



# IUCN SAVE OUR SPECIES (SOS) GRANTS OPERATIONAL MANUAL

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>CFO</b>	Chief Financial Officer
<b>CfP</b>	Call for Proposals
<b>COI</b>	Conflict-of-Interest
<b>CR</b>	Critically Endangered
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>EN</b>	Endangered
<b>ESMS</b>	Environmental and Social Management System
<b>GPOU</b>	Global Programme Operations Unit
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of nature
<b>SOS</b>	Save Our Species
<b>SSC</b>	Species Survival Commission
<b>TAG</b>	Technical Advisory Group
<b>VU</b>	Vulnerable
<b>The IUCN Red List</b>	the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Operational Manual* sets forth the procedures for the implementation of the IUCN Save Our Species grant-making programme.

The *Operational Manual* has been conceived and should be used as a living document that will be periodically reviewed and revised as necessary, based on the experience gained. Revisions may be developed to respond to specific requirements that may emerge.

Any operational manuals developed at the express request of (the) donor(s) for specific initiatives shall derive from this *Operational Manual* and adopt the same principles and procedures set forth herein, unless explicitly mentioned otherwise.

This document introduces the Save Our Species programme, its management and governance structures and its grant making processes and procedures.

The key users of the *Operational Manual* are the IUCN Species Conservation Action Unit Secretariat *herein referred to as the Secretariat*, any appointed Technical Advisors, and participating funding agencies.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## IUCN

IUCN's vision is *"a just world that values and conserves nature."*

IUCN's mission is *"to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."*

Since its creation in 1948, IUCN has adhered and continues to adhere to the principle that nature conservation and human progress are not mutually exclusive but, rather, that economic and social development can be achieved while respecting nature and the environment, with nature serving as one of the pillars of sustainable development. As such, it is considered that:

- The protection of species and habitats should be an integral part of sustainable development policy and practice.
- The social ramifications of conservation need to be taken into account, in particular the role of women in natural resource management and the value of indigenous peoples' knowledge about their natural environment.
- Businesses need to become active partners in the rational use of natural resources and therefore take measures to reduce the impact of their operations on the environment.

Through its Commissions and Specialist Groups bringing together over 10,000 experts, IUCN has the advantage of being able to draw on a large and diverse pool of species conservation experts. This broad network enables IUCN's Species Conservation Action Unit to adapt project funding to the most urgent conservation needs, while simultaneously addressing issues requiring specialist knowledge.

The grant-making programmes of the Species Conservation Action Unit, including the Save Our Species Programme, have become critical tools to further IUCN's vision and contribute very directly and usefully to the achievement of IUCN's mission, because:

- They allow for the direct provision of support to, and engagement of, members and other partners.
- The support provided to members and partners typically involves capacity-building and organisational development, in addition to conservation action.

- They allow for a direct and concrete application of IUCN's knowledge and expertise to conservation and sustainable development action.
- They increase IUCN's visibility and legitimacy as an actor delivering targeted impactful conservation results on the ground.

## IUCN Save Our Species (SOS) Programme

IUCN Save Our Species was set up in 2010 to ensure the long-term survival of threatened species, their habitats, and the people that depend on them. IUCN Save Our Species channels funds from donors to existing frontline conservation actors working to protect from extinction some of the world's most threatened species, i.e. those listed as Vulnerable (VU), Endangered (EN), or Critically Endangered (CR) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

IUCN Save Our Species is administered by a Secretariat based in IUCN Headquarters in Switzerland, with staff in IUCN regional or country offices as relevant. It harnesses the power of the largest network of species experts in the world – the IUCN Commissions and Specialist Groups – to evaluate project applications and provide technical advice to grantees throughout the course of a project's implementation. Working with this network gives IUCN Save Our Species a unique capability to identify and select high quality projects according to a clear set of conservation criteria.

The global Save Our Species programme aims to:

- develop initiatives that provide funding for Threatened Species Grants and Conservation Action Grants to achieve targeted and impactful conservation goals.
- provide Rapid Action Grants to address emerging conservation issues where an immediate response is required.
- provide Research Grants to early scientists in their research to improve knowledge on species or themes.
- monitor project implementation and evaluate project outcomes to assess conservation success and the impact of investments.
- provide best-in-class project management, including through the application of the IUCN Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) to avoid and minimise negative environmental and social impacts.
- raise awareness about the extinction crisis and the importance of on-the-ground conservation action to address this crisis, emphasising conservation success stories, and enabling learning from conservation failures.

- mobilise innovative financing, specifically through private sector engagement, with the aim to annually increase the total amount of funding allocated to species conservation.

## The IUCN Value Proposition

- IUCN has extensive expertise (staff in countries, regions and global programmes, expert commissions and membership) and knowledge that can be mobilised in support of grant-making mechanisms.
- IUCN's ground presence is able to enhance the quality of projects through technical assistance in design and through access to co-financing.
- IUCN's ability to combine grant management capacity with technical expertise has also been proven in other sectors to be effective.
- IUCN is in the position to link field activities supported by the grant-making mechanism with policy processes because of its role in conservation policy and of its close relationship with government and government agency members.
- IUCN has robust governance system in the form of policies and procedures on Conduct and Professional Ethics, Programme Evaluations, Risk Management, anti-Fraud, Environmental and Social Management System, among others.
- IUCN has established project accountability systems and processes that include monitoring and management systems that guarantee the effectiveness and efficiency of grant making mechanisms.

## Strategic Direction

The Save Our Species Programme currently works towards the following Strategic Directions:

- Support conservation action for threatened species, i.e. those that are listed as Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), or Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (hereinafter "the IUCN Red List"), with a target of at least 1,000 threatened species supported through grants by 2030.
- Address globally recognised conservation priorities that need additional investment in on-the-ground conservation action.
- Focus on the primary threats to species globally.
- Improve the integrity and connectivity of critical freshwater, marine/coastal, forest, savannah, and important landscapes.



- Support capacity building of civil society organisations working on the frontlines of conservation.
- Engage with the private sector and support them to increase their investments in species conservation.
- Increase public awareness of the extinction crisis, leading to increased public involvement in and support for species conservation through effective communication.

