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Information & Application to Become an Approved Non-Member SSP Program Participant

Approved by the AZA Board of Directors

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The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a professional organization representing zoological parks and aquariums. Among its objectives, AZA strives to raise professional standards that foster the continued development of superior zoos and aquariums and best practices in animal population management.

AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums serve as centers of excellence in wildlife conservation, and public education and create animal exhibits that provide society the opportunity to develop personal connections with the animals and nature. As such, AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are concerned about ecosystem health, take responsibility for species survival, contribute to research, and promote the highest standards of animal care and welfare in the management of small populations of earth's precious wildlife species.

Expectations for Approved Non-Member Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Participants

AZA SSP Programs focus on the conservation of select and typically threatened or endangered species through the cooperative management of small populations at AZA-Accredited Zoos and Aquariums and Certified Related Facilities. These institutions undergo a thorough accreditation review process that includes the submission of an extensive application as well as an intensive, on-site inspection by a team of experts to ensure the highest standards of animal care and management are met.

Organizations within the United States that do not meet the AZA definition of a zoological park/aquarium or a Certified Related Facility – OR - zoos/aquariums outside of the United States that are already members of a recognized, international zoological association may be eligible to apply for approval to become a Non-Member SSP Program Participant – IF - they care for animals that provide genetic, demographic, conservation, population management, and/or welfare benefits to an AZA SSP Program.

AZA believes that the highest standards of animal care, welfare, and population management are of paramount importance, and Approved Non-Member SSP Participants are expected to agree and abide by AZA's Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Animal Acquisition & Disposition Policy, and relevant Accreditation Standards, especially those related to animal care and welfare.

Non-Member SSP Program Participants are *not considered accredited or certified*. They are referred to as *approved Non-Member participants* and may not display the AZA SSP logo. Like AZA accreditations and certifications, approvals for a Non-Member's continued participation in an SSP Program must be renewed every five years.

Who is Eligible to Apply for Approval as a Non-Member SSP Program Participant?

If a an AZA SSP Program determines that a Non-Member organization cares for animals that can provide genetic, demographic, conservation, population management, and/or animal welfare benefits to the Program, the following are eligible to apply for approval as Non-Member SSP Program Participants:

1. Zoos/aquariums located outside the U.S. that are members of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) or one of WAZA's Super-Regional Zoological Associations
 Note: Super-Regional Zoological Associations of WAZA include: Asociación Latinoamericana de Parques Zoológicos y Acuarios (ALPZA), Asociación Mesoamericana y del Caribe de Zoológicos y Acuarios (AMACZOOA), Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA),

Asociación de Zoológicos Criaderos y Acuarios de México (AZCARM), Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), Eurasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (EARAZA), European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA), African Association of Zoos and Aquaria (PAAZAB), South East Asian Zoos Association (SEAZA), South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC) Note: these are called super-regional associations because all other WAZA-member zoological associations fall under these larger umbrella organizations.

2. Wildlife facilities located within or outside the U.S. that are not open to the public on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis.

Note: Wildlife facilities include, but are not limited to ranches, refuges, rehabilitation centers, research facilities, sanctuaries, survival centers, breeding facilities, private individuals, and educational outreach organizations.

***Note:** Zoos and aquariums located within the U.S. that are open to the public for exhibition purposes on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis are not eligible to apply. In addition, facilities located within the U.S. that meet the definition of related facility are not eligible to apply.

Application Processes

Submission Requirements

Zoos/aquariums located outside the U.S. that are members of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) or one of WAZA's Super-Regional Zoological Associations applicants are required to submit:

1. A completed and signed Non-Member SSP Program Participant Application;
2. A Letter of Invitation & Justification from an AZA SSP Program for the applicant to participate in their Program and;
3. A Letter affirming their membership in WAZA or their Super-Regional Zoological Association.

Wildlife facilities located within or outside the U.S. that are not open to the public on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis are required to submit:

1. A completed and signed Non-Member SSP Program Participant Application;
2. A Letter of Invitation & Justification from an AZA SSP Program for the applicant to participate in their Program;
3. Letters of Sponsorship from the directors of two different AZA-accredited institutions.

Applications are reviewed twice each year by AZA's Wildlife Conservation Management Committee (WCMC) – during the AZA Annual Conference (Applications due by June 15) and the AZA Mid-Year Conference (Applications due by January 15). No fees are charged for the Non-Member application.

The SSP Coordinator must work with the applicant to ensure all application materials are complete. The SSP Coordinator must submit the completed application and required letters to the AZA Conservation Department, and ensure that the applicant does not participate in their SSP Program until they are formally approved as a Non-Member Participant.

The AZA Conservation Department will review the application materials, and forward applications deemed to be complete and appropriate for review to the WCMC Vice-Chair for Non-Member Participation who will act as the coordinator of the Non-Member's application for SSP Participation. The Vice Chair for Non-Member Participation will review application materials to identify potential needs for clarification. The Vice Chair for Non-Member Participation will notify the AZA Conservation Department when the application is ready for WCMC review.

