

# Operational Manual of the International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade

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## 1. Introduction

Identifying and reducing human and animal health risks from wildlife trade needs an internationally coordinated and cooperative approach. To this end, the German Government initiated the International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade in 2021 as an inclusive and interdisciplinary platform.

## 2. Key Features, Products, and Services

This document defines the mode of operation and cooperation within the Alliance and works in conjunction with the separate *Charter*. To become a member, an applicant shall consent to both documents.

### 2.1 International, interdisciplinary, and inclusive platform

The Alliance seeks to include all actors who may offer additional information and evidence, skills, and experience towards the Alliance's goals:

- This will include national governments from around the globe, non-governmental organizations, representatives from civil society and Indigenous peoples' organizations, international organizations, research institutions, academia and the private sector to achieve its aim to become a platform for international, interdisciplinary and inclusive communication and match-making.
- The Alliance recognizes that the perspectives of Indigenous peoples and local communities and their traditional and indigenous knowledge systems are central to addressing health risks from wildlife trade and contact; it will therefore strive to actively include these perspectives in discussions, recommendations and implementation.

### 2.2 Aspiration to inform effective interventions

The Alliance does not seek to be prescriptive, but inform effective interventions in support of health risk mitigation in wildlife trade, to that end,

- It seeks to support science being translated into policy, point out knowledge gaps, and offer evidence-based recommendations how to best formulate regulation.
- Its actions strive to be supportive of and complementary to existing initiatives.

### 2.3 Products and services

The Alliance will provide the following **for members**:

- Make available and discuss latest research, developments, and evidence-based recommendations.
- Offer access to expert knowledge and insights into local realities.
- Offer an appropriate exchange online platform, incl. online seminars and other formats for different disciplines.
- Foster collaboration based on members' profiles and needs.
- Facilitate individual working groups according to members' interests to further explore topics, elaborate insights and offer guidance; working groups are determined by the Alliance's membership, supervised by co-leaders, and supported by the secretariat on demand.
- Keep members informed with news from other members through the website.

- Offer opportunities to share expertise to promote international dialogue.

Within the Alliance different members may choose to come together and work collaboratively on e.g.:

- Compiling explanatory or “policy papers”, including policy recommendations, and
- Offering best practice and lessons learned on topics of interest in form of papers, webinars, in-person conferences or training sessions.

Such outputs are expected to include the perspective of local communities and/or Indigenous peoples and their traditional and indigenous knowledge systems as much as possible. Members are expected to ensure that output of any kind offered under the Alliance’s brand with the Alliance’s logo must be directly linked to the Alliance’s goals and activities – and receive clearance from the Steering Committee. Details will be determined by the Steering Committee.

### **3. Membership**

#### **3.1 Becoming a member**

Becoming a member is voluntary, free of charge and is indicated by consenting to the Alliance’s Charter with its vision, mission and goals and this document, its Operational Manual.

To do so, applicants will register on the Alliance’s website ([alliance-health-wildlife.org](http://alliance-health-wildlife.org)) and consent to both, Charter and Operational Manual. The registration will then be made transparent for members; if any standing member has justified objections regarding a new applicant joining, the concern will be forwarded to the Steering Committee, which will then review the membership application within four weeks. Once approved, the Secretariat will add the applicant as new member. The secretariat may ask new members for their logo for presentation purposes on the Alliances’ website.

By registering, members express their intent to

- Support the goals of the Alliance.
- Contribute to the Alliance’s goals with local, national, regional, and/or international activities.
- Communicate about activities and plans with the Alliance and its members.
- Participate in spaces for knowledge sharing and common learning.
- Explore possibilities for cooperation and common actions with other members.

#### **3.2 Engagement and participation**

Members are entitled and encouraged to use the platform for mutual exchange and learning, e.g. to:

- Actively participate in general meetings, initiate projects, contribute to Alliance initiatives.
- Utilize and enrich information provided by the Alliances secretariat via the members’ area. (Members are responsible for accessing the content themselves).
- Share information about work in progress, learnings, research, and results towards the Alliance’s goals.

- Initiate and create working groups towards the achievement of the Alliance's goals.

### **3.3 Collaboration principles**

Membership is based on mutual respect and the belief that the mixture of perspectives is decisive in achieving the Alliance's goals. By joining, members agree and commit to the following collaboration principles:

- All member organizations have equal rights and duties.
- Collaboration among members is based on trust.
- Meetings among members are held in confidentiality (Chatham House Rule), unless agreed otherwise.
- Discussions are characterized by respect for traditional, local, and Indigenous peoples' knowledge systems.
- Conflicts of interest and biases are communicated transparently.