## Indicators of Success: The Pillars

All Save Our Species initiatives will be based on the following pillars, which will define the performance indicators:

- Protecting targeted species, their prey, and the ecosystem from the main threats.
- Preserving their habitats, including core habitats and corridors, and supporting human populations that co-exist with the species through avoiding conflicts.
- Providing local communities dependent on the targeted species habitats with sustainable income sources and alternative livelihoods.
- Supporting enabling conditions that collectively strengthens conservation initiatives and contribute to the long-term success of **species** and **habitat** protection and the **communities** that rely on them.

Grants in the portfolio of the Save Our Species programme will be assessed using a selection of relevant indicators based on these pillars as defined in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. These indicators will provide easy references to the IUCN Secretariat, donors, and grantees about the impact of each grant.

## 2. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

### Programme Structure

#### IUCN Save Our Species Structure

The principal Save Our Species governance and management structure consists of the **Secretariat** and a **Technical Advisory Group** established for each Save Our Species initiative. Each of these bodies has specific tasks, summarised below.

#### The Secretariat

The Secretariat manages and administers the programme. Its tasks are:

- supervising the implementation of all Save Our Species activities.
- developing the overall programme of initiatives and portfolio of projects.
- developing and updating the Operational Manual and supporting documents for calls for proposals (CfP) including, the Guidelines for Applicants, application forms, instructions for reviewers, review forms, due diligence questionnaire, Environmental Social and Management Systems (ESMS) questionnaire, applicant declaration form, and any other supporting documents that may be required.
- monitoring and reporting, including by conducting field visits, to ensure that all Save Our Species activities and financial management are carried out in compliance with IUCN policies and procedures and according to the Operational Manual as well as any rules and regulations that may be imposed by a donor.
- creating and managing an online Grant Management Portal for the submission of applications, review of concept notes and proposals, and review of technical and financial reports from grant recipients.
- developing terms of reference for, and recruiting, the Technical Advisory Group members for each initiative.
- launching CfPs and disseminating them widely to ensure prospective applicants are aware of funding opportunities.

- setting up a fair and transparent review of the application process, as well as reviewing applications submitted in response to CfPs.
- selecting applications for Rapid Action Grants and Research Support Grants that may be recommended for funding.
- obtaining donor approval of the shortlisted applications recommended for funding.
- issuing and managing grant agreements.
- reporting to donors (both technically and financially) on the implementation of initiatives.
- supporting annual audits and programme evaluations.
- developing international promotion, communication and outreach materials.
- documenting the lessons learnt, thereby facilitating knowledge sharing and the transfer of best practices using the IUCN PANORAMA solutions platform.
- due to the global nature of its work, IUCN Save Our Species collaborates with IUCN Regional Offices. Depending on the initiative, Save Our Species staff may be recruited in a Regional (ideally) or Country Office, or appointed through a mutually agreed adjustment of the role of existing staff in the IUCN Office concerned:
  - For Save Our Species initiatives focused on one particular region, the preference would be to recruit a Save Our Species Programme Officer from that region who shall be based in an IUCN Office in that region;
  - For Save Our Species initiatives covering more than one region, one or more Save Our Species Programme Officers may be recruited (depending on the amount of funding available), who may be based in one or all the regions concerned. Alternatively, the Save Our Species Programme Officer may be based in IUCN Headquarters;
  - For Save Our Species initiatives that are global in their scope, the Save Our Species Programme Officer will be based in IUCN Headquarters;
  - Save Our Species Programme Officers also ensure important proximity to the grantees and are available to provide information and explanation about the initiative. They organise and conduct monitoring missions, support the development and capacity building of grantees, review the progress reports and final reports submitted by grantees, and communicate about the initiative, liaise with IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat based at the headquarters, and coordinate regional components of the Save Our Species initiative.

## The IUCN Save Our Species Technical Advisory Group

For every initiative of IUCN Save Our Species, a Technical Advisory Group composed of independent experts from the IUCN Commissions and other partners will be set up to provide technical advice to the Secretariat to guide and support the implementation of the initiative.

The Technical Advisory Group will have geographic representation from the target region(s) of the Save Our Species initiative, as well as relevant thematic (species, major conservation challenges, etc.) expertise.

The Technical Advisory Group assists and advises the Secretariat in its task of reviewing, evaluation, and final selection of Threatened Species Grant awards for each call for proposals under the relevant initiative. Its primary function is to provide technical expertise and knowledge of the conservation needs of the region and species targeted by the initiative, during all aspects of project selection and evaluation.

The Technical Advisory Group is expected to assist the Secretariat with:

- evaluating proposals and making a final selection of proposals recommended for funding.
- providing through the Secretariat, technical direction to grantees by making recommendations about the technical strengths and weaknesses of shortlisted applications.
- providing support in the design of CfPs, i.e. identifying priorities and agreeing the focus of each CfP released as part of a specific Save Our Species initiative to ensure it is strategically aligned to those priorities, including the refinement of eligibility and/or selection criteria for project proposals.
- identifying existing conservation action plans and supporting the identification of priorities for the development of new or updated conservation action plans for the target species of the initiative concerned.
- supporting the Secretariat in refining the application review process, including the review forms and procedures.
- provide guidance and support in organising events such as workshops, seminars and webinars at the regional and national levels.
- support the compilation and publication of studies and knowledge products related to the programme.
- support strategic capacity-building activities and help identify the best practices and lessons learned from the projects to be shared with others and expanded in the future.

- participate in learning events and consultative meetings organised by the Secretariat (virtual or in person) to advocate project-level strategic achievements and promote IUCN's and the donor's positive contribution to tiger conservation.
- join and support, when applicable, policy and advocacy events at the national, regional, and international levels related to the programme agenda.
- recommend other members to be invited to the Technical Advisory Group.

To ensure fairness, transparency, and credibility in the selection process the Technical Advisory Group members are required to sign and adhere to the 'Conflict of Interest' Policy (Annex 1) before any review of applications.

Meetings of the Save Our Species Technical Advisory Groups will be conducted periodically as needed.

## Programme Monitoring

Programmatic monitoring is designed to track and assess performance and impacts at three levels:

- **The level of Save Our Species programmes**, using the Monitoring and Evaluation framework as the primary monitoring instrument, aggregating data to enable an assessment of the impact.
- **The level of thematic initiatives**, aggregating data from individual projects to enable an assessment of the impact a given initiative is having on its focal theme, as well as an assessment of the success of the initiative in achieving its strategic objectives.
- **The level of individual projects**, collecting data using the Monitoring and Evaluation framework based on standard indicators pre-selected by the grantee at the time of submitting their application for funding, and reporting every six months as part of a technical progress report.

