

## International Studbook Framework

*Launched on 27 May 2026*

### Preamble

WAZA's goal is to encourage everyone to work together under a shared dataset. WAZA Member Regional Associations encourage their studbook coordinators to work within global shared datasets for a taxon or species, where relevant.

Collaborative work and transparent data sharing are the most effective way forward for the benefit of a species, ensuring that resources are optimised, duplication of effort is reduced, and data entry is streamlined and consistent across regions.

We recognise that transitioning to this framework may take time, and we are committed to allowing sufficient time for regions and coordinators to adapt their processes and align with shared datasets.

This approach will be implemented with due consideration for data ownership, governance, and sensitivities, including respect for Indigenous data sovereignty and partnerships with range-state partners.

### 1. International Studbook - Definition

An International Studbook is a global *ex situ* population shared dataset for a particular taxon, maintained collaboratively by the regional studbook coordinators appointed by WAZA Member Regional associations\*, and an International Studbook Coordinator appointed by WAZA.

International Studbooks are intended to support clearly defined role(s) identified by the relevant respective regions.

### 2. Purpose of an International Studbook

The purpose of an International Studbook is to enable coordinated population management that allows regions to meet their respective programme's roles, and to operate at a scale that is greater than a region. Programme roles are dictated by the regions, and may differ for the same species between regions. These programmes might support, but are not limited to, these roles:

- Improve species recovery by supporting conservation outcomes
- Facilitating management of *ex situ* populations
- Supporting research and knowledge generation
- Providing value and information to range countries

- Facilitating reintroduction or translocation efforts
- Supporting national policy development and species-level conservation strategies

### 3. Establishment of an International Studbook

International Studbooks are established by the WAZA Committee for Population Management (CPM), with approval by its voting members.

An International Studbook may be established when the following minimum conditions are met:

- At the request of at least two WAZA Member Regional associations, with animals held across multiple regions and outside formal management structures (including range countries), necessitating coordinated global data oversight.
- The species dataset is maintained in Species360's ZIMS for Studbooks unless species' biology prevents this (e.g., group-living species)
- Regional or range-country association/institutional staff are prioritised for international studbook coordination roles where feasible
- A commitment is made by participating associations to provide access to range-state authorities on request.
- A Statement of Collaboration is signed by the regional and International Studbook Coordinators. (to be added once created)

The 2021 Guidelines for *Working together in a shared studbook database* may provide additional relevant guidance (see [here](#)).

### 4. The role of the International Studbook Coordinator

The International Studbook Coordinator acts as the curator of the global dataset and as a facilitator of inter-regional coordination and global dataset alignment.

The International Studbook Coordinator must:

- Facilitate the availability of a current global dataset that can be used by regional associations, GSMPs, GCAPs, and other recognised programmes to meet their needs.
- Enter, edit, and update data for animals housed in facilities in regions where no regional coordinator contributes to the dataset, ensuring its accuracy and completeness.

- Coordinate with regional coordinators to agree on update frequency when establishing the shared dataset.
- Support effective communication and collaboration between regional coordinators.
- Support data quality control by promoting agreed upon data entry standards, keeping data current, identifying and fixing duplicate records or other data entry errors, and researching unknown pedigrees.
- Oversee regular updates are made by the responsible regional coordinators.
- Liaise with the WAZA Executive Office to ensure appropriate access for the contributing regions to enable relevant analyses.
- Ensure alignment with relevant taxonomic standards (e.g., IUCN nomenclature)

Additional considerations to work inter-regionally on a joint dataset can be found in [this](#) document.

## 5. Appointment and review of coordinators

### Appointment

- Regional coordinators for an International Studbook are appointed according to existing WAZA Member Regional processes.
- International Studbook Coordinators are appointed by the WAZA CPM, under an undefined term and in accordance with existing processes<sup>[1]</sup>.
- The International Studbook Coordinator must be a staff member of a WAZA member institution or of an institutional member of a WAZA Member Regional association.

