an SSC Group becomes vacant for whatever reason, the Commission Chair will, to the extent possible, institute a process to allow the members of the **Group** in question to propose names of people to fill the vacant position. Where such a process is possible, it shall be based on criteria that will be developed for the position in question. The proposed names will be screened by an independent panel of SSC members (none of whom are candidates for the position) led by the relevant Committee Chair where one is in place. The panel will take into account the views of the incumbent Chair/Co-Chairs, a representative set of Members and external experts and will then make a recommendation to be considered by the Commission

Chair and Steering Committee.

- 4.3.2.** When the position of Chair, co-Chair or Deputy Chair of an Action Partnership becomes vacant for whatever reason, the Commission Chair will, to the extent possible, institute a process to allow the Governing Council of the Action Partnership in question to propose names of people to fill the vacant position. Where such a process is possible, it shall be based on criteria that will be developed for the position in question. The proposed names will be screened by an independent panel of SSC members (none of whom are candidates for the position). The panel will take into account the views of the incumbent Chair/Co-Chairs, a representative set of Members and external experts and will then make a recommendation to be considered by the Commission Chair and Steering Committee.

#### **4.4. *Qualifications for Membership***

Each SSC member should have relevant expertise corresponding to the roles and responsibilities they undertake within the Commission. Appointments shall be made by the person(s) authorised to do so, based on demonstrated experience and contribution to the objectives of the SSC, and in line with IUCN's principles of fairness, transparency, inclusivity, and good governance.

In making such appointments, due consideration should also be given to diversity in geography, gender, career stage, and particularly to the inclusion and mentorship of Young Professionals to abide by approved [Motion 123](#) from the 2025 World Congress.

No specific formal qualifications (including educational or scientific credentials) shall be required.

Each member shall comply with the Code of Conduct contained in these By-laws, and such further implementation of that Code as shall be adopted pursuant to section 8 of these By-laws relating to the conduct of members or any other qualifications.

Each member's continuing qualification for membership shall be considered at the discretion of the SSC Chair and/or the Chair of the SG or TF who appointed that member in consultation with the SSC Chair.

#### **4.5. *Membership Term, Term Limits and Removal or Termination***

The Term of the Chair of the Commission shall run from election until the close of the next World Congress. The Chair of the Commission may only be elected twice to this position.

The term of SSC Group Leaders will run from appointment until 90 days following the close of the next World Congress. SSC Group Leaders have the opportunity to be appointed for up to four full terms; following a process,

extraordinarily this may be extended by the Chair of the Commission in consultation with the Steering Committee. Regular turnover in leadership is essential for good governance and all SSC leaders should develop and demonstrate clear succession plans.

With the exception of the Commission Chair, all other Leaders and Members may be appointed or dismissed at any time.

#### **4.6. *Rights and Duties of Members***

Each member shall fulfil the duties of their category of membership, as set forth in these By-laws.

The governance of the SSC, as per section 7 of these By-laws shall be by members of the SSC. However, where appropriate, a person may become a member of the SSC in order to take on one of the tasks described therein, so long as they meet the membership qualifications of the particular category of membership to which they will be appointed.

Any member in good standing may seek the position of Commission Chair.

No person may claim to be a member of SSC who is not appointed as such and is not registered within the IUCN Commission Membership System.

### **5. *Designation and Duties of Members-at-Large***

Members of any category, or other distinguished individuals, may be designated as members of the Roll of Honour, Distinguished Service Members, Advisory Members or Emeritus Chairs. Such persons shall be considered as Members-at-Large of the SSC. Their designation, term, and duties are defined in this section.

#### **5.1. *Designation and term of members of the Roll of Honour***

The Chair of the Commission and Steering Committee may jointly appoint to the Roll of Honour a small number of highly distinguished people who have played critical roles in the history of the Commission. This honour may be awarded posthumously, and those names inscribed on the Roll of Honour remain so in perpetuity.

#### **5.2. *Appointment and term of Distinguished Service Members***

The Chair of the Commission may appoint individuals as Distinguished Service Members in recognition of significant service to the Commission. Distinguished Services Members are automatically re-appointed in each quadrennium.