Monitoring the initiatives will be conducted annually and cumulatively to assess the programme's overall contributions to addressing the species extinction crisis. The metrics to be evaluated are as follows:

### The status of target threatened species

- The number and proportion of target species whose status, based on IUCN's Red List criteria has (i) improved, (ii) remained the same, or (iii) declined over the term of its dedicated project and over the duration of the initiative. The Secretariat may also choose

to monitor an entire taxonomic group or target threatened species within vulnerable ecosystems.

## Representation

- **Taxonomic:** The number and proportion of different higher taxa at the level of orders with dedicated projects each year over the initiative duration.
- **Biogeographic:** The number and proportion of different biomes, biogeographic realms (Neotropic, Afrotropic, Palearctic, nearctic, Australia, Oceania, Indo-Malayan) and ecoregions with projects each year and over the initiative duration.
- **Financial allocation:** The amount of funding going to different countries and regions each year and over the initiative duration.
- **Types of grantees:** Number and proportion of different types of project grantees (international, national or local NGOs, scientific institutions, local communities, Indigenous Peoples other civil society actors) with projects for each year and over the initiative duration.

Species-level monitoring will be guided by the protocols recommended by the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC). Simple metrics globally applicable to all regions, species, taxonomic groups, and conservation situations will be used, at a minimum, to measure the conservation impact of Save our Species projects. These metrics should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound. In addition to the standard metrics that will be applied to all projects, the Secretariat will work with each grantee to identify a set of monitoring metrics that are informative, meaningful, practical and cost-effective for their particular context.

Target species will be evaluated at two levels:

### 1. Global population

The status (IUCN Red List categories and criteria) and estimated trajectory of the species' global population based either on available information supplemented by project data or entirely on project-generated information if the project encompasses the global population.

The degree to which the Save our Species project activities have contributed to the stabilisation of, or improvement in, the global populations will be estimated at the end of each project.

This will be elaborated within a status category based on relevant Red List criteria (species population size and trend, area of occurrence, condition of critical habitat, threats).

## 2. Target population

The status and estimated trajectory (using Red List definitions and criteria) of the species' population targeted by the project will be assessed either wholly or in part, based either on available information supplemented by project data or estimated data, or on project-generated information if the project encompasses the entire population.

Regional populations may be assessed, where relevant.

Target populations must be carefully defined during the proposal stage. A species' target population will, at a minimum, be monitored using estimates of the following metrics:

- The number of individuals
- The population trend
- Critical habitat
- Direct threats
- Enabling conditions

## Financial Management

The International Union for Conservation of nature (IUCN) oversees internal control and financial management in accordance with its internal financial policies and procedures as well as in Swiss Law and applicable funding sources guidelines. The Finance Department at IUCN's Headquarters manages IUCN's global financial operations. It oversees the budget, daily accounting activities, regulatory compliance, and field office accounting. The Global Programme Operations Unit (GPOU), a part of the Finance Team, supports the financial management of the Save Our Species grant-making programmes.

Secretariat staff work closely with the Global Finance Group at IUCN Headquarters. The IUCN Chief Financial Officer, or his/her delegate, will oversee the financial function of the Secretariat, including financial planning and modelling, preparation of financial statements and other donor reports, managing the annual external audits, the Annual Spending Plan, revenue and cash management, and financial performance reporting for the Save Our Species programmes.

### Financial Systems

IUCN uses NAV software customised by Serenic as its accounting software. IUCN's Chart of Accounts includes unique dimensions for funding sources, units, project codes, activity

codes and grant numbers among others. In addition, dimensions are available for tracking specific project results or activities. IUCN has established a series of donor and grant numbers to track Save Our Species funds. The Secretariat will track the full lifecycle of a grant including all applications, rejections, plus the proposals through project implementation to the eventual closeout.

## **Due Diligence**

IUCN is committed to ensuring that it exercises an appropriate and responsible standard of care, competence, and quality in the management, administration, and implementation of all its activities. Where IUCN works together with partners, sub-recipients, and grantees in the implementation of its activities, IUCN recognises that as part of good business practice and risk management it is important to evaluate the organisation it may fund, and accordingly undertake appropriate due diligence of prospective partners, sub-recipients, and grantees. This is intended to help ensure that these organisations have adequate systems and structures in place to exercise the standard of care, competence, and quality required by IUCN and its donors, and that any potential risks to IUCN are detected early and mitigated.

The information gathered by conducting due diligence shall be used to provide management recommendations regarding the assessed capacity of the organisation to adequately manage and administer the proposed level of funding to be provided by IUCN.

IUCN Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and/or his/her delegate, shall be responsible for the IUCN Sub-recipient Due Diligence Procedures.

The standard "IUCN Due Diligence Assessment Form" shall be used to conduct due diligence assessment on all sub-recipients.

## **Procurement**

All procurement to be undertaken in the framework of grant-making will be made according to "IUCN Procurement Policy and procedures for recipients of grant funding from IUCN". The policy is to be applied both at the level of the grant-making mechanism itself, and at the level of the individual projects.

For the projects implemented by grantees, the use of the IUCN policy on procurement of goods and services is referenced in the grant agreement. In addition, IUCN ensures that grantees are fully aware of, and informed about, the policy on procurement of goods and services to be applied during project implementation.

Procedures for assessing procurement compliance include a thorough budget review during project design, and procurement reviews as an integral part of the review of submitted financial reports as defined in the reporting schedule. Procurement review is also a part of site visits where relevant.



## **Audits**

IUCN undergoes a statutory audit annually. Additionally, specific programmes may have programme-specific audits that include audits of its individual projects, audits of field offices, and audits of grant recipients.

### **IUCN Record Keeping**

Records associated with financial transactions are kept at IUCN Headquarters according to IUCN's Record Maintenance Policy, which requires complete documentation to be maintained for no less than ten full years after the transaction, which the document supports.

### **IUCN internal audit and Oversight**

IUCN's Oversight Unit includes an internal audit function which may conduct specific programme audits of performance, economy, and efficiency in relation to achieving the objectives of the initiatives.

## **Bank Accounts**

Bank accounts used for Save Our Species initiatives' funds are tracked by a ledger account in IUCN's accounting system. All donor contributions in a funding currency are transferred directly to those accounts. Funds to external grantees are disbursed directly from those accounts. Funds for project needs are disbursed on a schedule, based in accordance with projected budget needs. IUCN's Finance Department will reconcile the Save Our Species Programmes funds monthly.

