

## WAZA Population Management Goal Framework

*Approved by the WAZA Council on 8 October 2023*

### Preamble

As the voice of a global community of high-standard, conservation-based zoos and aquariums and a catalyst for their collaborative conservation action, WAZA promotes cooperation among leading zoos and aquariums, and national and regional associations, as well as with leading wildlife experts, academics, non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations, and universities.

Fundamental to our contributions to conservation and long-term zoo and aquarium populations is our expertise in professional and effective population management. The science and needs-based processes, skills, and tools developed by our community have had profound positive impacts on animal care, population management, and species conservation.

The WAZA Population Management Goal (PMG) commits to establishing the benchmark for population management across regional associations, thereby ensuring that:

1. Populations are managed professionally and effectively with due consideration for the welfare of animals in human care.
2. Persons, institutions, and associations charged with managing populations are sufficiently supported to undertake this critical task.

In support of the WAZA Strategy (2023-2027), the WAZA PMG will drive forward the WAZA Strategic Pillars of Transformative Leadership and Species Impact, will add value for Global Members, and further enhance our Reputation as integral partners in conservation.

Acknowledging the Convention on Biological Diversity's commitment to the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework and the goal to halt human induced extinction, WAZA affirms the critical roles played by leading zoos and aquariums as also highlighted in the IUCN SSC's IUCN SSC Position Statement on the Role of Botanic Gardens, Aquariums, and Zoos in Conservation. The PMG will be a significant resource for zoos and aquariums to further deliver on their essential mission activities.

### Purpose

The purpose of the WAZA PMG is to define the concept of professional and effective population management and to define what this community's role and commitment should be to ensure thriving populations, uniting WAZA's Regional Associations and our joint global members towards a joint mission.

### WAZA Population Management Goal Statement

*By 31 December 2027,*

- WAZA Regional\* associations must have a science-based population management framework that reflects the specific professional and effective elements of population management as approved by WAZA.
- WAZA Regional associations must require participation of its institutional members in their population management framework, such that there is institutional responsibility for effective and impactful population management.

*\* Without the oversight of a Regional association, this responsibility will be that of the operating National association.*

## WAZA Population Management Goal Framework

### 1. Goal-driven species selection

Population management activities are prioritised following a robust species assessment and selection process that identifies specific roles and goals for the population, and that considers the needs, feasibilities, and risks associated with managing the population.

- 1.1. The Regional Association is required to have in place and implement a population management framework that includes a species assessment process and that defines population management roles and goals to assure sound decision making regarding the management of species. The framework must cover the aspects of which species to manage, why to manage them, and how to manage them effectively.
- 1.2. The Regional Association will seek to assure that their species assessment and selection process considers and appropriately prioritises species conservation needs and refers to existing conservation guidelines (e.g., IUCN Ex situ guidelines [1], One Plan Approach [4], IUCN Translocation Guidelines [2]) when setting defined conservation roles for *ex situ* population management, when applicable.
- 1.3. The Regional Association verifies that their member institutions have an Institutional Species Plan (ISP) or similar plans which includes designated roles for the species they keep.
- 1.4. The Regional Association facilitates and encourages members to align their ISP with relevant Regional Species or Collection Plans (RSP/RCP), or other similar documents.

### 2. Sourcing, transfer, and destination policy

Population management activities are based on and support legal, sustainable, and ethical sourcing and placement of animals.

- 2.1. The Regional Association has a policy that defines the process and standards associated with sourcing, transfer, and destination of animals.
- 2.2. The Regional Association has a policy requiring their institutional members to source and place/transfer animals legally, sustainably, and ethically and that, at minimum, includes the following points:
  - 2.2.1. All local, national, regional, and international laws and regulations must be adhered to when acquiring, transporting, or placing animals. This applies to all laws and regulations in source, transit, and destination countries or areas.
  - 2.2.2. Sourcing and placement of animals must minimise adverse effects and not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity in the wild.
  - 2.2.3. The policy includes rules and procedures on due diligence, transparency, traceability, wild caught animals, release of animals into the wild, non-Member sources and destinations (including private entities), use of intermediate parties (e.g., dealers, brokers, transporters), commercialisation (i.e., selling and buying), and suitable housing and care.
- 2.3. The Regional Association has a disciplinary process in place to address situations where the sourcing, transfer, and destination policy is not adhered to by members.