The award of Distinguished Service Membership encourages continuing activity in the SSC. Examples of possible Distinguished Service Members include:

- Former active Specialist Group, Task Force or National Species Specialist Group Chairs, and Red List Authority Coordinators
- Former active Steering Committee or Committee members

- Long-serving and particularly active Specialist Group, Task Force, and Red List Authority members
- Outstanding staff in the IUCN Secretariat, SSC Chair's Office and Specialist Groups (e.g. long-serving Programme Officers)

### **5.3. *Appointment and term of Advisory Members***

The Chair of the Commission may appoint individuals as Advisory Members when they are in a working relationship with the SSC during the intersessional period. Each Advisory Member's appointment shall automatically expire 90 days after the close of the next World Congress. Re-appointment is not automatic.

### **5.4. *Appointment and term of Emeritus Chair***

The Commission Chair may appoint from any Committee, SG, TF or AP any individual as Emeritus Chair who has founded or contributed long or exceptional service in the role of Chair of that respective group. Chair of Committees, SG, TF, or APs may propose individuals to the Chair of the Commission for consideration as Emeritus Chairs. Emeritus Chairs are automatically re-appointed in each quadrennium.

### **5.5. *Duties of Members-at-Large***

Members of the Roll of Honour have no continuing duties in the SSC, although their contribution and participation will always be welcomed.

Distinguished Service Members shall:

- Provide advice as requested
- Seek to provide a longer-term perspective on the work of the SSC, and to ensure that institutional memory is not lost

Advisory Members shall:

- Work with the SSC on specific matters
- Provide advice as requested by the Chair of the Commission

Emeritus Chairs shall:

- Provide advice as requested
- Seek to provide a longer-term perspective on the work of the respective group, and to ensure that institutional memory of the group is not lost.

## **6. The Substantive work of the SSC**

The main work of the SSC shall be done by and through the Specialist Groups, Task Forces, Action Partnerships, Red List Authorities and National Focal Persons.

### **6.1. *Establishment of SGs, TFs, APs and RLAs***

SGs, TFs, APs and RLAs shall be established by the Commission Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee, and the IUCN Red List Scientific Committee in the case of RLAs, in accordance with section 4.2 of these By-laws. The mandate of each such group may be based on one or more taxonomic

groups, a taxonomic group within a specified region, a specified conservation thematic area or discipline, or a specific country. Task Forces are temporary groups formed to address key emergent issues.

## **6.2. Roles and Responsibilities of SG/TF/AP/RLA Members and Officers**

The specific roles and responsibilities of the Chairs, officers and members of Specialist Groups, Task Forces, Action Partnerships and Red List Authorities are defined in the following documents (annexed to these Bylaws):

- 6.2.1. *Committee Chairs:*
  - Terms of Reference, IUCN Species Survival Commission Committee Chairs 2026-2029
  - Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2026-2029
  
- 6.2.2. *Impact Task Force Chairs:*
  - Terms of Reference, IUCN Species Survival Commission Impact Task Force Chairs 2026-2029
  - Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2026-2029
  
- 6.2.3. *Regional Vice Chairs:*
  - Terms of Reference, IUCN Species Survival Commission Regional Vice Chairs 2026-2029
  - Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2026-2029
  
- 6.2.4. *SG/TF/AP Chairs:*
  - Terms of Reference, IUCN Species Survival Commission Specialist Group and Task Force Chairs 2026-2029
  - Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2026-2029
  
- 6.2.5. *RLA Coordinators and Members:*
  - Rules of Procedure for IUCN Red List Assessments 2026-2029
  - Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2026-2029 (for Stand-alone RLAs)
  
- 6.2.6. *All Chairs and Members of any SG, TF, AP or RLA:*
  - Terms of Reference for Members of the IUCN Species Survival Commission 2026-2029

These documents may be amended, revised or replaced from time to time, by the Steering Committee, acting in accordance with these By-laws. The most current version of each shall be Annexed to the official copy of these By-laws.

## **6.3. Establishment, Roles and Responsibilities of Action Partnerships**

The Commission Chair shall establish Action Partnerships in consultation with the Steering Committee. The mandate, objectives, governance and main programme areas of work of each Action Partnership shall be defined in its constitution which the Commission Chair will approve in consultation with the Steering Committee and relevant partners.