## **Other Guiding Policies and Principles**

[IUCN Anti-Fraud Policy](#)

[Environmental and Social Management System Framework](#)

[Grievance Mechanism](#)

[Protection from Sexual Exploitation Abuse Harassment](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Code of Conduct and Profession Ethics](#)

## 3. GRANT-MAKING FOR THE SAVE OUR SPECIES PROGRAMME

### Types of grants

#### IUCN Save Our Species – Threatened Species Grants

Threatened Species Grants provide funding for threatened species or taxonomic groups (groups of related species) primarily IUCN Critically Endangered species, Endangered species, and, in cases where immediate investments make sense to avoid declines, Vulnerable species.

Key criteria for allocation of Threatened Species Grants are:

- projects that seek to address the underlying loss of species decline,
- projects with a focus on improving the status of the target threatened species - Vulnerable species will be accepted in cases where immediate investments are necessary to avoid rapid declines,
- projects that include aspects of human-wildlife conflict,
- projects that include a component of engaging indigenous peoples or local communities,
- be a local or national civil society organisation (CSOs), a local or an international non-governmental organisation (NGOs), and
- projects must implement concrete conservation activities on the ground.

#### IUCN Save Our Species – Rapid Action Grants

Rapid Action Grants provide immediate funding to address conservation crises and situations that require early or rapid action to respond to situations that could negatively affect the status of threatened species in a rapid and significant way, and to initiate local capacity-building. Rapid Action Grants will be made available in a timely manner at the discretion of the IUCN Secretariat.

The projects must meet the following criteria for allocation of Rapid Action Grants:

- Projects must directly address a crisis or emergency situation for threatened species.

- The proposed intervention must have moderate to high likelihood to improve the situation.
- Grantees must demonstrate proven capacity to implement proposed activities, responsibly manage projects, and meet IUCN's Environmental and Social Management Safeguards.

Eligible conservation activities for Rapid Action Grants include, but are not limited to:

- investigation of sudden new threats to species in specific locations (diseases, pollutions, stranding, oil spill, anarchic development).
- rapid support for specific actions aiming at preserving highly threatened species (targeted support for protected areas, meeting to agree last chance emergency measures, purchase of crucial equipment to protect specific threatened species).
- urgent surveying and monitoring in the face of development.

## **IUCN Save Our Species – Research Support Grants**

Research Support Grants will be provided to young and early scientists for their research to improve knowledge on threatened species and their role in natural ecosystems. These grants intend to provide budding researchers the opportunity to develop into world class conservationists. Presently, maximum grant size for Research Support Grants is EUR 7'000 for a maximum duration of 12 months. Applicants must be enrolled in a curriculum at an academic institution in order to apply.

## **Grant Application Eligibility Criteria**

Proposals must meet the following basic eligibility criteria, with the caveat that these may vary depending on the specifics of the call for proposals:

- Grants are generally open to international and national NGOs, individuals, Community-based organisations, and administrators of protected areas and collaborations are highly encouraged with governmental partners.
- Where applicable, projects must implement concrete conservation activities in the field and must fulfil one or more objectives of the programme.
- Projects must focus on improving the status of threatened species and their critical habitats.

- Projects are based in eligible countries, as stated in the Guidelines for Applicants published as part of the CfP.
- Grant funding will not be used for the purchase of land and water rights, involuntary resettlement of people or activities that negatively affect physical cultural resources, including sites having archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious, or unique natural values, or those important to local communities.
- Grantees must not have a conflict of interest in applying for the call - a conflict of interest can consist of, but is not limited to, economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest.
- Grantees cannot be current employees of, or close relatives of, IUCN employees (i.e. immediate family members).
- Co-funding must be provided where it is deemed necessary (required for the IUCN Save Our Species Threatened Species Grants).
- Grants cannot exceed the threshold indicated in the Guidelines for Applicants.

## Calls for Proposals (CfPs)

### Launch Process

IUCN Save Our Species works on the basis of CfPs. Each initiative under the programme will issue a certain number of calls that will be coordinated by the Secretariat. The application process is facilitated through the IUCN Grants Portal. As and if the need arises, the Secretariat may issue *corrigendums* to the Guidelines for Applicants to communicate any changes in scope and timelines while the call for proposals is still open.

The procedures below will be followed for each call.

The Secretariat may provide limited technical guidance to grant applicants as part of the proposal preparation phase. In addition, support may be provided to applicants in response to questions on the application process and clarification on the guidelines.

Questions (received via email and the Grants Portal help section) and their answers are also published under the FAQ section of the Grants Portal. While responses will be provided directly to the applicant, the FAQ section will be updated on a weekly basis as relevant during the application process.

Project proposals must be completed using the prescribed templates for the respective grant types as indicated above. Required elements of the proposal include:

- Size of the grant,
- Statement about background and experience,
- Clear link to the Save Our Species Strategic Framework, Save Our Species strategic direction(s), SSC species priorities, species profiles, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, where relevant,
- Clear statement of the project purpose,
- Description of the main project outputs,
- Targeted performance indicators for both purpose and output levels,
- Assessment of Safeguard Policies,
- Description of stakeholder participation and consultation,
- Explanation of external risks and sustainability issues,
- Project budget, and
- Project timeline.

Prior to final approval of a grant, a completed Logical Framework, a Monitoring and Evaluation plan that highlights key performance measure to be met over time, is required.

## **Dissemination**

Communication around CfPs is disseminated widely using various communication channels, including, but not limited to, IUCN social media channels, the Save Our Species website, the Save Our Species newsletter, IUCN Digest, through relevant IUCN regional and country offices.

The information on the CfPs will include instructions on how to submit an application using the IUCN Grants Portal. 'Guidelines for Applicants' and relevant application templates will also be made available.

Depending on project relevance, the documentation could be available in English, French or Spanish.

## **Timelines**

The timeline for the grant making process is defined for every initiative.