Review Processes

WCMC will evaluate the benefits of the applicant being approved as an SSP Program Participant in the context of the entire AZA ex-situ population which includes all SSP animals at AZA Accredited Institutions, Certified Related Facilities, and Approved Non-Member facilities.

Reviews are held in closed sessions, and are attended by WCMC members and advisors and AZA staff; in addition, members of the AZA Board of Directors, the SSP Coordinator, and/or the corresponding Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Chair may attend as well. Approval decisions are based on the information that exists at the time of the application review, not on future plans.

Crucial elements in WCMC's consideration include:

- Application completion
- Application support letters
- Sufficient evidence that the applicant follows the tenets of AZA's Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Animal Acquisition & Disposition Policy, and relevant Accreditation Standards, especially those related to animal care and welfare.

WCMC may take one of the following actions:

- *Approval:* WCMC will grant approval when it determines that the applicant facility meets the requirements of an approved Non-Member SSP Program Participant.
- *Table Approval:* WCMC may table a facility's materials if it determines that certain conditions must be met or additional information submitted before the facility can be considered as meeting Non-Member SSP Program Participant standards. In addition, WCMC must believe that the facility can meet those standards within one year.
- *Deny Approval:* WCMC will deny approval when a facility does not meet the minimum requirements (see page 2 – expectations) to be recognized as an approved Non-Member SSP Program Participant at the present time and, in its opinion, would require in excess of one year to successfully do so.

Once a decision is reached, the WCMC Vice-Chair for Non-Member Participation will inform the SSP Coordinator and the facility's Owner/CEO/Director of the outcome. An official letter noting the decision and points of discussion will be sent from the AZA Conservation Office to the SSP Coordinator and the facility Director within 30 days of the application review.

Approved Non-Member SSP Program Participant Responsibilities

Once approval has been granted the Approved Non-Member SSP Program Participant will:

1. Agree to adhere to AZA's Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Animal Acquisition & Disposition Policy, and relevant Accreditation Standards, especially those related to animal care and welfare.
2. Appoint an Institutional Liaison (IL) to serve as the primary point of contact for SSP communications.
3. Not display the SSP logo.
4. On an as-needed basis, agree to allow the sponsoring AZA-accredited institution, staff, Board, WCMC, TAG, and/or SSP representatives to visit the applicant institution/zoo and view their facility, upon request, to ensure adherence to AZA policies and animal care and welfare practices. Such visitors will provide feedback to the SSP, TAG, and the WCMC.
5. Submit a new, complete application for Non-Member Participant Approval before the end of the five-year approval period in order to continue participation in the SSP Program.

Loss of Approval Status

An Approved Non-Member Participant may have its approved status revoked if it fails to meet any of the Participant responsibilities identified above and in the application.

If AZA/WCMC deems it appropriate, the SSP Program may work with a Non-Member Participant that loses its Approved status for up to two years to help manage the population, facilitate disposition of animals owned by AZA institutions and, when possible, mentor re-approval of Participant status. In such instances, the Non-Member will not be an active participant in the SSP but still may be considered during the planning processes. During this time the SSP will not move SSP animals to the Non-Member facility.

For reinstatement as an Approved Non-Member SSP Program Participant, the Non-Member's benefit to the SSP population and adherence to AZA's Code of Professional Ethics, Animal Acquisition & Disposition Policy, and Animal Care and Welfare Standards must be reassessed.

Application Checklist

1. Completed and signed Application
2. Letter of invitation and justification from the SSP Program

And Either:

4. Letter Affirming membership from WAZA or a Super-Regional Zoological Association if the applicant is a zoo or aquariums located outside the U.S. and is already a member of WAZA or one of WAZA's Super-Regional Zoological Associations.

OR

5. 2 Letters of Sponsorship from the directors of separate, AZA-Accredited Institutions (if the applicant is a wildlife facility located within or outside the U.S. that is not open to the public on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis).

Supporting Materials

21. Does this application include a completed Letter of Invitation and Justification from the SSP Program Coordinator? Yes No

22. If the applicant is a zoo or aquariums located outside the U.S. and is already a member of WAZA or one of WAZA's Super-Regional Zoological Associations – Does this application include a completed Letter Affirming the applicant's membership from WAZA or a Super-Regional Zoological Association? Yes No

Name of Association:

Association Director Name:

Association Director's Telephone Number:

Association Director's E-mail Address:

- **OR** -

23. If the applicant is a wildlife facility located within or outside the U.S. that is not open to the public on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis – Does this application include completed Letters of Sponsorship from the directors of 2 AZA-Accredited Institutions? Yes No

Name of AZA-Accredited Sponsoring Institution # 1:

AZA Institution #1 Director Name:

Institution #1 Director's Telephone Number:

Institution #1 Director E-mail Address:

Name of AZA-Accredited Sponsoring Institution # 2:

AZA Institution #2 Director's Name:

Institution #2 Director's Telephone Number:

Institution #2 Director's E-mail Address:

Applicant Agreement to Accept All Non-Member SSP Program Participant Responsibilities