## **7. Designation of Focal Persons to IUCN Regional and National Committees**

Focal Persons or Focal Points of SSC before IUCN Regional and National Committees are SSC members with more than two years' membership, residing in the respective region or country, and will be designated by the SSC Chair as follows:

- Focal Persons for IUCN Regional Committees will be the SSC Regional Vice-Chairs; where no SSC Regional Vice-Chairs exist, the SSC Chair will designate a Focal Person from among the SSC members residing in that region in consultation with the relevant IUCN Regional Committee;
- Focal Person for an IUCN National Committee will be, by default, the Chair of the relevant National Species Specialist Group; where no National Species Specialist Group exists, a representative of a National Center for Species Survival partnership will be designated as the Focal Person for an IUCN National Committee. If neither a National Species Specialist Group nor a Center for Species Survival Partnership exists, the SSC Chair will designate a Focal Person from among the SSC members residing in that country as recommended by the relevant SSC Regional Vice Chair, in consultation with the relevant IUCN Regional and National Committees and IUCN Regional Offices where they exist.

## **8. Governance of the Commission**

The Commission shall be under the direct oversight of IUCN Council, through the Commission Chair. It shall be governed by and through its officers, staff and Steering Committee, and shall follow the procedures and mandates set forth below.

### ***8.1. The Officers of the Commission***

The Officers of the Commission shall comprise the following:

- 8.1.1.** The Chair, elected by the World Congress, in accordance with the Statutes. The Chair is the head of the Commission and has full powers in accordance with these By-laws to undertake such functions and responsibilities as may be necessary to meet the objectives of the Commission.
- 8.1.2.** The Deputy Chair, nominated by the Commission Chair and appointed by the IUCN Council in accordance with the Statutes and Regulations. The Deputy Chair acts in the place of the Chair whenever the latter is unable to act as the Chair.
- 8.1.3.** Regional Vice-Chairs (appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee). The responsibilities of the Regional Vice-Chairs are defined in the Terms of Reference: Regional Vice-Chairs 2026-2029.

### ***8.2. Staff of the Commission***

The Chair's Office shall consist of staff employed by one or more host

institutions, filling specific roles for the governance and management of the Commission.

### **8.3. The Steering Committee**

Composition: The Steering Committee shall consist of between 10 and 30 Steering Committee Members, operating under the Chairmanship of the Commission Chair, and the Deputy Commission Chair. The members of the Steering Committee shall include the following:

- The Commission Chair
- The Deputy Commission Chair
- Committee and Impact Task Force Chairs, as set forth in 7.4. who shall be nominated by the SSC Chair and appointed by the IUCN Council (as set forth in 4.2.4, where a Committee has Co-Chairs, the Chair of the Commission may decide to nominate just one of them for Steering Committee membership); and
- Other individuals nominated by the Chair and appointed by the IUCN Council to provide advice and guidance while representing specific areas of expertise.

#### **8.3.1. Steering Committee Observers:**

The Commission Chair may appoint non-voting Observers to the Steering Committee to strengthen collaboration with partner organisations that make significant, sustained contributions to the work of the SSC beyond a threshold as defined and communicated by the Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee. The contributions of any organisation being considered for SSC Steering Committee Observer status, must be outlined and managed under a formal agreement and workplan with clearly defined objectives and deliverables. Activities aligned with SSC Chair's Office or SSC Group priorities but falling outside of an appropriate, defined and approved agreement will not be considered towards the defined contribution thresholds until such an agreement is in place. Steering Committee Observers will be invited to participate in key designated meetings and activities of the Steering Committee at their own expense

Observer status shall be reviewed annually and may be revoked at any time at the discretion of the SSC Chair.

#### **8.3.2. Roles and responsibilities:**

- The Steering Committee assists the Chair in overseeing and coordinating the strategic direction of the Commission. .
- The Steering Committee shall determine the Commission's policies, guidelines, strategic plan, and work plan, and guide Commission activities within the mandate established by the World Congress.
- The Steering Committee shall review and adopt or amend the

governance documents of the Commission, including SSC By-laws and all documents annexed to them.

- The Steering Committee shall assist and promote fundraising in support of the work of the SSC and its network of experts.
- The Steering Committee shall perform such other functions as may be conferred upon it or its individual Members by the Commission Chair.