An approximate timeline is as follows:

- The CfP is open for approximately 8 weeks.
- After the CfP closes, the Proposal Review takes place.
  - The Secretariat conducts admissibility and eligibility checks (1-2 weeks).
  - Reviewers review eligible proposals (several weeks).
  - The Secretariat conducts due diligence on the proposals, the total review process takes 6 to 8 weeks.
- The Secretariat informs applicants of the proposal outcome, i.e. whether they were unsuccessful or shortlisted.
  - If shortlisted projects require revisions or have comments which need addressing, the applicant may be asked to submit a revised application (several weeks).
- Once any requested revisions are complete, the Secretariat sends the Grant Agreement and a request for a budget forecast to the grantee.
- The grantee signs the Grant Agreement and submits a budget forecast and an invoice for payment of the first instalment.
- The Secretariat pays the first instalment and grantee starts implementation of their project.
  - Subsequent payments made to grantees are based on estimated spending as reported in financial forecasts in interim reports as well as previous actual spending levels.
  - A final 10% payment is withheld until the final technical and financial reports are validated.
- For applications that are unsuccessful either because they are not admissible, not eligible, or were not shortlisted for funding, an email response is shared with the applicant advising them of the status of their application and indicating the reasons why the application was not successful.

## Selection Process

### Selection Criteria

In order for the Save our Species programme to have maximum impact, the selection of projects will be guided by the following criteria:

- The Technical Advisory Group reviews the shortlisted proposals and is guided by a selection criterion for Threatened Species Grants (Annex 2), the Rapid Action Grants (Annex 3) or Research Support Grants (Annex 4), as appropriate.
- Alternate processes for the selection of projects factoring in donor requirements may also be considered.
- Projects must clearly focus on one or more Save Our Species strategic directions.
- The main objectives of the project must be fulfilled within the lifespan of the funding provided.
- Applicants must argue persuasively or demonstrate that their project will be able to improve the conservation status of threatened species and their critical habitats in a measurable and biologically meaningful way and be feasible to implement.
- Applicants must demonstrate capacity to manage and implement successful projects.
- Projects with a socioeconomic or environmental management component must have in place measures that contribute to the mitigation of the impacts of environmental change, such as climate change.
- All projects must be scientifically robust and must be underpinned by scientifically derived evidence that can be measured.

The following types of projects will be viewed favourably (not all the below points are relevant for all grant types):

- Projects slated to provide benefits to **multiple threatened species** and their critical habitats.
- **Collaborative projects** that are implemented by, or work closely with, local actors.
- Projects that focus on underfunded and “**neglected**” **species**. These are threatened species and higher taxonomic groups that currently receive minor conservation attention and investment due to their lacking “charismatic” features, lack of knowledge or awareness about the species. Taxonomic groups include plants, lichen, fungi, invertebrates, smaller vertebrates, and most freshwater and many marine species.

- Projects **combining species conservation with socio-economic development** of communities living in threatened species landscape.
- Projects focusing on **alternative livelihoods** with a clear link to threatened species conservation.
- Projects that also **have a legacy** that continues beyond the lifespan of the funding programme. Measurable indicators need to be put into place within the project plan in order to achieve this.

After the close of any CfPs, the Secretariat maintains a record of all applications received.

## Extension of Calls

In some cases, it can be chosen to extend the calls for proposal. This can happen if the number of proposals received was not sufficient to disburse the entire funding envelope, or if it is believed that the received proposals do not reflect the broad areas meant to be funded. For example, if the proposals skew heavily to one species, one country, or one geographical area, or are not representative of the problems we would like to address or represent a narrow subsection of potential grantees. In such cases, the call will be extended by several days or weeks, and the extension will be publicised via the usual media dissemination channels.

## Negotiation Phase

The Secretariat will, during this phase, compile all reviews on individual proposals and request any changes to be made by the applicant. They will assist applicants in addressing questions raised during the application review process. The Secretariat will also perform a financial review and initial safeguards screening that will include a Programmatic and Financial Risk Assessment; and discuss any questions with the applicant. The Programmatic Risk Assessment and Financial Risk Assessment determine the proper level of monitoring and reporting required for the applicant. Any proposal that does not meet this screening's requirements will either be rejected, or a revised proposal will be requested from the applicant. A revised proposal may require a reduction in budget, but an increased budget above the allowable limit of the specific CfP is not allowed.

The Secretariat, having performed a financial risk assessment, by assessing the due diligence questionnaire completed by the applicant during the application phase, will build in risk mitigation measures in the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. The Secretariat prepares a draft Grant Agreement for submission for legal review and internal approval, to



ensure compliance with IUCN requirements. Once approved, the Grant Agreement is sent to the applicant so they may fill in some highlighted parts (e.g. legal name of organisation, bank account details) if they accept the terms of the grant.

The Grant Agreement will include a time-bound programme of work, which will be linked to payment schedules. Upon signature of the Grant Agreement by both parties, the Secretariat will book the commitment into the Grant Management Tracking System. Management tasks include monitoring of technical and financial performance, tracking progress and completion of deliverables, reviewing payment requests, conducting site visits and ensuring adequate follow up on any issues that arise.

The financial and technical monitoring conducted by the Secretariat is dependent on the risk ratings associated with the grantee as per the financial risk assessment.

Technical and financial reports are required to be submitted in accordance with the reporting schedule as defined in the Grant Agreement. While oversight is provided by the Species Conservation Grants Coordinator, the reports are analysed and validated by the Programme Officers. Any performance issues will be discussed between the relevant Secretariat staff and the grantee.

## 4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The progress and management efficacy of individual projects will be monitored by the Secretariat in collaboration with grantees. Annual progress towards achieving project goals, benchmark, and project implementation and financial management requirements will be part of the monitoring.

Species-level monitoring for target populations will be required for most projects except in cases where the project duration is not long enough to make this practical. The Secretariat will have primary responsibility for assessing performance against the defined targets. The Secretariat will provide guidance to grantees on a standard portfolio performance monitoring plan that includes schedules for data collection, analysis, review, and dissemination during the life of the funding cycle.

All grants, **except IUCN Save Our Species Rapid Action Grants and Research Support Grants**, require full monitoring. IUCN Save Our Species Rapid Action Grants and Research Support Grants will require minimal monitoring, with a single conservation impact (that is, target threatened species status, and critical habitat monitoring) and financial report being required.

### Grant Execution

#### Execution Arrangements

A variety of scenarios can be considered to ensure the effective and efficient execution of the project by the grantee, including:

- The establishment of a dedicated project management unit responsible exclusively for the project within the grantee's organisation.
- The inclusion of the project within the portfolio of a project management unit that oversees several projects within the grantee's organisation.
- The designation of one or more staff members of the recipient organisation responsible for project coordination and execution, either on a full-time or part-time basis.
- The selection of the preferred arrangement will be based on several criteria, including the size of the grant and the capacity of the grantee.