<sup>[1]</sup>*The WAZA ISB Resource Manual (2018) will be accordingly updated once this proposal is adopted. The internal process for studbook coordinator appointment can be consulted [here](#).*

### Review and removal

The WAZA CPM may review the appointment of an International Studbook Coordinator when responsibilities are not being met and this is adversely affecting the quality, integrity, or usability of the dataset for participating regions.

Any such action is taken to safeguard the effectiveness and credibility of the dataset and associated regional programmes.

Concerns should be raised through the relevant regional association. Regional coordinators or programme leads are expected to flag issues to their association,

which can then bring these to the attention of the WAZA CPM through its representatives.

## 6. Access to the International Studbook

Following discussion and agreement between regional and International Studbook Coordinators:

- Regional coordinators will have editing access, granted by their relevant regional zoo and aquarium association and/or the WAZA Executive Office.
- Analytical access will be granted to population biologists and supporting professionals upon request by a regional or International Studbook Coordinator, submitted by the International Studbook Coordinator to the WAZA Executive Office.
- Additional access for other purposes (e.g., research) is governed by the WAZA Data Sharing and Use framework (see [here](#))

## 7. Monitoring and evaluation

In collaboration with Species360, WAZA will monitor that the dataset remains globally updated and will assess data quality within ZIMS for Studbooks.

These data points will be informed by the activity on ZIMS for Studbooks<sup>[2]</sup> (e.g., last edited date, currentness date, the Studbook Activity Feed).

<sup>[2]</sup>*We recognise that this approach may face certain limitations, Species360 and WAZA are collaborating towards defining a more robust system to assess studbook activity.*

## 8. Governance of the International Studbook dataset

This section defines ownership, authority, accountability, and dispute-resolution arrangements and does not duplicate operational responsibilities described elsewhere in this document.

### Dataset ownership and stewardship

The International Studbook dataset is a shared global resource collectively stewarded by the contributing WAZA Member Regional associations\*, under the oversight of WAZA. No single region or coordinator holds exclusive ownership or unilateral control. See WAZA Data Sharing and Use Policy [here](#).

### Authority and decision-making

Authority within an International Studbook is federated, meaning that decision-making power is shared across regions, rather than vested in a single association/region.

- Regional coordinators retain authority over data originating from their region, in line with their association's policies.
- The International Studbook Coordinator facilitates alignment and transparency.
- Unresolved issues may be referred to the WAZA Executive Office for guidance and, where appropriate, to the WAZA CPM.

#### Data accuracy and accountability

- Primary responsibility for data accuracy rests with the regional coordinators that enter and validate data.
- The International Studbook Coordinator is responsible for the accuracy of any additional data included in the studbook.
- The International Studbook Coordinator supports the identification of gaps or inconsistencies and facilitates corrective action with the relevant regions.

#### Participation and expectations

Participation in an International Studbook implies a good-faith commitment to timely updates, adherence to agreed standards, and transparent communication.

While participation in a global dataset is encouraged by WAZA and its Member Regional Associations, regions retain autonomy in determining their level of engagement, in line with their priorities and capacities. Where a region chooses not to participate or has limited involvement, this should be clearly communicated to the International Studbook Coordinator.

#### Data use and publication

Use and publication of data from an International Studbook are governed by the WAZA Data Sharing and Use Policy (see [here](#)). Contributors retain recognition for their data, and any public use must acknowledge the International Studbook and contributing regions and respect embargoes, sensitive records, and range-state considerations.

## 9. Suspension of an International Studbook

An International Studbook may be suspended when there is agreement between the contributing regions and the International Studbook Coordinator that a shared dataset is no longer required.

Agreement or considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- The criteria for establishment no longer apply.
- There is insufficient regional participation or multiple vacant regional coordinator positions.
- There is agreement to dissolve the studbook due to conservation or population management strategy changes.
- The species is no longer held in *ex situ* populations.
- While no longer recognised as an International Studbook under the umbrella of WAZA, the dataset will remain accessible to contributing regions for ongoing use in regional programmes.

*\* Without the oversight of a Regional association, and where appropriate, this responsibility will be that of the operating WAZA Member National association.*