By signing below, I, (Name), (Title-this must be the Applicant Director or CEO) of the (Applicant Organization Name), fully agree to meet the responsibilities listed below if approved as a Non-Member Participant in the SSP Program and further acknowledge that failure to do so may result in a revocation of this approved status:

- I and my Staff will adhere to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Animal Acquisition & Disposition Policy, and Animal Care and Welfare Standards.
- I will provide the AZA SSP Program with complete studbook histories for all animals proposed for inclusion in the SSP managed population within 30 days of approval.
- I will not display the SSP logo.
- I will complete the full application process before the end of the five-year approval period ends in order to continue my Organization’s participation in the SSP Program.
- I will ensure that the sponsoring AZA-accredited institution, staff, Board, WCMC, TAG, and/or SSP representatives can schedule a visit to the applicant institution/zoo upon request to view the facilities and ensure adherence to AZA policies and animal care and welfare practices.

Applicant Director/CEO Signature:

Date:

Applicant- Do Not Fill Out This Section.

The WCMC Vice-Chair for Non-Member Participation will complete this section.

Is the applicant eligible to apply for approval as a Non-Member SSP Program Participant? Yes No

Is the Application filled out completely and signed by the Organization Director/CEO? Yes No

Is the Letter of invitation and justification from the SSP Program complete and included? Yes No

Is the Letter of Affirmation or Letters of Sponsorship complete and included? Yes No

Letter of Invitation and Justification from an AZA SSP Program for a Non-Member to Participate in their Program

Guidelines for Letter of Invitation and Justification of Non-Member Participation:

The letter from an SSP Coordinator should:

1. Clearly identify the SSP for which the Non-Member participant's involvement is being requested, as well as the SSP Coordinator's identity, telephone number and e-mail address;
2. Make a clear formal request for approval of the Non-Member as an SSP Participant;
3. Identify very specifically why the Non-Member's participation would benefit the SSP program and how approval of the Non-Member for participation in the SSP will provide genetic, demographic, population management, welfare, conservation or other benefits to the Program;
4. Provide confirmation that the SSP Coordinator has discussed in detail with the Non-Member the responsibilities that the Non-Member will assume upon approval as an SSP Participant including assurance that the Non-Member applicant has fully read and understood:
 - a. AZA's Code of Professional Ethics,
 - b. the Full Participation in the SSP Policy,
 - c. the Animal Acquisition and Disposition Policy, and the
 - d. relevant Accreditation Standards, especially those related to animal care and welfare.
5. Provide a clearly stated description of how the Non-Member applicant provides a level of animal care and welfare in keeping with AZA's standards and identify how the SSP Coordinator has developed this understanding. This section should include any forms of information that corroborate the applicant's adherence to AZA standards of animal care and welfare (e.g. photographs, veterinary statements, USDA inspection reports, etc.).
6. Identify any additional factors that substantiate how approval of the Non-Member applicant's participation will benefit the SSP Program and conservation of the species.
7. End with the signature of the SSP Coordinator and the date.

Letter Affirming Membership in a Recognized Zoological Association for Organizations Outside the United States that are not Members of AZA, which are Applying for Approval in an AZA SSP Program

Name of Association: *(WAZA or a WAZA Super-Regional Zoological Association)*

Association Director Name:

Association Director's Telephone Number:

Association Director's E-mail Address:

Guidelines for Letter Affirming Membership in a Recognized Zoological Association for Organizations Outside the U.S. that are not members of AZA, which are Applying for Approval as a Participant in an AZA SSP Program:

The letter from the appropriate association should:

1. Clearly identify the name of the organization /entity applying for approval as a participant in an AZA SSP Program;
2. Affirm that the applicant organization / entity is a current member in good standing of the Association providing this letter;
3. Provide clearly stated assurance that the applicant organization / entity provides a level of animal care and welfare in keeping with the standards of the Association providing this letter and identify how this information is known.
4. End with the signature of the Association Director and the date.

Letters From the Directors of Two AZA-accredited Institutions Sponsoring the Approval of a Non-Member Organization as an SSP Program Participant

Guidelines for Letter from the Director of an AZA-accredited Institution Sponsoring Approval of a Non-Member for SSP Participation:

The letter from an AZA-accredited Institution Director should:

1. Identify the SSP for which the Non-Member participant's involvement is being sponsored;
2. Provide a description articulating why you believe that the Non-Member applicant will provide a benefit to the SSP Program;
3. Provide a statement that you understand that your signature on the letter of sponsorship serves as your assurance that the applicant organization provides a level of animal care and welfare equivalent to or above that of the relevant AZA Accreditation Standards. In this section please describe when you (or identify who on your senior staff) have visited the applicant's facility and outline the observations / experiences that substantiate why you believe the applicant adheres, or will adhere, to AZA's Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Animal Acquisition & Disposition Policy, and relevant Accreditation Standards, especially those related to animal care and welfare.
4. Identify any additional factors that substantiate how approval of the Non-Member applicant's participation will benefit the SSP Program and conservation of the species
5. End with your signature and the date.