Ambassador Animal Guidelines Development & Revision Processes

1) The Ambassador Animal Guidelines (AAG) template is located on the AZA website.

In the event an Animal Care Manual (ACM) exists for a species, or is in the development process, the AAG will be incorporated into the ACM development process or integrated as appropriate at the next scheduled revision.

In the absence of an ACM, the AAG would continue through the development and revision process outlined in this document.

2) A species may be identified as a priority to create AAG by the AASAG, TAG/SSP or other relevant committee. The TAG(s) and/or SSP(s) will identify a contact person (AAG Coordinator) who will serve as the main communications conduit between the AASAG, TAG/SSP and the AZA Conservation and Education Staff. The AAG Coordinator will be responsible for seeking input from the TAG/SSP, collecting TAG/SSP-based information, composing and editing the AAG, updating the TAG/SSP and AASAG Chairs on the AAG progress, and communicating AAG issues with AZA Staff.

3) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will consult with the AAG Coordinator to monitor the progress of the AAG, be available to answer questions and assist with challenges as requested, and will ensure that the AAG Coordinator and the TAG/SSP are informed of relevant issues or concerns regarding the AAG development, review, or approval processes.

4) The AAG Coordinator, along with an AASAG Liaison, will work with the TAG/SSP, AASAG, Conservation Education Committee, and other relevant committees to compile all scientific data and professional information about the natural history, management, handling, and interpretation strategies of the taxa(on) and will incorporate this information into the pre-existing sections of the AAG template. All sections of the AAG should be completed unless:

- The AAG Coordinator explicitly states that the section is not relevant to the taxa(on) and provides justification for omitting this section in writing.

- The AAG Coordinator determines that information for the section does not exist, in which case, an explicit statement should be included that recommends the need for research in this area.

5) The AAG Coordinator and TAG/SSP may add additional chapters or sections to the AAG if they believe the information is warranted and not included elsewhere.

6) The AAG Coordinator will ensure that Institution names and individual names are NOT included in the content of the AAG (except when listed as a contributing author or editor on the second page). The AAG is a compilation of "best practices" that the authors recommend, or "problematic practices" that the authors do not recommend, and institutions/individuals may not be associated with either.

7) The AAG Coordinator will ensure that each photo included in the AAG is representative of the written content that references it. Individuals submitting photos must affirm in writing that they have permission from the photographer and/or facility to release the photo to AZA for publication with credit and should indicate to whom the photo should be credited, either the name of the photographer or the institution. Photos that include recognizable people (i.e. clear views of faces) require a release form from the subject(s) to be submitted or the submitting individual must affirm in writing that they have the rights to share the photo without such a release (i.e. a visitor photo release is included in their ticketing policy). A photo release form can be downloaded from AZA’s website at, https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/2332/aza_photo_release_form.pdf. In all cases, the submitting individual is encouraged to consult their communications department before submitting photos. All photos should have a 1.5 point black border and include a credit in the following format below the photo: "Photo Credit: Photographer or Facility Name."
8) The AAG Coordinator and the AASAG Liaison will ensure that all editing guidelines are incorporated and then submit the first draft of the AAG to the AASAG Steering Committee for review.

9) After the AASAG Steering Committee review, the AAG Coordinator and the AASAG Liaison will submit the draft to AZA.

10) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will acknowledge receipt of the Draft AAG and will initiate the editorial process.

11) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will confirm that any removals of AAG sections are justified and will communicate any disagreements with the AAG Coordinator. The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will work with the AAG Coordinator to resolve any disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved.

12) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will edit all sections of the Draft AAG, will remove confusion between “must” and “should” statements, and whenever possible, ensure that sensitive topics (aggression, disease, stress, death of an animal, etc.) are contextually framed in a manner that relates these occurrences with those that occur with animals in the wild, identify research needs and identify sections that are inconsistent and/or lack content or clarity.

13) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will work with the AAG Coordinator, TAG/SSP and AASAG review members to resolve any editorial disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved, at which time the AZA member comment and external review process of the final Draft AAG will be initiated.

14) The AAG Coordinator will communicate with the TAG/SSP and AASAG to identify two or more external review experts (including one who specializes in the care and presentation of the taxa) who are willing to review the final Draft AAG within 30 days of its receipt.

The AAG Coordinator will submit the contact information of the external review experts along with the Draft AAG to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff so they may be included in the 30-day review period.

15) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will post the final draft of the AAG on the TAG’s Program page of the AZA website and send it to the following for the required 30-day member comment period: External Reviewers, TAG Steering Committee and/or SSP Management Group, Ambassador Animal SAG Steering Committee, appropriate Program Leaders, Chair of the Conservation Education Committee, and the Chair of the Animal Welfare Committee.

16) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will collect all comments from these reviewers, organize them according to their corresponding AAG sections, and distribute them via email to the AAG Coordinator at the close of the 30-day review period. Please note: if comments are not received from Committees or SAGs during the 30-day comment period, it is assumed that their silence indicates that they have no comments to make and we will move forward with the publication as is.

17) The AAG Coordinator will work with the TAG/SSP and AASAG to review all comments, incorporate suggestions as deemed necessary and provide a written justification report for omitting suggestions as deemed unnecessary. The AAG Coordinator will submit the now Pending-Approval AAG and justification report to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff within one month.

18) The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will review the written justification and will edit the Pending-Approval AAG within two weeks of its receipt. If any edits are made, the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will work with the AAG Coordinator to ensure that they are warranted and to resolve any editorial disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved.
19) Once completed, the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will provide final approval and post the AAG on the AZA website accordingly.

20) If an Animal Care Manual (ACM) for the species/taxa is developed after the AAG is approved, its content will be integrated in the ACM's Ambassador Animal and other relevant chapters as appropriate.

Required Five-Year Revision of the Ambassador Animal Guidelines

1) Within 5 years of final approval of the AAG and based on a schedule chosen by the TAG/SSP, the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff will contact the AASAG Chair to initiate a required revision of the AAG.

2) The AAG Coordinator will work with the TAG/SSP to update and revise the AAG via the Microsoft Word Track Changes feature and will resubmit the Revised AAG to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff within 60 days of the request to initiate the formal review process.

3) If absolutely necessary, edits can be made to the AAG before the annual update. Requests for urgent modifications must be submitted to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Staff by the AAG Coordinator with approval from the TAG/SSP.