In all cases, IUCN encourages the grantee to opt for an arrangement that will ensure efficient and effective project management while at the same time contribution optimally to strengthening the recipient organisation and its capacity.

IUCN also encourages the grantee to integrate the project into its normal programming structure, by ensuring that:

- the project is included and properly described and articulated in the grantee's overall plans and programmes of work.
- staff in the recipient organisation are all aware of the project, provide support to it when necessary and possible, and are able to describe it to third parties.

## Payment

Once a project is approved and both parties have duly signed the grant agreement, the IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat is responsible for distributing, and accounting for, all disbursements to grantees. The schedule for payment of the contribution to the project is dependent on the type of grant awarded and will be included in the grant contract.

The project document will have included expenditure planning while the schedule of cash advances or reimbursements is stipulated in the contract. Although this is planned ahead, grantees must complete and submit cash transfer requests, including a request for cash advances.

For subsequent instalments (as replenishments of the accounts during project implementation), the grantee presents to the Secretariat a request for disbursement together with a financial report.

For each cash transfer request, the Save Our Species Secretariat, will verify that:

- the grantee's financial reports are correctly calculated.
- the technical report is validated.
- the report is made against the correct and approved budget.
- variances from budget categories are not greater than a fixed ratio, if not formally approved a priori following a request to the IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat by the grantee.
- expenses appear reasonable given the progress of the corresponding work.
- the cash request for the following period is reasonable and corresponds to the planned budget and workplan.

- expenditure projection does not exceed the total amount of the grant.

## Project Supervision

After a project has been selected, a grant contract issued and 1st instalment payment processed, there are key project supervision milestones that guide the Secretariat support to grant recipients. It is therefore expected that the Secretariat will pay close attention to the following process:

- Ensure that grant recipients provide additional communication material on a rolling basis.
- The Secretariat monitors progress of project implementation every 3 or 6 months as specifically defined in the project documents.
- The Secretariat holds regular monitoring calls with the grantee.
- The Secretariat supports the grantee to submit interim technical and financial reports and populates Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with their project data, the frequency of which is defined in the Grant Agreement. After validation of interim technical and financial reports, the grantee submits an invoice for the next instalment.
- The Secretariat undertakes technical and financial field missions to project locations (as often as each Initiative stipulates).
- Auditors conduct interim and final audits if required (whenever stipulated).
- The Secretariat reminds grant recipients of reporting deadlines one month in advance.
- The grantees submit final technical and financial reports and update the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with their end-of-project data and final communications report. After validation of the final technical and financial report and audit, the grantee submits an invoice for the payment of the remaining balance.
- The Secretariat closes the project, informs the grantee, and publishes the final project communications output.

## Extension of Projects

Grantees can request a No-cost Extension for the project, if duly justified. The Save Our Species Secretariat and the grantee have, then, to agree on the extension of the period covered. A contract amendment will be initiated by the relevant IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat member to amend the agreement and modify the end date. It will enter into force

upon signature by both the IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat and the grantee. All other terms and conditions of the agreement will remain the same.

Grantees can also request budget amendments and technical amendments to the contract.

## **Project Closeout**

At project completion, all grantees will be required to submit final Technical and Financial Reports. Save our Species grants will be closed upon verification that all deliverables have been completed, all Progress, Financial, and Audit Reports have been reviewed and approved and that the total grant amount has been reconciled. Reconciliation includes verification that all advances have been accounted for, the final payment has been issued, and any unspent funds have been returned and credited back to the donor or to the portfolio for future grants.

After the grant is closed, relevant IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat will officially notify the grantee in a Closeout Letter that the grant is complete, and all deliverables are approved. If applicable, a final payment or refund request will be processed. Any unused funds received by the grantees should be refunded and subtracted from the reported eligible expenditures. These funds are then available for other grants if time allows it.

## 5. PROJECT REPORTING

### Technical Reporting

All grantees are required to submit interim and final Technical Reports according to the reporting schedule defined in their Grant Agreement.

All reports submitted by the grantee must be reviewed and validated by the Save our Species Secretariat. This enables the Secretariat to check that the project activities are implemented as planned in the proposal and to see if the use of the funds is coherent with the progress on activities.

Any performance issues that are identified should be discussed between IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat and the grantee. Key questions that the reviewer should bear in mind include:

- Is the period of the report accurately indicated on the report?
- Does the report contain an adequate level of detail to describe activities accomplished, have they been rescheduled and explained?
- Do activities from this reporting period present sufficient changes or concerns that a discussion or site visit should be conducted?

Results are compiled to provide programme level results.

### Financial Reporting

Grantees will report against the approved budget included in their grant agreements. Financial reports include prior period expenses, current period expenses, total expenses to date, budget balance, and projected cash needs for the next period.

The Global Programme Operations Unit will analyse financial reports for accuracy and reasonableness considering the project's progress to date.

Grantees must submit financial reports no less frequently than as set forth in their grant agreements (as determined by the Financial Reporting Grid in the Financial Risk Assessment).

## 6. PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### Project Monitoring

Projects supported by the Save Our Species programme should, under the guidance of the Save our Species Secretariat, demonstrate a Monitoring & Evaluation process that meets international quality standards. This includes the monitoring of indicators in the following aspects:

- Biological monitoring (e.g. tiger and prey populations)
- Habitat monitoring (e.g. protected area management tools)
- Social monitoring (e.g. livelihoods, and also ESMS aspects)
- Financial monitoring

### Project Evaluation

IUCN provides guidance on the requirements for mid-term and final evaluations, in addition to recognising donor requirements.

The evaluation process following project completion revisits the original design and reports on the impact that the project had on its intended beneficiaries, looking at planned versus actual performance, delivery of outputs, achievement of impact, and any valuable lessons to be learned.

Evaluations by external experts will be carried out at the mid-term and at the end of project operations. The mid-term evaluation is intended to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the project, and an opportunity to critically assess administrative and technical strategies, issues and constraints associated with the project implementation. The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to give recommendations for enhancing the potential of the project to achieve the expected outcomes and to meet objectives within the project period. Based on this assessment, the project partners should be able to take decisions on the future orientation and emphasis of the project during its remaining lifetime. To assist with this process, the extended contact network of IUCN and Advisory/Expert Committee may be called upon to provide an external peer review, assisting with the evaluation process.

The purpose of the final evaluation is to promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments. The results will thus help to synthesize lessons learned that can help to improve the selection, design, and implementation of future projects under Save our Species, and similar programmes of the broader conservation community.