#### 8.3.3. *Meetings of the Steering Committee:*

- The Steering Committee will meet at least once per year through the intersessional period between meetings of the World Congress.
- Notice of meetings of the Steering Committee shall be distributed to all the Steering Committee Members at least ninety (90) days in advance of the opening of an in-person meeting, and thirty (30) days in advance of the opening of a virtual meeting.
- The draft agenda for a meeting will be prepared at the direction of the Commission Chair and distributed to Steering Committee members for comment at least sixty (60) days in advance of the opening of an in-person meeting and at least fifteen (15) days of the opening of an in-person meeting.
- The agenda papers for a meeting will be distributed to Steering Committee members for comment at least fifteen (15) days in advance before the opening of the meeting in-person or seven (7) of the virtual meeting.
- Meetings of the Steering Committee are chaired by the Commission Chair, and by the Deputy Chair of the Commission in his/her absence.
- Other persons may attend Steering Committee meetings, if invited by the Commission Chair or with his/her permission.
- Summary minutes of each meeting of the Steering Committee shall be prepared and submitted to the Members of the Steering Committee for approval no later than thirty (30) days after each meeting in-person and fifteen (15) virtually.
- The final version of the minutes of each meeting shall be posted on the SSC website.

#### 8.3.4. *Decisions of the Steering Committee in meetings:*

- The Steering Committee may conduct meetings and/or take decisions during meetings only with a quorum participating. For these purposes, a quorum shall be at least 50% of the Steering Committee members as of the time of the meeting or decision, excluding observers.
- The Steering Committee will normally take decisions by consensus.
- Where consensus cannot be reached, the Steering Committee may take decisions by a vote of two-thirds of the votes cast (observers do not have a vote). Abstentions do not count as votes cast.
- The Commission Chair may vote on any matter before the Steering Committee.

Action without a meeting: The Steering Committee may also take decisions electronically between its meetings. Draft decisions to be taken electronically should be circulated to Steering Committee members at least

ten (10) days in advance of the due date of the decision. Lack of response to a draft decision by the end of the ten-day period will be counted as agreement with the proposed decision.

#### **8.4. *The Committees***

The Steering Committee mandates the Committees to carry out specific aspects of work on its behalf as follows:

- Upon nomination of the Commission Chair, the Steering Committee may establish Committees to carry out work on its behalf, either to help promote areas of work that need greater emphasis in the Commission, or to handle areas of work that require more detailed oversight than the Steering Committee is able to provide.
- The Steering Committee will adopt terms of reference for each Committee. The following principles apply to the functioning of all Committees:
  - Committees are responsible for developing specific Key Species Results (KSRs) and Targets within the Species Strategic Plan, and for overseeing and monitoring progress in implementing these KSRs and Targets.
  - Committees are accountable to the Steering Committee and report annually to it.
  - Committees are not implementation bodies, but seek to catalyse implementation through Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities and Task Forces.
  - Committees identify emerging conservation issues within their domains of responsibility.
  - Committees support and promote fundraising efforts for priority KSRs and Targets within the Species Strategic Plan.
- Committees meet as frequently as needs and funding permit but continue their work intersessional between meetings.

#### **8.5. *Proposal of candidates to the position of SSC Chair***

According to Regulation IV.30 of IUCN, “[a]t least six months prior to a meeting of the Council taking place no less than four months before the date set for the opening of an ordinary session of the World Congress commission members shall be invited...to make their proposals for Chair of their Commission.”

In line with Regulation IV.30bis, the SSC Steering Committee shall select at least three and up to five of its members, excluding the Chair, to form an ad hoc committee, and invite Commission members to submit names to be considered for Commission Chair, at least one month prior to the date indicated in IV.30 of the Regulations. The committee shall be composed of members who are not candidates themselves. All submissions to the committee shall remain confidential. The ad hoc committee shall submit the list of proposed candidates to the Council, highlighting the especially qualified candidates, with prior endorsement by the Steering Committee at large.

Commission Members are encouraged to present their proposed candidates to the ad hoc committee, though they may also present them directly to the Council (Regulation IV.30 of IUCN).

## **9. Code of Conduct**

Every SSC member is expected to contribute to the Vision and Mission of IUCN and the SSC. SSC membership embodies a relationship of mutual trust and respect among all SSC members and with other parts of IUCN. SSC members are expected to undertake their work and participate in the affairs of the Commission individually and collectively in a responsible, professional and respectful manner, to deal fairly in all transactions and to honour all commitments and promises. As such, each SSC member pledges to achieve the high standards of IUCN Commissions in the following areas:

- Integrity and Professionalism,
- Accountability,
- Ethical Leadership and Transparency,
- Responsiveness and Reliability,
- Mutual Respect for Colleagues, Peers, IUCN Secretariat and other Commissions,
- Dignity and Cultural Sensitivity,
- Paid and Unpaid Work (Including Consultation) for IUCN Secretariat, any Commission or any recognised SG, TF or AP.
- Representation,
- Environmental Responsibility and Safety,
- Confidentiality,
- Conflicts of Interest, and
- Response to Violations of this Code.

