



# ASIAN SPECIES ACTION PARTNERSHIP

## Constitution

January 2017

IUCN SSC

## Asian Species Action Partnership

This document defines and clarifies operational relationships within the Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP), in particular the roles and composition of the Partnership, the Governing Council and the partners.

### Background

1. ASAP is an inter-institutional coalition convened by the IUCN Species Survival Commission to address the urgent conservation needs of the most threatened land and freshwater vertebrates of Southeast Asia. The status of ASAP with the SSC is defined in the By-laws of the IUCN SSC. The concept for the partnership was a response to the alarming results of a comprehensive IUCN Global Mammal Assessment in 2008. This was a programme to assess the conservation status of all the world's mammal species for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, and showed that Southeast Asia had by far the highest concentration of species on the edge of extinction of any region in the world.
2. A meeting of conservation organizations shortly thereafter clarified that similar patterns were shown by other hunted and traded groups (e.g. reptiles) in the region, and that a major cause was the explosion in urban markets for wildlife used as pets, meat and medicinal products over the last ten to thirty years. ASAP can be viewed as an emergency call with a species-specific response, aimed at focusing attention on a region that, without more serious and targeted conservation interventions, is likely to see the demise of much of its wonderful diversity of charismatic fauna.
3. By mobilizing support where it is urgently needed, drawing on the collaborative expertise of conservation practitioners, pooling resources and efforts to maximize efficiency, and galvanizing political will, ASAP hopes to minimize extinctions which could be imminent within the next two to three decades.
4. The first meeting of representatives of many interested organizations was held at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju, Korea, in September 2012. The aim of this introductory meeting was to explore the participants' views on whether or not a coalition could materially support the partners in reducing species' extinctions, and, if so, gather broad ideas on how it might practically achieve this. A second meeting was held at the CITES CoP16 meetings in Bangkok on Saturday, 9 March 2013.

## The Partnership

5. The mandate of ASAP is *'as a matter of urgency, to reverse the declines in the wild of Critically Endangered freshwater and land vertebrates in Southeast Asia'*.

6. The specific objectives of the partnership are:

- To strengthen direct conservation action for the recovery of ASAP species
- To enhance understanding and support, especially in Southeast Asian countries, for ASAP species conservation
- To increase political commitment regionally and globally for the conservation of ASAP species

7. Organizational entities that formally associate with ASAP are termed ASAP Partners.

8. ASAP Partners are organizations interested in implementing and / or funding conservation action for ASAP species. ASAP will consist of Partner organisations, some of which will have representatives on the ASAP Governing Council. Partnership will be open to NGOs, IUCN SSC Specialist Groups and Red List Authorities, donors, government agencies, academic and research institutions, conservation breeding centres and others as relevant. Organizations may join the Partnership subject to the approval, by consensus, of the Governing Council.

9. All Partners should have a demonstrated capability of implementing or financially supporting conservation action in Southeast Asia on ASAP species and a commitment to working in partnership with others. Organizations may leave the Partnership at any time, or may be removed from the Partnership by a two-thirds majority vote of the Governing Council in the event of active hindrance of ASAP, or activities considered to be seriously unethical.

## The Governing Council

10. The Governing Council is the primary decision-making body of ASAP, providing strategic direction to the operations and structure of the partnership. Composition of the Governing Council is defined as the following:

- The Governing Council of ASAP will be made up of individuals representing ASAP Partner organisations.
- The Governing Council will consist of up to nine individuals.
- The Governing Council members will initially serve a four-year term made up of voluntary offers to serve in the first instance.
- The Governing Council will put in place by 2020 a participatory process to ensure staggered rotation and allow the full Partnership to select the Governing Council.

- The ASAP secretariat host institution will have an automatic seat on the Governing Council.
- To ensure continued links with the IUCN as the convening institution, IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and IUCN Asia Regional Office (ARO) will both have an automatic seat on the Governing Council.
- Governing Council member organisations must meet two out of the three criteria for inclusion on the Governing Council:
  - i. contributions to the secretariat costs (cash/in kind),
  - ii. technical and / or practical expertise relevant to conserving ASAP species,
  - iii. raise the profile of ASAP species and influence policy.
- The Governing Council should include at least 2 National NGOs from Southeast Asia, ideally from different countries and should differ in their expertise to the greatest extent possible.
- Every effort will be made to provide balance in the Governing Council in the long-term regarding expertise, nationality, gender and age.

11. The Governing Council is responsible for setting strategy, reviewing the overall aims and objectives of the Partnership and approving the annual workplan and budget of the Secretariat. It also ensures that the Partnership's joint efforts and concerns are efficiently and effectively coordinated and executed. It sets and reviews the accountabilities and goals of the ASAP Secretariat.

12. The ASAP Governing Council will have a Chair and Deputy Chair. The Chair will be a senior level person, preferably from the region, appointed by the Chair of IUCN SSC on the advice of the Governing Council. The key roles of the Chair are to:

- Provide high-level representation of ASAP in the region with governments and donors.
- Chairing all Governing Council meetings in a way that promotes inclusive, constructive debate and effective decision-making.

The Governing Council may develop terms of reference for the Chair which further outline their role and responsibilities.