## **Field Visits**

### **Programmatic Site Visits**

Each year the Save our Species Secretariat conducts selected programmatic site visits based on the type of grant and the grant award value. Save our Species staff visits help to confirm activities and progress reported to date, through technical reports and monitoring calls. It can then assess the grantee's capacity to continue implementation as planned and review or identify any potential constraints to success. Formal site visits undertaken should use the Field Mission Report to record recommendations, concerns, and follow-up steps as appropriate.

### **Financial Site Visits**

The IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat will review the financial progress of the grant and the related deliverables. In addition, as part of the efforts to build and maintain strong relationships with partners and promote fiscal accountability, each year the IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat develops a site visit schedule identifying the grantees that will receive a formal, mandated financial site visit. The IUCN Save Our Species Secretariat concerned, in consultation with the IUCN Senior Grants Finance Manager, consider the risk rating, grant award value, cash received to date, and issues identified through prior site visits or in other ways when developing the list of grantees to receive a site visit. The purpose of this visit is to review the accounting and financial controls in place. The IUCN Save Our Species Secretariats will schedule a follow-up visit, if appropriate.



## 7. COMMUNICATIONS

### Programme Level

Communication at the programme level will aim to build momentum and global public support around species conservation by engaging a range of partners in conservation programmes and in a global communications campaign.

The aim of this level of communication should be to:

- build awareness about species conservation.
- provide an inspiring communications platform for Save our Species partners.
- catalyse political attention to species conservation.
- promote species conservation results and successes in the field.

Communications will also cover basic publicity, the use of logos, crisis communication arising from events that could lead to negative publicity that poses a potential reputational risk to the programme and organisations involved.

Communication activities will be linked, when appropriate, to key events in the conservation calendar each year.

Save our Species will focus on communication about why species matter, the sense of urgency, the wildlife extinction crisis, the work of implementing organisations and the uniqueness of their approaches.

Programme-level communication policies will be made available to the grantees.

### Project Level

At a project level, the communication approach is also to build momentum and create public support for species conservation.

The grantee, through the project management unit established for (or in charge of) managing the grant, will be responsible for communicating the project activities and the progress made in achieving the expected outcomes of the grant. This will be done through

the project-dedicated website if any, or at least through the grantee's website when available.

All communications will be made mentioning IUCN, the Save Our Species Programme name and the donor if required. The use of the relevant logos will be facilitated by their inclusion in grant implementation contracts.

All communication costs will be embedded in the project budget approved in the Grant Agreement. In some specific cases, communications costs could be included in the co-financing element of the project.

Project-level communications policies will be made available to the grantees.

# ANNEXES



# ANNEX 1

## Conflict of Interest Policy

October 2023  
(Version 1.0)

### I. Introductory provisions

#### 1) Purpose

- This Conflict of Interest Policy (“**COI Policy**”) is established to be used under all IUCN Save our Species initiatives.
- It outlines expectations, disclosure requirements, and the consequences of failing to disclose conflicts.
- It aims to mitigate conflicts of interest in the evaluation of applications for calls for proposals to ensure fairness, transparency, and credibility in the selection process.

#### 2) Scope

This COI Policy applies to all individuals involved in the grant application review and selection process, including but not limited to members of the review panel that may include Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and the Secretariat.

### II. Definition of a ‘conflict of interest’

A conflict of interest exists when an individual’s personal, professional, financial, or organisational interests or loyalties may influence their judgement, objectivity, and impartiality in the selection process.

A *perceived* conflict of interest exists when it could be reasonably considered by a third party that a conflict exists (irrespective of whether or not this is actually the case).

Conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- **Personal relationship with any individual affiliated with or who has a noted involvement in an applicant organisation:** For example, a family member. Family relationship includes spouse, parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, great-grandchild, sibling, spouse of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and siblings.

- **Professional relationship with an applicant organisation:** This includes current employment, collaboration, volunteer affiliation or board membership in an applicant organisation.
- **Direct financial interests in an applicant organisation:** This includes ownership, shareholding or board membership.
- **Any other situation** that could reasonably be perceived as a conflict of interest.

### III. Disclosure of conflict of interest

Transparency is critical for maintaining trust and ensuring fair evaluation.

It is expected that anyone involved in the processing or assessment of applications, including but not limited to members of the review panel (TAG members and SOS Secretariat program staff), identifies any real or perceived conflicts of interest related to the people and/or organisations submitting applications for review.

When determining possible conflicts of interest, we expect everyone to be:

- thorough and transparent to ensure all possible conflicts have been considered.
- objective and consistent to ensure fairness throughout the process.
- timely in the provision of information.
- accepting of the SOS Secretariat's decision on how to manage any conflict.

### IV. Managing conflict of interest

When a potential conflict has been identified, the Secretariat will determine the degree of materiality taking into account:

- the closeness of the conflict.
- the value and nature of the potential benefit

Two levels of restriction will be used to manage material conflicts of interest. The level of restriction depends on the nature of the conflict identified, as follows:

1. **Recusal:** when a material conflict of interest has been identified which only impacts the assessment of the application in question. For example, the review panel member had been a Board member of one applicant organisation for a period up to 3 years prior to the submission of the application. **The reviewer will not be asked to evaluate this application and will leave the meeting for the discussion of that application.**

2. **Exclusion:** when a material conflict of interest has been identified which impacts the assessment of **any** application. For example, if a member of the review panel is affiliated with an organisation that applied to the same call for proposals whether as Lead Partner or acting Partner. **The reviewer will not participate in the review process and will not have access to any of the applications.**

### Conflict of interest for Secretariat Staff members

Conflicts of interest related to the current Secretariat program staff participating in the assessment of an application are handled in the same way as for an external reviewer.

Staff previously employed by IUCN Save our Species funded organisations may not review applications for funding from those organisations for a period of one year from the start date of their employment with IUCN. However, they may attend selection committee meetings and contribute to the decision-making process for other applications they reviewed.

## V. Reviewer obligations

### a) Full disclosure

Reviewers are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest promptly and fully, whether real or perceived, **before** participating in the review process. The declaration of conflict of interest should be made to the appropriate manager of the relevant Save our Species initiative, who will record and help to manage any identified conflicts.

### b) Acknowledgement

Reviewers are required to acknowledge their understanding of and compliance with this COI Policy prior to the start of each call for proposals process.

