



# Translocations & Animal Handling

## WWF Network Standard

Version 1 – September 2021

This Network Standard was approved by CQC and endorsed by the NET in September 2021.

<b>Issued/Owned by:</b>	Wildlife Practice Core & Leadership Teams
<b>Versioning controlled by:</b>	Margaret Kinnaird, Wildlife Practice Leader & Anna van der Heijden, Wildlife Practice Knowledge Manager
<b>Version History:</b>	Version 1 released September 2021. <i>(Note: An earlier version of this standard has been used as guidelines for translocation and animal handling since 2019)</i>

## **1. Purpose and Scope**

This standard is a requirement for all WWF Offices.

**Purpose.** This standard aims to help WWF achieve the best possible conservation outcomes for wildlife while ensuring the highest standards of animal welfare and minimizing operational and reputational risks.

**Scope.** This standard applies to any project or programme supported or implemented by a WWF office that includes chemical and physical restraint as well as handling of wild animal species (including anaesthesia for treatment and translocation)<sup>1</sup> listed as threatened by the IUCN Red List<sup>2</sup> for any purpose except emergencies. Emergencies are exempted from this standard as they are not foreseeable events and not linked to planned programmatic work. However, where WWF is requested to assist in an emergency intervention, notification from the partnering authority detailing the nature of intervention and type of assistance requested from WWF should be available to the respective WWF office prior to the intervention and ensure that the intervention observes best practice for human and animal ethics.

Requirements may differ between activities - for instance between physical handling for conflict management and complex translocation procedures. Such differences are detailed in the standard's checklist (section 4). While standard adherence and use of the checklist is limited to IUCN Red List of threatened species, WWF offices involved in handling of non-threatened animal species may opt to use this checklist.

Acknowledging the existence of a number of national and/or regional standard guidelines and protocols in the regions/ countries where WWF works, in addition to the IUCN protocols, as well as the numerous and varied roles that WWF offices play, the standard is designed to not to be overly prescriptive, but rather present a checklist that ensures best practice and prerequisite due diligence are undertaken.

**Staff health and safety.** This guidance does not cover staff health and safety issues during translocations. These should be covered by other policies or guidelines within the implementing office or partner.

**Working with partners.** The checklist includes what agreements should be established with partners. Partners are expected to comply, at a minimum, with these standards, or with their own standards if these are comparable or go beyond those of WWF.

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<sup>1</sup> The focus on species listed as threatened by the IUCN Red list is based on the need for this standard to enhance rather than create unnecessary blockages to WWF's work on handling wild animal species, and it is felt more common, non-threatened species do not need to undergo such scrutiny.

<sup>2</sup> Includes categories vulnerable (VU), endangered (EN) and critically endangered (CR).