### **3.4 Ending Membership**

A member may withdraw from the Alliance at any time by giving notice in writing to the Secretariat. Such notice will be effective upon the date of receipt by the Secretariat. The Plenary may decide with a simple majority to expel a member from the Alliance in case of

- repeated or serious actions contrary to the interests of the Alliance or
- repeated violations against the principles of the membership (Chapters 3.1-3.3).

Members can raise such concern with the Steering Committee; proposals for voting on an expulsion need to be made by the Steering Committee.

When a member who leaves the Alliance for whatever reason holds an elected position within the Alliance, the position is opened for re-election as soon as possible.

Members will be contacted after two years of inactivity to check their continued interest in remaining in the Alliance. If they don't respond, their membership will be terminated.

## **4. Plenary**

### **4.1 Purpose and Functions**

The plenary is the main body of the Alliance. It offers the space for members to meet, exchange and collaborate. The Plenary is where ideas for working groups are voiced and debated, collaboration projects are initiated, where questions to the Steering Committee and/or Secretariat are raised. In total, the Plenary will review, guide, and stimulate the work of the Alliance and decide on all Alliances' matters that are not explicitly delegated to the Steering Committee or the Secretariat:

- elect the Steering Committee (see chapter 5.3),
- elect the Secretariat (see chapter 6.2),
- adopt the strategic plan drawn up annually by the Steering Committee,
- determine the general policy and strategy for the Alliance,
- make proposals for working groups,
- review the results of working groups and other initiatives.

## 4.2 Composition

The Plenary is composed of all registered members of the Alliance. The Plenary shall meet at least once a year, either in presence or virtually, convened by the Secretariat. Members of the Plenary may make proposals for agenda and voting items. The Plenary draft agenda will be circulated in advance, and meeting documentation will be provided afterwards by the Secretariat that will also host the meetings.

## 4.3 Voting rights

All decisions in Plenary shall be made by consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions may be reached by simple majority vote, with one vote per member – both individual and organization.

Exceptions to this rule apply for voting on Steering Committee seats. The details are found below in Chapter 5.

# 5. Steering Committee

## 5.1 Purpose and Functions

The Steering Committee is elected for a term of three years and is responsible to:

- Formulate the strategic plan for the Alliance and set targets for further development and orientation, supported by and in cooperation with the Secretariat.
- Set topics and priorities for the Alliance's focus. This includes approving the Alliance's work plan for the following year and reviewing the previous year's achievements towards the Alliances' goals.
- Give general clearance for the Alliance's logo under the Alliance's brand to be used for output by members or groups of members.
- Represent the Alliance and its goals, engage and communicate with other initiatives and external partners in different fora and platforms.
- Safeguard the smooth functioning of the Alliance between the Plenary meetings.
- Request the Secretariat to support selected Working Groups.
- The Secretariat together with the Steering Committee strives to secure sustainable funding for the Alliance.

## 5.2 Composition

Given the Alliance's interdisciplinary, international, and inclusive character and composition of diverse members, the composition of the Steering Committee attempts to reflect this by including a range of topics, regions, and areas of action.

The Steering Committee consists of 11 members (seats). All members have the same rights and obligations. There are two categories of seats with slightly different modes of election:

Category A (elected by the member organizations):

One seat each is reserved for the following five themes:

1. Health & microbiology
2. Wildlife trade, biodiversity conservation
3. Global environmental change & big picture

4. Law, regulation
5. Anthropology, psychology, behavioral & social sciences

One seat each is reserved for the following world regions:

6. Latin America & Caribbean
7. Africa
8. Asia, Pacific & Oceania

One seat each is reserved for the following areas of action:

9. Governments or governmental agencies.
10. Indigenous peoples' and local communities' representatives.

Category B (elected by the individual members, i.e. all Alliance members that are not organizations)

One seat is reserved for

11. A representative for individual members.

### 5.3 Elections

The Steering Committee is elected by the Plenary. Elections are held at the plenary meeting, unless a plenary meeting cannot be held, in which case the Secretariat may provide an appropriate online voting mechanism.

The tenure of the Steering Committee is three years. Membership in the Steering Committee is limited to two terms.

Elections for the Steering Committee are held as follows:

Members may **stand for election** for Steering Committee seats in the following way:

- For any given seat in Category A (representing topics, world regions or areas of action):
  - Member organizations may nominate one person, but not more, to stand for election.
  - Individual members (i.e. that are not organizations) may also stand for election.
- For a seat in Category B (representing individual members):
  - Only individual members (i.e. that are not organizations) may stand for election.

Members stand for election by announcing the desire to do so to the Secretariat. The Secretariat collects a profile of each candidate and makes the profiles available to the Plenary at least one week prior to the vote.

