

Defining Field Conservation for the AZA Community

Developed by the Field Conservation Committee

Approved in 2013

Field conservation is directly contributing to the long-term survival of species in natural ecosystems and habitats, as defined below:

1. Direct Action
 - a. Field work. Direct costs of **institution-sponsored field work** including research, community-based programs, population management, translocations, reintroductions, park management, securing of additional park space
 - b. Species Recovery. The direct cost of food, housing, veterinary care, and husbandry of animals in captive breeding programs where the animals are **slated** to be reintroduced back into the wild within a defined period of time in accordance with an existing **recovery program**. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. The rehabilitation of animals that are part of a managed program and they are scheduled to be reintroduced into the wild
 - ii. The direct cost of a wildlife rescue operation of state, federal, or provincially protected animals that are being reintroduced back into the wild.
 - c. Veterinary Care.
 - i. Direct costs of veterinary care for wildlife disease issues and animal health issues for animals found in the institution's collection **if it directly impacts the conservation of species in the wild**.
 - ii. Direct costs of veterinary care for wildlife disease issues and animal health issues for **animals not found in the institution's collection**.
 - d. Conservation Assurance Populations. Direct cost of food, housing and care of animals that are being housed at the institution or in-country facility, either on or off exhibit, which cannot be reintroduced back into the wild at this time because of *in-situ* conditions. The species must be classified as either "Extinct in the Wild" or "Critically Endangered" on the IUCN Red List or if not listed on the IUCN Red List, should meet the criteria for "Extinct in the Wild" or "Critically Endangered". Plus, the institution must be actively working with partners to determine a strategy for reintroduction back into the wild. (An example is a population of frogs that cannot be reintroduced because of the chytrid fungus.)
2. Research
 - a. Direct costs of **research that takes place outside of the institution** and helps protect species in the wild, or protection of species or ecosystems *in-situ*.
 - b. Direct costs of **research that takes place inside the institution** but is essential to the protection of species in the wild, or protection of species or ecosystems *in-situ*.
3. Field Conservation Education
 - a. Awareness-building through informational/educational materials. Direct costs for work done on behalf of an NGO that **publicizes conservation and not the institution itself**. (ex. Developing and printing guides for customs inspection agents.)
 - b. Outcome-oriented Education. Direct costs of conservation education programs that take place **outside** of the institution and **target an audience that directly impacts the species or habitat** of concern. Also includes the direct costs of an **in-zoo/aquarium** program that is specific to protecting a local species or habitat of concern. Ideally, programs can be shown to improve wild animal numbers or survival. General education program costs do not qualify.
 - c. Training and Building Conservation Capacity. Direct costs of **training staff or volunteers not employed by the institution** for field conservation work. This may include providing scholarships or sponsoring participation in workshops or conferences and financially supporting local citizens in conservation and research. (ex. Training citizen scientists to participate in field conservation projects as defined above).

4. Advocacy
 - a. Direct costs of work done to lobby for or generate support for conservation **other than for direct support for the institution** (ex. Lobbying to strengthen a law that provides increased protection of animals in the wild.)
5. Fundraising/Direct Grants
 - a. **Cash grants** made to other conservation organizations to support field work that meets the above definitions.
 - b. The value of any **goods, equipment or supplies (including educational supplies)** donated to field conservation projects as defined above.
 - c. **In-kind personnel** support if your institution's employee is doing the work that would normally be done by an employee of another conservation organization. This would be direct costs only, not administrative overhead.
 - i. This may include salary and benefit costs of person(s) managing field conservation grants, reflecting percentage of time spent doing so

Note₁: Direct costs may include **salary and benefits** of employees who are doing field conservation work as defined above, reflecting the percentage of time spent doing so.

Note₂: **Sanctuary** support may be included as a field conservation expenditure if the sanctuary:

- Is in range-country;
- Has an active conservation education program;
- Works with law enforcement to assist authorities with confiscations; and/or
- Participates in field conservation activities as defined above (would include reintroduction, research, assurance populations, etc.)

Note₃: Green Operational Practices are being defined and documented for AZA through a separate instrument because they directly impact an institution's bottom line and the link to protection of species in the wild is indirect.