The Steering Committee shall adopt guidelines and other implementation mechanisms, as necessary to apply this Code of Conduct within the structure and operations of the SSC.

### **9.1. Integrity and Professionalism**

- To act honestly, truthfully and with integrity in all dealings, both within IUCN and on its behalf or in its name; to examine the accuracy and source of all relevant information before allowing it to be used in Commission products and advice.
- In all dealings, and especially towards IUCN Commission members, to behave professionally, as part of the collective desire to strengthen the competencies of IUCN and the conservation community.
- To comply with all applicable laws and regulations in all dealings relevant to IUCN and its activities and objectives.

### **9.2. Accountability**

- To abide by all relevant governing documents of the SSC.
- To make all reasonable efforts to ensure that SSC's products are delivered in a timely fashion and meet all relevant contractual terms and conditions.

- To treat all who provide funding to, or receive funding from, the IUCN Secretariat, SSC or any SG, TF or AP fairly, openly and honestly throughout the fundraising and fund distribution process, with appropriate acknowledgement of all contributions, and proper accounting thereof.

### **9.3. *Ethical Leadership and Transparency***

When fulfilling a leadership role within SSC or any SG, TF or AP:

- To do so ethically, operating transparently and fairly, giving appropriate notice of key leadership decisions to affected members, and avoiding personal or institutional bias or favour.
- To act as a fiduciary with regard to any property or information held on behalf of IUCN, SSC or any SG, TF or AP.
- To make reasonable efforts to listen to stakeholders and understand and respect their needs and concerns.

### **9.4. *Responsiveness and Reliability***

To contribute to the work and deliberations within SGs, TFs or APs, sharing knowledge, time and expertise; endeavouring to honour all commitments; keeping all partners and stakeholders aware of the status of work under such commitments; and refraining from promising more than the member is capable or authorised to deliver.

### **9.5. *Mutual Respect for Colleagues, Peers, IUCN and Commissions***

- To recognise all members of the IUCN Commissions as colleagues deserving of respectful treatment both in communications within IUCN and also in communications about them outside of IUCN.
- In cases of disagreement with any position taken by IUCN, SSC and/or any SG, TF or AP, if making any public comment on that position, to express it respectfully.

### **9.6. *Dignity and Cultural Sensitivity***

- To respect the cultural diversity of our global network and to behave in all communications on behalf of IUCN, SSC and/or any SG and other related interactions with respect for all peoples, cultures and traditions.
- To avoid and refuse to tolerate discriminatory practices that treat groups or individuals less favourably on the basis of culture, national or ethnic origin, gender, marital or other family status, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disability, political alignment or religious belief.

### **9.7. *Paid and Unpaid Work (Including Consultation) for IUCN or any Commission or SG***

When engaging in paid or unpaid work with, or in the name of, IUCN, SSC, or any SG, TF or AP, to abide by the contract, as well as the governing documents of IUCN, the Commission and/or the SG, TF or AP.

### **9.8. Representation**

- When participating in negotiations and policy discussions as a representative of IUCN, SSC and/or any SG, TF or AP, to endeavour to ensure that all actions taken are informed by the relevant policy positions of IUCN and/or SSC.
- To avoid any communication or use of the name, logo or other formal indications of IUCN, SSC or any SG, TF or AP that has not been authorised by the appropriate person or body or which conveys a misunderstanding about whether that communication is authorised by IUCN, SSC or any SG, TF or AP.
- To avoid any statement or behaviour when undertaking a role in the name of IUCN or SSC that exposes IUCN or SSC to legal liability.

### **9.9. Environmental Responsibility and Safety**

- When acting and/or engaging in advocacy affecting conservation or sustainable development, to do so in a manner that reflects IUCN's shared commitment to sustainability, responsibility and environmental best practice, leading by example and, to the extent possible, working with partners who conform to these standards.
- To avoid, where reasonable and possible, any activity that harms or endangers others, where such danger, harm or injury might be perceived to involve IUCN or SSC and to notify appropriate persons where such activity is unavoidable.