### c) Recusal or exclusion

Reviewers with disclosed conflicts of interest shall respect the level of restrictions imposed by the Secretariat, and

- not participate in the review, evaluation, or scoring of any application associated with the conflict (**= recusal**)

or

- not participate in the selection process for a given call for proposals (**= exclusion**)

**d) Impartiality**

Reviewers should evaluate grant applications objectively, based on the merits and criteria specified in the call's guidelines for applicants, without favouritism or bias.

**e) Confidentiality**

Reviewers must maintain the confidentiality of all information related to grant applications, discussions, and the selection process.

**f) Professionalism**

Reviewers should avoid any conduct that could compromise the program's integrity or reputation.

**VI. Consequences of policy violation**

Violation of this COI Policy may result in the removal of the reviewer from the review panel, a decision upon their continued participation in the program's selection process, or other appropriate actions as determined by the SOS Lemurs program leadership.

**VII. Amendments to the policy**

This policy may be updated or amended as necessary, and all reviewers will be informed of any changes.

**VIII. Reporting and transparency**

The Secretariat will maintain a record of disclosed conflicts of interest, actions taken, and any associated recusals to ensure transparency and accountability.

## ANNEX 2

### Threatened Species Grants Proposal Evaluation Form

Categories	Criteria (to what extent...)	On a Scale from 1 to 5
Impacts on targeted species populations	What is the probability of the targeted species to persist as a result of the project and of its conservation status to improve? How much good will result from the project?	
Impacts on habitats	Will the project benefit other species (other than the target species) and the functioning of the wider ecosystems?	
Impacts on people	Have all the relevant stakeholders been identified and will they be involved in the project implementation? Are livelihoods made sustainable through the project by improving current practices or introducing alternatives? Does the project have appropriate community participation, including the empowerment of disadvantage groups (women, youth, indigenous people and other)? Have all social and socio-economic safeguards been detailed in a satisfactory manner?	
Regional cooperation	Does the project foster regional cooperation and synergies at the regional and local levels? Does the project have the potential to establish or maintain long term relationships for collaboration in biodiversity conservation with relevant local, regional and national organisations? Does it ensure coordination and synergies with existing and future initiatives?	



Technical coherence	Are the project's overall objective, purpose and intended results appropriate, achievable and aligned with existing Conservation Strategies for the target species? Does the project include a sound logical framework with clear results and indicators? Is the proposed approach feasible? Does the project clearly identify any risks and provide solutions to mitigate/overcome them? Is the timeline for completing the work clear and realistic?	
Technical competency of proponent	Do the skills of the consortium cover sufficient breadth of expertise to implement the project and communicate outputs? Is the proponent well positioned to implement the project? Does the proponent have a successful track record of similar projects in the region?	
Finances & financial competency	Is the budget adequate and cost efficient? Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? Are all activities appropriately reflected in the budget? Can the proponent show evidence of good financial management?	
Sustainability	Is there a clear approach for ensuring the sustainability of the project activities beyond the end of the project? How likely are the results to be sustained and or replicated?	
Chances of success	How likely is it that the project will reach its intended objectives?	
Communication	Does the project include dissemination and communication activities? Are the activities appropriate and the target groups clearly identified?	
Lead partner organisation	<b>Please answer yes or no</b>	
	Is the proponent a local or national organisation or an indigenous organisation (Community Based Organisations)?	

## ANNEX 3

### Rapid Action Grants Proposal Evaluation Form

Categories	Criteria (to what extent...)	On a Scale from 1 to 5
Emergency of the threat	How urgent is the conservation problem? Does the project directly address a crisis situation?	
	Comments:	
Impacts on targeted species populations	What is the probability of the project to directly address the crisis or emergency situation for the threatened species?	
	Comments:	
Impacts on habitats	Will the project benefit other species (other than the target species) and the functioning of the wider ecosystems?	
	Comments:	

Impacts on people	<p>Have all the relevant stakeholders been identified and will they be involved in the project implementation? Does the project have appropriate community participation, including the empowerment of disadvantage groups (women, youth, indigenous people and other)? Have all social and socio-economic safeguards been detailed in a satisfactory manner?</p>	
	Comments:	
Technical coherence	<p>Are the project's overall objective, purpose and intended results appropriate, achievable and aligned with existing Conservation Strategies for the target species? Does the project include a sound logical framework with clear results and indicators? Does the project clearly identify any risks and provide solutions to mitigate/overcome them? Is the timeline for completing the work clear and realistic?</p>	
	Comments:	
Technical competency of proponent	<p>Do the skills of the proponent cover sufficient breadth of expertise to implement the project and communicate outputs? Is the proponent well positioned to implement the project? Does the proponent have a successful track record of similar projects in the region?</p>	
	Comments:	

Finances & financial competency	Is the budget adequate? Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? Can the proponent show evidence of good financial management?	
	Comments:	
Sustainability	Is there a clear approach for ensuring the sustainability of the project activities beyond the end of the project? How likely are the results to be sustained and or replicated?	
	Comments:	
Chances of success	How likely is it that the project will reach its intended objectives?	
	Comments:	
<b>Recommendation of this proposal for funding: Yes or No and Why?</b>		

## ANNEX 4

### Research Grants Proposal Evaluation Form

Categories	Criteria (to what extent...)	On a Scale from 1 to 5
Conservation challenge	Is the project addressing a high-priority conservation challenge for the target species?	
Contribution to conservation	Is the research project aligned with existing Conservation Strategies for the target species? Will the scientific outcomes enable conservationists to undertake critical conservation action for eligible species? Will the project influence positively environmental knowledge, and potentially local conservation efforts, attitudes and behaviours?	
Feasibility	How likely is it that the project will reach its intended objectives? Is the proposed approach feasible? Does the project clearly identify any risks and provide solutions to mitigate/overcome them? Is the timeline for completing the work clear and realistic?	
Technical coherence	Does the research question clearly identify and address a conservation need? Does the project include a sound logical framework with appropriate and achievable results? Are the methods, activities and outputs adequate and consistent with the overall objective?	
Budget & cost efficiency	Is the budget adequate and cost efficient? Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? Are all activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	

Applicant  
background  
and capacity

Is the applicant a young and early scientist? Does the applicant experience reveal a commitment to conservation? How likely is it that the project will build the applicant's knowledge, skills and experience (capacity development) for the work she/he is doing?

**Recommendation of this proposal for funding: Yes or No and Why?**

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