## **2. Definitions**

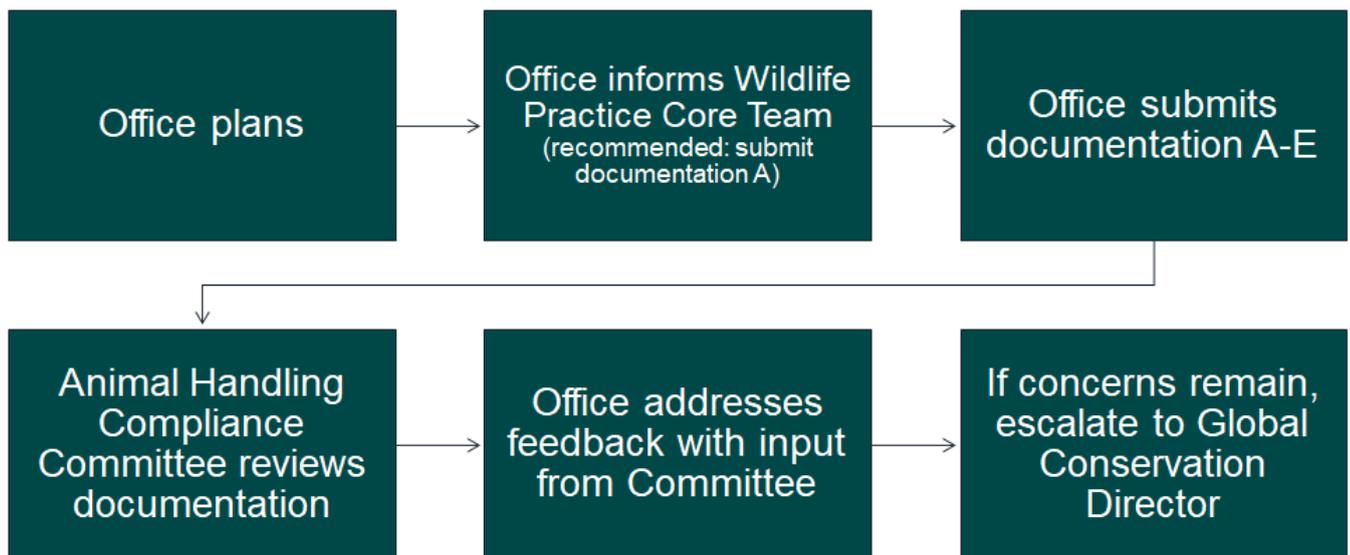
'Animal handling' refers to live, wild animals and is defined as any interaction with an animal that involves capture, restraining or immobilizing whether through chemical or physical means.

'Translocation' is defined as 'the human-mediated movement of living organisms from one area, with release in another.' (Definition from the [2013 IUCN Guidelines to Reintroductions and Other Translocation Operations](#)).

## **3. Process Overview**

Any project or programme supported or implemented by a WWF office that includes chemical and physical restraint as well as handling of wild animals for any purpose (including anaesthesia for treatment and translocation) except emergency needs to follow the process below and the associated checklist (section 4).

The general process for the application of this standard is as follows.



The standard checklist envisages three broad situations requiring animal translocation and handling. These are pre-planned strategic relocations, emergency relocations, and animal handling for research and monitoring purposes. The 13 items identified in the checklist have been grouped under 5 sub-headings as follows: A) Conservation need; B) Logistical preparations; C) Monitoring and evaluation; D) Legal and contractual compliance; and E) Risk analysis.

The checklist should be used in the following manner:

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
Pre-planned strategic relocations	Address all sub-headings (A-E) in the checklist and submit relevant documentation. (Exact documentation depends on situation and arrangements)	Submit documentation for conservation need (A) as early as possible, before proceeding with logistical preparations.
Animal handling for research and monitoring purposes	Submit all relevant documentation per sub-heading (A-E) or note and explain when a certain section is not applicable.	Consider fast tracking A and B, and focusing on C, D and E.
Emergency relocations	Observe best practice and inform Wildlife Practice Leader	WWF offices are encouraged to consider fast-tracking A-E where possible but must ensure that the emergency interventions observe best practice for human and animal ethics and must also inform the Wildlife Practice Leader of the operation through their respective focal person.

The checklist (using a submission template that will be provided) and supporting documentation should be uploaded to a shared folder in the Wildlife Practice document library in coordination with the Core Team knowledge manager. Upon approval by the Committee, a PDF version of the final approved checklist must be uploaded in Insight under the relevant WWF CPM Project Number.

This standard should be applied within the wider context of WWF project and program management standards (and associated risk management and quality assurance) that is required of all projects (see [Network Standards](#) and [Project Guide](#)).

#### **4. Requirements of all WWF offices**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Requirement description and guidance</b>	<b>Documentation (Submit all relevant documentation or list when and why not applicable).</b>
A. Conservation need	1	<p><b>CONSERVATION NEED</b></p> <p>Projects and programmes have substantial potential benefit for long term conservation of the respective species that cannot be achieved with less invasive measures. The proposed translocation is in line with IUCN guidance on when translocation</p>	Justification, investigations, or feasibility studies, taking risks of genetic contamination into account. Include in the justification a statement on conservation needs in relation to risks

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and animal handling is an acceptable choice.