### 3. Data, tools, and science

Population management activities are data-driven, science-based and use appropriate record-keeping and analytical tools to inform decision-making.

- 3.1. The Regional Association requires their members to keep detailed, accurate, and up to date records for the animals in their care.
- 3.2. The Regional Association and their Members apply the latest peer-reviewed science (e.g., in the field of small population biology) and will aim to use ZIMS for Studbooks for recording population management data and analytical tools like PMx and Vortex for their population management programmes.
- 3.3. The Regional Association must have a process to verify that their institutional members record and share data on, at least, the data points in the WAZA Committee for Population Management (CPM)'s *Recommendation on Baseline Institutional data entry points*.
- 3.4. The Regional Association's population management system and programme leaders use the data provided to monitor and analyse population trends and produce recommendations for effective population management to meet identified roles and goals.

#### 4. Animal Welfare

Population management activities seek to maximise opportunities for positive welfare experiences, and these opportunities must be considered during decision-making processes at both the regional and institutional levels.

- 4.1. The Regional Association verifies that animal welfare is considered as a factor in the development of Regional Species Plan, Institutional Species Plans, and the daily operation of population management programmes (e.g., (non-)breeding and transfer recommendations, and application of population management tools such as contraception, and culling).

#### 5. Engagement and participation by the members

Population management activities are in accordance with rules and procedures set by the Regional Association, that contribute to achieving set goals and that assumes cooperation and participation by members and other relevant stakeholders for these activities. These rules and procedures should also define the process for the coordination and collaboration of these activities and how these are implemented and evaluated.

- 5.1. The Regional Association must demonstrate that they have rules and procedures in place for its population management activities, including that these incentivise the implementation of population management recommendations by Members.
- 5.2. The Regional Association implements a process(es) to evaluate the programmes against its goals.
- 5.3. The Regional Association implements a process(es) to assess the performance of the population management leaders and programme participants.

#### 6. Capacity building and staff

Population management activities are appropriately resourced and supported by trained and capable staff.

- 6.1. The Regional Association must implement an appropriate and relevant training programme for all their programme leaders and other relevant positions.
- 6.2. The Regional Association's training approach includes soft skills (e.g., communication and negotiation) for programme leaders.
- 6.3. The training must include, at least, the set of *Baseline skills developed by WAZA CPM*.
- 6.4. The Regional Association must have an identified person to act as reference point for population management support (e.g., a member of the Association, a member of staff of one of the Associations, a chair of a relevant committee or an external consultant).

- 6.5. The Regional Association ensures the implementation of the population management system through an oversight structure (e.g., Taxon Advisory Group, Committee).
- 6.6. The Regional Association has implemented a mechanism to secure the institutions' commitment to support a programme leader.

#### References and key documents

1. IUCN SSC (2023). Position Statement on the role of botanic gardens, aquariums, and zoos in species conservation. IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), Gland, Switzerland. 8 pp.  
Available at: [IUCN Resources](#)
2. IUCN SSC (2014). Guidelines on the Use of Ex Situ Management for Species Conservation. Version 2.0. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Species Survival Commission.
3. IUCN SSC (2013). Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations. Version 1.0. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Species Survival Commission, viiii + 57 pp.
4. Thomas, S (2020) Social Change for Conservation: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Education Strategy; Barcelona, WAZA Executive Office, 89pp  
Barongi, R., Fischen, F. A., Parker, M. & Gusset, M. (eds) (2015) Committing to Conservation: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy. Gland: WAZA Executive Office, 69 pp.
5. Penning, M., Reid, G. McG., Koldewey, H., Dick, G., Andrews, B., Arai, K., Garratt, P., Gendron, S., Lange, J., Tanner, K., Tonge, S., Van den Sande, P., Warmolts, D. and Gibson, C. (Eds) 2009. Turning the Tide: A Global Aquarium Strategy for Conservation and Sustainability. World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Bern, Switzerland.