### **9.10. Confidentiality**

- To respect the confidentiality of sensitive information about IUCN, SSC and any SG, TF or AP, including closed discussions involving its members, constituents, donors, board and employees.

### **9.11. Conflicts of Interest**

- To refuse to accept any payment or special consideration from any person or organization whose purpose in providing such a payment is to unduly influence the decisions, policies or actions of the IUCN, SSC or any of its SGs, TFs or APs or to interfere in the established decision-making process to accomplish that person/organisation's objectives.
- To refuse to accept or tolerate behaviour described in the previous bullet in others, and to disclose to the Commission Chair (or his/her designee), any potential conflict of interest, before engaging in any action or decision-making involving that conflict.
- Where for any reason, any SSC member finds that he/she cannot comply with this Code of Conduct, to notify the SSC Chair (or his/her designee), and from that point onward to refrain from claiming to be an SSC member. (IUCN, SSC and its SGs, TFs or APs will not criticise any member who takes this option, as long as that person continues to behave respectfully toward IUCN, SSC and its SGs, TFs or APs).

## 9.12. Response to Violations of this Code of Conduct

- Upon becoming aware of any violation of this Code of Conduct, to request that the person(s) engaging in the violation cease such behaviour.
- To report any continuing violations to the relevant Commission Chair (or his/her designee).
- If serving in a leadership capacity that authorises or mandates such action, to respond to reports of violations of this Code of Conduct promptly and appropriately, ensuring that appropriate notice of such response reaches all interested persons, and using discretion as to whether and how broadly dissemination is to be undertaken.
- SSC shall consider whether to adopt procedures implementing this Code of Conduct.

**Procedures pursuant above are attached as Annex 1. and will be conducted by an Inter-Commission Ethics Committee**

It is the responsibility of all SSC members to read, understand and abide by the above-described Code of Conduct. Action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in that member's removal from the SSC. The above-described Code of Conduct complements any other general provision on ethical behaviour adopted by IUCN.

## 10. SSC Awards

**10.1. Types of Award** There shall be four SSC Awards as follows:

- 10.1.1. The Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit.** This is the senior SSC award dating back to 1984, and honours Sir Peter Scott, Chair of SSC from 1963 to 1980. The award consists of a medal and a certificate. It is presented to individuals in recognition of exceptional service and leadership to species conservation over many years through their work with the SSC. The SSC Steering Committee decides recipients. Awards may be made at any time, but formal ceremonies will take place at least once per IUCN Quadrennium.
- 10.1.2. The George Rabb Award for Conservation Innovation.** This award honours Dr George Rabb, Chair of SSC from 1989 to 1996, and is given to individuals in recognition of their delivering transformational advances in conservation theory and practice, and specifically for outstanding innovation and creativity in species conservation in the context of the SSC. The award consists of a monetary prize of USD 5,000 and a certificate, given monetary resources are available for this. The SSC Steering Committee decides recipients. Awards may be made at any time, but formal ceremonies will take place once per IUCN Quadrennium.
- 10.1.3. The Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership.** This award, established in 2004 in honour of Professor Harry Messel,

former Chair of the SSC Crocodile Specialist Group, recognizes emerging leadership in the SSC, especially from individuals who have made a specific contribution to species conservation on the ground through their leadership, as part of an SSC Specialist Group or Task Force. The award consists of a monetary prize, lower than the previous Award and a certificate, given monetary resources are available for this. The SSC Steering Committee decides recipients. Awards may be made at any time, but formal ceremonies will take place once per IUCN Quadrennium.

- 10.1.4. *The SSC Chair's Citation of Excellence.*** The Chair of the Commission gives this award in recognition of outstanding contributions and performance to SSC. The award consists of a certificate. Recipients are decided by the Chair of the Commission. Awards may be made at any time.

## **10.2. *Nominations for Awards***

On at least one occasion during each IUCN quadrennium, SSC members will be invited to make nominations for the Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit, George Rabb Award for Conservation Innovation, and Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership. The Steering Committee will establish an independent Awards Committee to review the nominations and make recommendations for consideration by the Steering Committee.