Members may stand or nominate candidates for election for one seat only.

Members **vote** for Steering Committee seats in the following way:

- The Plenary votes on each Steering Committee seat separately. Each seat goes to the candidate that receives the highest number of votes. Whenever there is a tie, another round of voting may be held, limited to the tied candidates.
- For any given seat in Category A (representing topics, regions, or areas of action):
  - Only members that are organizations have the right to vote.
- For the seat in Category B (seat that represents individual members):

- Only individual members (i.e. that are not organizations themselves) have the right to vote.

Elected Steering Committee members commit to act as representatives of the respective topic, region, area of action or group of members, and **not** as representatives of their own organization. Conflicts of interest must be declared to the Secretariat upon declaring the intent to stand for election. The Secretariat makes these transparent to the members.

## 5.4 Meetings

The Steering Committee meets at least three times a year. Meetings are convened by the Secretariat, either physically or using appropriate on-line tools.

## 5.5. Ending the Steering Committee membership

If a member leaves the Steering Committee early for whatever reason, the affected seat is proposed for re-election (either at the next plenary meeting or through an appropriate online voting mechanism). However, the tenure of the replacement member is limited to the remaining tenure of the member who was replaced.

The Plenary may decide to end the tenure of any Steering Committee member, or of the whole Steering Committee, before the full tenure is over. The intent to conduct such a vote needs to be announced to the Secretariat jointly by at least ten per cent of member organizations together with at least ten per cent of individual members (that are not organizations).

In case such an announcement is made, the Secretariat organizes a vote within four weeks, either by convening a plenary meeting or by providing an appropriate on-line tool. For the vote to pass, it must be supported by the majority of the entire membership of organizations and by the majority of the entire membership of individual members.

If the vote is successful, the tenure of each affected Steering Committee seat is terminated with immediate effect, and the Secretariat is charged with organizing the election of a replacement for the affected seat(s) within six weeks. The tenure of the re-elected seat(s) is equal to the remaining tenure of the replaced member(s), unless the whole Steering Committee is replaced, in which case the newly-elected Steering Committee starts with the full three-year tenure.

## 6. Secretariat

### 6.1 Purpose and Functions

The main purpose of the Secretariat is to facilitate the smooth operation of the Alliance, its work and progress towards its goals.

- The Secretariat works as the overall **coordinating and managing entity** of the Alliance.
- It supports the **Steering Committee** in their work, including convening, organizing and documenting its meetings, regularly updating and consulting the Steering Committee on key issues and developments, and bringing to its attention and facilitating decisions by the Steering Committee on adaptations, modifications,

opportunities, and challenges that address the long-term strategic development, direction, and priorities of the Alliance.

- It enables collaboration and communication among **members**, by establishing appropriate website infrastructure and devising and creating appropriate formats and opportunities.
- It ensures a conducive, continuously improving **website infrastructure** to serve as knowledge hub and enable highlighting lessons learned, facilitating exchange and match-making of interdisciplinary expertise and experience, advising members on tools and criteria for knowledge sharing.
- It serves as the Alliance central point of contact and **liaise with other related initiatives and stakeholders**: It ensures that the Alliance is represented in relevant international fora and strategically engaged and heard in relevant policy processes; it safeguards communication of the Alliance's work to the interested public and other stakeholders, promoting the One Health approach and joint communication activities by Alliance members. It will identify and support strategic and innovative partnerships with other initiatives and/or organizations, complementing related activities.
- All services provided by the Secretariat are dedicated to support the Charter and the Alliance's values and goals.
- Once per year the Secretariat provides an **annual report** to the Plenary.
- The Secretariat together with the Steering Committee strives to secure **sustainable funding for the Alliance**.

## 6.2 Composition

The Secretariat can be hosted by any member organization that is capable of allocating sufficient personnel and financial resources to this work.

The Secretariat is elected in the Plenary for four years. The Plenary may decide to terminate the Secretariat's term early with a vote by the majority of the entire membership.

## 7. Working Groups

Working groups are determined by the Alliance's membership and its principles. The Secretariat will facilitate selected working groups which are embedded in the Alliance's overall strategic plan.

### 7.1 Establishing Working Groups

Members can propose and create working groups according to their interests to further explore topics, elaborate insights and offer guidance. Each working group shall nominate a co-leader and report continuously, but at least once a year, on their output to the Secretariat and offer insights to the Plenary, other working groups and/o the wider public.

### 7.2 Scientific Expert Group

To provide scientific input and comment upon requests from outside and members of the Alliance, a Scientific Expert Commission will be set up as a standing working group. On the basis of selection criteria, to be approved by the Steering Committee, 7-12 scientists from the membership will be selected by the Steering Committee.