(see section E).

**Recommended as first action:** Submit the required documentation for conservation need first to initiate the approval process of this standard, so it can be approved before proceeding with logistical preparations.

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B Logistical preparation

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#### SUITABILITY & AUTHORISATION

For translocations, motivation and authorisation to carry out the operation is to precede everything else. This needs to include an assessment of the target area vis-a-vis the source area regarding its level of protection, habitat availability, suitability and conditions, as well as post release procedures, also with respect to potential disease exposure. Site preparation should include consultations with local communities where-from wild animals are to be captured and where wild animals are to be translocated and released.

Report on the suitability of the area for translocation; documentation of mutual approval by WWF and partners including local communities.

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#### STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS & AGREEMENTS

Especially for translocations, planning and implementation of projects and programmes are aligned as much as possible with existing standards and guidelines of, for instance, IUCN, and are being undertaken in consultation with respective IUCN specialist groups and/or other relevant institutions (e.g. EAZA / EEP for translocations with zoo-involvement). Any intervention, including immobilization, must be aligned to standards of a particular office or country specific guidelines and protocols where they exist and if none exist then align to the existing IUCN guidelines. This should also detail any planned sedation/medical protocol (including potential emergency responses identified through risk assessment) and ensure that all required equipment and materials are available.

Provide and state alignment with existing standards and protocols, including agreements with partners to follow these standards, as well as legally required documents in accordance with country or province-specific translocation policies.

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#### PARTNERS & CONSULTANCIES

Competent partners with proven experience (where they exist) in handling such operations as well as donor institutions are involved in development, implementation and monitoring of project or program as needed via appropriate contractual agreements. Where no partners with proven experience are available, such experience needs to be ensured for the project/program through consultancies. Sufficient availability of adequate human resources with the necessary expertise and experience to form a team responsible for the execution of the planned program, including a skilled and experienced support team on stand-by, equipped and resourced.

Contractual arrangement, MoU, or signed Minutes of Meeting with the involved partners and implementers; else a brief statement on why no partners are needed. In case of new consultancies/ partners, include statement on due diligence process used to select them.

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	5	<p><b>AGREED ROLES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>All involved partners and implementers have clear roles, functions and responsibilities in the project or program, which are defined and agreed in writing by all partners in advance, including procedures in crisis situations.</p>	<p>Contractual arrangement or MoU and relevant signed minutes with involved partners and implementers.</p>
	6	<p><b>FINANCIAL PLAN &amp; BUDGET</b></p> <p>A financial plan is prepared, agreed to by all the partners involved and adequate funds are available, ensuring ability to comply with the basic protocol requirements and cover any potential risks and associated mitigation activities.</p>	<p>Detailed budget and list of funding sources.</p>
	7	<p><b>COMMUNICATIONS</b></p> <p>A communications plan is ready that takes into account the possibility of unforeseen and undesired situations.</p>	<p>Communication plan or in case the operation is still weeks away, a short statement on planned communications, including communications officer managing this operation's communication for WWF.</p>
C. Monitoring & evaluation	8	<p><b>M&amp;E and REPORTING</b></p> <p>Projects or programs are fully documented and reported to WWF Wildlife Practice Core team, including results, data produced and any problems that occurred. As applicable, reports are made available to respective IUCN specialist groups and involved partner(s).</p>	<p>Data exchange agreement on documentation and reporting agreed on by all partners.</p>
D. Legal & contractual compliance	9	<p><b>ACCESS &amp; DATA COLLECTION</b></p> <p>WWF office as well as partners and implementers have access to sites, activities, and information, as well as rights to collect defined relevant data before, during and after the implementation.</p>	<p>Contractual arrangement or MoU, signed Minutes with involved partners and implementers.</p>
	10	<p><b>DATA SHARING</b></p> <p>All involved partners and implementers share all relevant data, such as plans, information, documents, studies, samples (including post-mortem samples), results etc., produced in the direct project context in advance, during and after the planned project or programme, as compliant with relevant national laws.</p>	<p>Contractual arrangement; MoU or an Agreement with the involved partners and implementers.</p>