## **11. General**

### **11.1. *Cooperation with Other Bodies***

The Commission may collaborate with and extend full cooperation to other organisations and bodies promoting objectives similar to those of the Commission, particularly other Commissions, Programmes and offices of the IUCN.

### **11.2. *Submission of Reports to the World Congress and IUCN Council***

- The Chair shall present a report at each ordinary session of the World Congress.
- The Chair shall present a report each year to the IUCN Council.

### **11.3. *Communicating on behalf of SSC and IUCN***

No member of the SSC shall issue public statements, correspondence, or communications purporting to represent the views, positions, or authority of the SSC or IUCN, unless explicitly delegated to do so by the Chair of the Commission, or in accordance with the delegation of authority outlined in the following documents:

- Terms of Reference, IUCN Species Survival Commission Specialist Group, Task Force and Committee Chairs 2026-2029
- Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders 2021-2024
- Terms of Reference for Members of the IUCN Species Survival Commission 2026-2029

Any communication made without such delegation shall be considered unauthorised and not representative of the SSC or IUCN.

**11.4. Amendments to these By-laws**

- No change may be made to these By-laws that is inconsistent with the IUCN Statutes and Regulations.
- These By-laws may be amended at any meeting of the Steering Committee.

## **Annex 1 – Further Guidance on the Code of Conduct and its Application by and within the SSC**

This Code of Conduct is adopted to provide guidance to the Species Survival Commission (SSC – its respective officers and members and any recognised sub-grouping (SG) within the Commission). It is intended to recognise the important and diverse roles that SSC members play, both in their private capacities and when acting on behalf of SSC or its SGs. If an SSC member’s conduct is perceived as inappropriate or unethical, that action and perception can be harmful to the individual, to the SG or SSC, to other SSC members, to IUCN, and to others.

### **1. Purpose and Scope of the Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to guide the actions of SSC, its leadership, and its members, particularly when acting on behalf of or in the name of IUCN, SSC and/or any SG. For purposes of this Code of Conduct, the phrase “the rights and responsibilities of SSC or any SSC member” shall include the rights and responsibilities of SGs within SSC. Similarly, where an SG has adopted governing documents of an SG in accordance with the SSC’s governing documents, they shall be accorded the same respect and obligation as the governing documents of the SSC. Where this Code of Conduct refers to actions or statements by, within or on behalf of SSC, it shall include such actions or statements by or on behalf of an SG; and where it speaks of assets or property of SSC, that reference shall include assets or property of an SG, without implying any independent right of the SSC to control such assets or property.

This Code of Conduct applies in addition to, and does not alter, any (collective or individual) terms of reference that have been or will be accepted by the IUCN Commissions or their members. It applies to all SSC members, including those in leadership positions within the Commission or any SG (collectively referred to herein as “SSC leadership”).

Nothing in this Code of Conduct shall alter or restrict the rights and responsibilities of SSC or any SSC member as set out in the governing documents of IUCN or any governing documents (constitution, charter, bylaws, statutes, guidelines, rules, procedures, *etc*) of the SSC. SSC shall ensure that its governing documents are consistent with the provisions of this Code of Conduct.

This Code of conduct provides one element of a broader effort to create and maintain a quality organisation that places the highest priority on ethical conduct. It will be reviewed periodically and amended as necessary.

### **2. Purpose and Impact of this Annex**

The following are additional guidance regarding particular aspects of some points within the Code of Conduct. They should not be taken as limitations on its coverage, but only as particular points on which one or more members have indicated that there may be a need for additional guidance.

### **3. Specific Elements of “Accountability”**

Among other aspects of accountability, the Code of Conduct’s commitment to “abide by

all relevant governing documents of IUCN and its Commissions” will essentially include the commitment, when transacting any business involving or on behalf of the IUCN, SSC or any SG, to engage in fair and ethical business and labour practices as defined internationally, and to avoid any activity that uses child labour.

#### **4. Specific Elements of “Ethical Leadership and Transparency”**

With regard to the commitment to “act as a fiduciary”, a member should consider the following to be included:

- control of the property of IUCN, SSC or of any SG,
- Authority regarding the distribution of information products of IUCN and/or SSC,
- access to its communication tools, or
- responsibility for the maintenance or use of its other mechanisms,

that member should act in all respects in the best interests of the body whose property, information, tools or mechanisms is so held, placing its interests and the collective interests of all components or members of that body above the member’s personal interests.