13. The Deputy Chair will be appointed by the Chair of IUCN SSC on the advice of the Governing Council and will also be the IUCN SSC member of the governing Council. The key roles of the Deputy Chair are to provide general oversight and coordination as follows:

- Ensure effective operation of the Governing Council and ASAP Partnership, and convene Partners to address particular issues as the need arises.
- Set the meeting agendas, in conjunction with the Chair and the Governing Council, primarily focused on strategy, oversight, performance and outputs.

The Governing Council may develop terms of reference for the Deputy Chair which further outline their role and responsibilities.

14. Decision-making in the Governing Council will be made by consensus where possible with the Chair facilitating the discussions where a decision is required. Should a consensus not be reached, decisions will be made by:

- If over 50% of the members are present, the Governing Council can decide whether the decision is suitable to be made on the spot or whether it needs full Governing Council voting through electronic means.
- In emergency situations, whoever can be reached in a reasonable amount of time will be authorized to make the decision. To implement this provision, the Chair will decide what constitutes an “emergency situation” and a “reasonable amount of time”.
- All non-consensus decisions will be made through the principle of majority vote wins. Votes can be made verbally on calls or in person, or via email.

15. The Chair and Deputy Chair will be able to serve a maximum of two four-year terms and will be responsible for ensuring an effective succession plan and transition phase. The Chair, with the support of the Deputy Chair, will be responsible for the following:

- Setting the style and tone of the Governing Council discussions to promote constructive debate and effective decision-making.
- Managing the Governing Council to ensure that adequate time is allowed for discussion of all agenda items (in particular strategic issues) and to ensure that complex or contentious issues are dealt with effectively.
- Ensuring that Governing Council members receive accurate, timely and clear information, in particular about ASAP performance.
- Ensuring appropriate delegation of authority from the Governing Council to the ASAP Secretariat.
- Ensuring that all working groups are properly established, composed and operated in conjunction with the ASAP Secretariat.

16. Members of the Governing Council agree to the following:

- Governing Council members will meet quarterly with at least one face-to-face meeting per year.
- Governing Council members must make all possible arrangements to participate in all calls and email discussions. Members that routinely do not participate in the activities of the Governing Council without good reason will be subject to removal.
- Governing Council members who are not able to attend the face-to-face meeting can send a representative in their place.

17. The Governing Council will work in consultation with the ASAP Secretariat to provide the primary direction to ASAP's main programme areas of work. Specifically, the Governing Council will:

- Set the strategy for ASAP and approve the annual workplan of the Secretariat.
- Establish Working Groups if they are deemed appropriate and necessary for the implementation of the ASAP strategy, and specific terms of reference will be developed for the Working Group on their creation. Working Groups may consist of Governing Council representative members, other ASAP Partners (in particular IUCN Specialist Group representatives) or other individuals with the relevant expertise and knowledge.
- Establish any other committees or advisory bodies that it deems to be needed, always with clear terms of reference.
- Provide guidance to the ASAP Secretariat to develop mechanisms to assess ASAP progress and suggest changes in directions or approaches as relevant.
- Encourage the integration of ASAP priorities within the respective organizations' activities/strategies as appropriate.
- Provide guidance to the ASAP Secretariat to develop and identify financial and logistical mechanisms to support the fulfilment of ASAP's goals and objectives.
- Identify key deliverables for ASAP and take joint responsibility for achieving those deliverables.
- Provide suggestions for modalities of communication within the Partnership.
- Contribute to the development of, and agree on, mechanisms to assess ASAP progress and suggest changes in directions or approaches as relevant.

### The Secretariat

18. The role of the Secretariat is to facilitate and support the work of the Partnership with oversight from the Governing Council. The Manager of the Secretariat will be appointed by the Governing Council. The Manager may then appoint other staff to positions that have been approved by the Governing Council. Specifically, the responsibilities of the Secretariat include the following:

- Run ASAP on a day-to-day basis, ensuring good and effective communication between all the components of ASAP.
- Ensure the implementation of the ASAP strategy as approved by the Governing Council.
- Prepare an annual workplan (for itself and the Partnership) that contributes to the implementation of the ASAP Strategy for approval by the Governing Council.
- Develop mechanisms to assess ASAP progress and suggest changes in directions or approaches as relevant.

- Submit progress reports, according to agreed schedules, to the Governing Council, ASAP Partners and donors.

#### Financial Arrangements

20. The Governing Council member organizations, with the support of the Secretariat, are responsible for ensuring that sufficient funds are secured to cover the costs of the ASAP Secretariat, including salaries and basic administrative and travel costs.

21. All Governing Council member organizations are expected to contribute to the working of the Partnership, either financially or in-kind or both, as determined by the Governing Council. In July of each year, Governing Council member organizations providing financial contributions will confirm their financial commitment for the subsequent financial year.

22. All international Governing Council member institutions are expected to meet their own costs of attending any face-to-face Governing Council meeting.

#### Duration

23. This Constitution shall be deemed to have taken effect on November 2016. It shall remain in force until 31 December 2020, unless it is dissolved or further extended with the agreement of the partners and the SSC Chair and Steering Committee.

#### Status of this Agreement

24. This Constitution is not a legally binding agreement. Its legal status is defined in the By-laws of the SSC.

#### Dissolution

25. The Partnership may be dissolved by the vote of two-thirds of the Partners, and with the agreement of the SSC Chair and Steering Committee. In the event that the Partnership ceases to exist, any unspent funds remaining in its accounts at the point of termination shall be reimbursed to the Governing Council member organizations or other Partners in proportion to their contributions in the preceding 36 months.