



Asian Species Action Partnership
Conserving species on the brink

IUCN SSC ASIAN SPECIES ACTION PARTNERSHIP

Constitution

IUCN SSC





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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 (SSC) 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 organisations 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 mobilising support where it is urgently needed, drawing on the collaborative expertise of conservation practitioners, pooling resources and efforts to maximise efficiency, and galvanising political will, ASAP aims to minimise extinctions which could be imminent within the next two to three decades.
4. The first meeting of representatives of many interested organisations 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, 9th 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 land and freshwater vertebrate species of Southeast Asia'*.

6. The specific objectives of the partnership are to:

- catalyse conservation action for ASAP species;
- increase financial resources to initiate and scale up conservation action;
- strengthen regional conservation capacity and leadership for ASAP species conservation; and
- raise the profile of ASAP species, Partners and the ASAP initiative, to maximise the effectiveness of targeted conservation action for ASAP species.

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

8. ASAP Partners are organisations 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, donors, government agencies, academic and research institutions, conservation breeding centres and others as relevant. Organisations may join the Partnership subject to the approval, by consensus, of the Governing Council.

9. All Partners should have a demonstrated capability of implementing, contributing to or financially supporting conservation action on ASAP species and a commitment to working in partnership with others. Organisations 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.

10. All IUCN SSC Species Specialist Groups and Red List Authorities that include ASAP species are formally associated with ASAP through the IUCN SSC. They are known as IUCN SSC Network Partners.

The Governing Council

11. The Governing Council is the primary decision-making body of ASAP, providing strategic direction to the operations and structure of the partnership. 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. Governing Council member organisations are expected to participate actively in meetings and discussions and must meet two out of the three following criteria for inclusion on the Governing Council:

- i. annual contributions to the secretariat costs (financial/in kind) ensuring sufficient funds are secured to cover operations to maintain a functioning ASAP Partnership;
- ii. technical and / or practical expertise relevant to conserving ASAP species;
- iii. active involvement in raising the profile of ASAP species and/or influencing relevant policy.

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

- Governing Council members will meet for quarterly meetings online including an annual meeting, face to face if possible, to review progress and set the workplan and budget for the next year.
- Governing Council members must make all reasonable arrangements to participate actively 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.
 - If the nominated representative of the Governing Council member organisation is unable to attend a meeting, an alternative individual may represent the organisation.

14. 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 ASAP secretariat host institution will have an automatic seat on the Governing Council. This seat has no term limit.
- To ensure continued links with the IUCN as the convening institution, IUCN Species Survival Commission and IUCN Asia Regional Office (ARO) will each have an automatic seat on the Governing Council. These seats will have unlimited terms.
- The Governing Council should include at least 2 National NGOs from Southeast Asia, ideally from different countries and which should differ from each other 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 etc.



15. ASAP Partner organisation representation and duration on the Governing Council:

- Each Governing Council organisation can nominate one individual from its organisation to represent it on the Governing Council. This individual should remain the same, as far as possible, throughout the organisation's term. If the nominated individual can no longer act as the organisation's representative, an alternative individual representative will be nominated by the member organisation, subject to approval of the Governing Council.
- Governing Council members who do not have unlimited terms will serve a four-year term, with the option to renew for one further four-year term, if they have satisfactorily fulfilled the criteria and obligations of a Governing Council member. The renewal for a second term is at the discretion of the Governing Council. If the Governing Council decides not to renew the second term, a new appointment will be made using the process outlined in paragraph 21. Once remaining Governing Council members have completed two four-year terms, they may not be re-appointed to the Governing Council until at least one year has passed. Following this, any re-appointments will follow the process as outlined in paragraph 21.

16. The ASAP Governing Council will have a 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 and will also be the IUCN SSC member of the Governing Council. The key roles of the Chair are to:

- Chair all Governing Council meetings in a way that promotes inclusive, constructive debate and effective decision-making.
- 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 Governing Council, primarily focused on strategy, oversight, performance and outputs.

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

17. The SSC Chair will appoint a Deputy Chair who may or may not be from the existing Governing Council membership, on the advice of the ASAP Chair and Governing Council members. The Deputy Chair will support the Chair with general oversight and coordination, and will stand in for the Chair in circumstances where the Chair is unable to attend or Chair a meeting. The Governing Council may develop terms of reference for the Deputy Chair which further outlines the position's role and responsibilities.

18. 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.

19. 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 the following mechanisms:

- 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 authorised 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.

20. 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 workplans 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 SSC 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 organisations' 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.

21. Selection of Governing Council member organisations

- The changeover in Governing Council membership takes place at the ASAP annual meeting, unless a Governing Council member organisation needs to retire between these meetings, in which case the changeover is effective as soon as the incoming Governing Council member can be confirmed.
- If the outgoing member is one of only two national bodies, the incoming member must also be a national body. If the outgoing member is an international body, or if it is a national NGO but there are more than two national bodies on the Governing Council at that time, the incoming member can be either an international or a national body.
- The existing Governing Council members, having sought advice from the secretariat and ASAP Partners, nominate an organisation and its designated individual representative as a replacement member to the Governing Council, with the express consent of that member, three months before the annual meeting. The identity of the nominee is communicated immediately to the Partnership, with a request for comments in the following one month.
- If any Partner(s) wish to nominate an alternative replacement member (organisation with specified individual representative), they may do so, with the express consent of that member, and at least two months before the changeover.
- Final decisions will be made at the discretion of the Governing Council and communicated to the Partnership.

22. If ASAP Partners have any concerns with a Governing Council member organisation, or its individual representative, they can raise these directly with the Governing Council Chair or through the ASAP Secretariat, for resolution.

Advisors

23. The Governing Council may appoint up to five individuals to act as ASAP Advisors who serve as non-voting members of the Governing Council. Advisors do not need to be from ASAP Partner organisations. The role of the Advisors will be flexible and specific roles will be outlined on appointment. Advisors may have a highly targeted role and set time period to deliver on a specific need, or may have a more general advisory role to the Governing Council and Secretariat. A general advisor will be expected to attend Governing Council meetings. An advisor appointed to assist on a



specific topic will not be expected to participate in Governing Council meetings except in situations which are directly related to their role. Advisors may serve a maximum of two four-year terms.

Partnership Development Council

24. The Governing Council may appoint up to five individuals to sit on a Partnership Development Council, working with the Secretariat and reporting to the Governing Council. The role of the Partnership Development Council would be to:

- Improve the long-term financial sustainability of ASAP and help raise funds;
- Create new funding streams for ASAP species conservation;
- Engage with influential and high net worth individuals, the private sector, and foundations to establish new partnerships for ASAP;
- Raise the profile of and support for the ASAP Partnership and ASAP species conservation outside traditional conservation channels.

The Secretariat

25. The role of the Secretariat is to facilitate and support the work of the Partnership with oversight from the Governing Council. The Director of the Secretariat will be appointed by the Governing Council. The Director 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

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



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

28. The Governing Council may meet its financial responsibility for the Secretariat through direct contributions, through identifying and securing third-party sources of funding, or through a mix of the two.

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

Duration

30. This Constitution shall be deemed to have taken effect on 30th November 2016 and updated on 5th May 2021. It shall remain in force until such time as it is dissolved by the SSC Chair and Steering Committee.

Status of this Agreement

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

Dissolution

32. 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 organisations or other Partners in proportion to their contributions in the preceding 36 months.