#### **5. Specific Elements of Mutual Respect for Colleagues, Peers, IUCN and Commissions”**

Some members have asked that this guidance should be clear that the following points are included within the general obligations specified in the Code of Conduct bullet points under this heading:

- To direct constructive criticism regarding SSC or any SG to the designated leadership of the SSC or SG, in the first instance, in accordance with any designated procedures that may have been adopted within SSC.
- To refrain from harassment, bullying or abuse of authority.
- To refrain from spreading (or allowing the spread of) negative gossip or defamatory statements about colleagues and peers.

#### **6. Specific Elements of “Representation”**

Where a member’s correspondence or other communications indicate that he/she may be acting, speaking or writing on behalf of or with the support of the IUCN, SSC or any SG, that member should make every reasonable effort to ensure that such correspondence or communication does not give the mistaken impression that he/she is acting or speaking on behalf of IUCN, SSC or any SG. Specifically, this point calls on the member to be aware of the implications of the use or inclusion of the name, logo or other formal indications of IUCN, SSC or of any SG, and to adhere to the SSC By-laws in this regard.

#### **7. Specific Elements of “Confidentiality”**

Within the members’ commitments with regard to confidentiality, all members specifically should maintain and safeguard the confidentiality of all collegial discussions, including

listservers, website discussions on restricted portals, and email exchanges, except with the express agreement of any individual whom a member might wish to quote, paraphrase or name.

### **8. Specific Elements of “Conflict of Interest”**

In complying with the Code of Conduct’s provision relating to conflict of interest, each member should:

- refuse to accept any payment or special consideration from any person or organisation whose purpose in providing such a payment is to enrich a single member or group of members unduly, or to unduly influence the decisions, policies or actions of the IUCN, SSC or any of its SGs; and
- refuse to undertake or finance any other activities that conflict with any of the provisions of this Code of Conduct.

Wherever a member is uncertain as to whether his/her interests relating to a particular action or decision might constitute a conflict of interest, that member should disclose the potential conflict to the Chair of the Commission (or his/her designee), before engaging in any action or decision-making which involves that conflict.

### **9. Procedures For Addressing Claims of Violation of the Code of Conduct**

Under IUCN’s Regulations, its Commissions are organisationally independent, each having a full right to adopt and/or revise its own By-laws; subject only to the limitation that “the by-laws shall conform to the Statutes and the Regulations of IUCN.” IUCN’s Statutes, Rules and Regulations include a careful balancing to ensure that Commissions retain this independence, but remain a closely linked integral part of the overall Union. Accordingly, the responsibility for the appointment and oversight of Commission members is clearly allocated to the Commission Chairs, who also determine what rules and requirements shall apply. Commission Chairs may address matters formally or informally, as they think fit. Accordingly, in SSC, initial responsibility for addressing allegations that a member of a Specialist Group, Task Force, Action Partnership or Red List Authority has violated the Code of Conduct has been specifically assigned to the Chairs and Co-Chairs of applicable Specialist Groups, Task Forces, National Species Specialist Group and Red List Authorities.

The provisions of the Code of Conduct under the heading “Response to Violations of this Code of Conduct” address the first level of response.

It is recognised, however, that in rare cases, controversy regarding such a claim may continue after the decision/action of the assigned responsible person. In those cases, an appeal process may be used:

- Within a reasonable time following such a decision, any person involved may refer the matter for guidance to the relevant Chair of the Commission or to any person that has been or may be designated as responsible for such matters.
- The person referring the matter must also inform all involved persons of the referral.
- At his/her discretion, the Commission Chair or designated person may offer guidance on the issue, taking into account the authority of the

person making the initial decision, as set out in the relevant terms of reference and/or in the governing documents of the SSC.

***10. In the event that any such disagreement should continue after the disposition of a referral to the Commission Chair or designated person:***

- any person may, within a reasonable time following referral to the Commission Chair or designee, request that the matter be referred to the designated IUCN Vice Presidents who constitute the Ethics Committee of the IUCN Council.
- In their discretion, that Committee may issue guidance regarding the matter, through the Commission Chair as a member of Council, taking into account the authority of the SSC's leadership, as set out in the relevant terms of reference and in the SSC's By-laws and any relevant non-conflicting bylaw, rule, regulation, statute, Council decision or Congress resolution of IUCN.