	11	COMPLIANCE	Compilation of relevant documents.
		Project or program is in full compliance with relevant national laws, recovery plans, international treaties and agreements, and is fully aligned with and contributing to the WWF, national and IUCN strategies for the respective species (if existent).	
E. Risk analysis	12	RISK ANALYSIS & PLAN	Risk analysis and mitigation plan, ideally within contractual arrangement, MoU, or signed Minutes of Meeting with the involved partners and implementers, permission letter from government authority/ies.
		Project or programme includes a risk analysis and risk mitigation plan agreed upon by all partners and implementers, as needed with support from risk analysis specialists in the particular office, if there is one, and the WWF Network. Risk analysis needs to conclude whether risks are at acceptable levels to pursue the operation. For wild animals which are legally protected by each country's laws, prior written permission for chemical or physical immobilisation, capture and translocation should be acquired by the respective WWF country office.	
	13	SAFEGUARDS	Assessment report; project/procedure/program plan Meeting minutes; if applicable, include analysis of scale and types of impacts and Safeguards adopted.
		An assessment, which includes consultations with local communities that may be affected, is made of whether the project/procedure/program is likely to impact on the local community, and if so, an analysis of the scale and types of impacts must be completed, in order to integrate appropriate Safeguards into the project/procedure/program plan.	

## 5. Responsibilities

Any WWF office supporting<sup>3</sup> or implementing an animal handling or translocation activity is responsible for the project's or programme's planning, implementation and results. If the respective office is a program or country office, this responsibility extends to WWF International or WWF US, respectively. The respective office will name a responsible contact for translocations and animal handling. If none are named explicitly, the Wildlife Practice Focal Point in that office can be contacted and may then defer to colleagues.

The contact person in each office is responsible for completing checklists, ensuring due diligence protocols are checked for quality, and submitting all documents to the Animal Handling Compliance Committee with a copy to the Conservation Director in their office, and to the Wildlife Focal Point (if different from contact person). The Animal Handling Compliance Committee, appointed by the Wildlife Practice Core Team ([TOR](#)), will review the documents and respond to the submitting office within 2 weeks. Where concerns have been highlighted and cannot be addressed by the committee or the

<sup>3</sup> Where one WWF office provides grant funding for this work to another WWF office to implement the activity, the latter office takes primary responsibility for implementing this standard.

respective WWF office, then the concerns will be elevated to the Global Conservation Director who will then determine how to proceed. Coordination of the overall due diligence process and compliance with this checklist in each office is the responsibility of the project or programme contract manager.

## **6. Review Requirements**

This Standard is subject to review on a regular basis and at least every three years.

## **7. Support and Other Relevant Standards**

If you have questions or comments on this Standard, please contact your Wildlife Practice Focal Point in your office, Wildlife Practice Core Team/Knowledge Manager, and WWF International Head of Network Standards.

## **8. Links to Related Standards, Guidance and Templates**

Related Network Standards:

- [HR, People & Culture: Health and Safety Standards](#)
- [Environmental & Social Safeguards Framework](#)

Example tools and templates related to this Standard:

- [Step-by-step template document](#) to submit required documentation; When you inform the Wildlife Practice Knowledge Manager of your planned activity, you will be given access to a folder and submission template.

Other references related to this Standard:

- Additional resources on [Wildlife Practice site/translocations](#)
- [2013 IUCN Guidelines to Reintroductions and Other Translocation Operations](#)