Summary of major findings; Actions agreed at the meeting

1. There has been substantial progress achieved in implementing MIKE in the Southeast Asia elephant range States during the first implementation Phase of MIKE (2003-2006). This has mainly come about through the collaboration between the CITES Secretariat’s MIKE Subregional Support Unit in Bangkok, government partners from Asian elephant range States and NGO’s, notably Wildlife Conservation Society. The main achievements of Phase I include:

   - Training of 181 staff at 8 sites in 7 countries in standardized law enforcement monitoring methods, and the initiation of standard systems for collection of patrol data.
   - Dung-count based population estimates for Asian elephants for two sites in Indonesia (Way Kambas and Bukit Barisan Selatan), and two sites in Malaysia (Gua Musang/Taman Negara and Kluang/Endau Rompin).
   - DNA-based population estimates completed at one site in Lao PDR (Nakai Nam-Theun), and one site in Cambodia (SBCA).
   - Field staff capacity developed to conduct future population surveys via national MIKE survey methods training courses.
   - Training of staff in use of the MIKE database.
   - Distribution of various equipment to enable MIKE field activities (GPS) and data assembly (computers, printers).

2. Although patrol data continues to be collected at some Southeast Asian MIKE sites as part of ongoing management programmes (e.g. in SBCA, Cambodia), there has been no systematic accumulation and processing of carcass or patrol data for the MIKE programme since 2007. This is largely due to the absence of a MIKE Subregional Support Unit and a Subregional Support Officer. Also, former MIKE staff from range States, including many National Officers and Steering Committee Members, and some Site Officers have now moved on to other posts and have been replaced with new staff who are not familiar with the MIKE programme.

3. Despite the hiatus, adequate MIKE Baseline information and carcass data could be collected in 2007 from sufficient sites to meet the requirements of the Standing Committee and allow the establishment of formally approved baseline levels of illegal killing for Southeast Asia’s MIKE sites.

4. The range State participants present at the meeting expressed their continued support for the MIKE programme, indicating that they saw the value of MIKE for contributing to their national elephant management and conservation plans and
activities. There was sufficient interest to re-establish a functioning MIKE SSU if certain needs could be met in the countries and sites, and sufficient financial external resources could be obtained.

5. An agenda and working programme of the meeting were agreed upon (see attached CITES MIKE Southeast Asia SCM Agenda). On the first day of the meeting, the key items were a review of the history and current status of the MIKE programme, presentation of the ToRs for the MIKE Subregional Steering Committee, a review of accomplishments of the MIKE programme in Southeast Asia, and Country Reports on the implementation of MIKE in the elephant range States. On the second day, the key items were an outline of the strategy for future implementation of MIKE along with reports on technical developments with the MIKE programme, reports on TAG issues relevant to Southeast Asia, and a review of recent trends in data assembled by the ETIS that concern Southeast Asia.

6. ToRs for the MIKE Subregional Steering Committee (SSC) were presented and adopted.

7. CITES and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Asia Program have initiated work on a collaborative project;

   a. To assist in the collection and analysis of MIKE data from the Southeast Asian range states
   b. To consult with the Southeast Asian range states, and other stakeholders, about the implementation of MIKE in the subregion and the creation of a MIKE subregional support unit
   c. To assist in the deployment of MIKE in Southeast Asia
   d. To facilitate the reestablishment of a MIKE subregional support unit in Southeast Asia, and
   e. To assist in the organization of the Subregional Steering Committee meeting

As part of the project, WCS will undertake a needs assessment for the subregional deployment of the MIKE programme in Southeast Asia. The assessment will be conducted by Dr Antony Lynam with inputs from Mr Simon Hedges, WCS Asian Elephant Coordinator. Dr Lynam will contact the Steering Committee members individually to arrange visits to each of the range States and MIKE Sites during July-November 2009. Dr Lynam will effectively be the point of contact for the range States for MIKE in Southeast Asia during the transition phase. He will draw up a detailed implementation plan for the MIKE programme in Southeast Asia reflecting the needs and capacities of the range States and Sites.

8. Based on presentations by participants at the meeting, it was agreed that the degree to which MIKE Sites are able to implement MIKE in Phase II (2007-2011) will depend on the following:

   a. Adequate and functional MIKE equipment in place (e.g. GPS or other tracking devices, computers, printers)
b. Boundaries of MIKE Sites clearly defined

c. Sufficient expertise available for conducting elephant population surveys when these are required

d. Sufficient staff and resources/budgets available for effective patrolling at the MIKE Sites

e. Support in place to facilitate communications and logistics of MIKE staff and rangers

f. Where staff and resources/budgets permit, regular patrolling is undertaken inside the MIKE Sites

g. Local language MIKE forms, and simple MIKE reporting and analytical procedures available

h. MIKE data and analysis pertinent to and used for adaptive management of the Sites

i. Staff capacity for LEM is built

j. Capacity is available for conducting elephant population surveys

k. Capacity is built at the national and site level for using MIST and analyzing MIKE data

l. MIST databases in place or in preparation

m. Maintain or expand collaboration with NGOs and other stakeholders operating at the sites

A short questionnaire filled in by the range State participants has identified the particular gaps for the MIKE Sites in each range State.

9. Issues that need to be addressed at the level of range States and the subregion include the following:

a. MIKE Subregional Support Unit for Southeast Asia

   Thailand proposed to maintain the SSU office in the premises of the CITES Management Authority in Bangkok because space is being kept open for this purpose. Other countries may be interested in hosting the SSU, and the SSU could also be located with an IGO or NGO, as in the case in Africa where the 4 SSU's are hosted by IUCN. These options would need to be objectively explored.

   The re-establishment of a functional SSU requires external funding and the participants agreed to assist in securing these resources (see c).

b. Annual Subregional Steering Committee (SSC) meetings
The participants agreed to hold future meetings of the SSC at a MIKE Site rather than in a city. In 2010, it was proposed to hold the meeting in Vietnam (Cat Tien), followed by Malaysia (Meraoph) in 2011.

The participants considered that range States should try bringing their National and Site Officers to these meeting at their own expense.

c. Funding proposals and range State support

It was proposed to resurrect a proposal for support to MIKE in Southeast Asia that should have been submitted to ASEAN in 2007, but for reasons explained in paragraph 2 above had not been acted upon. The representatives from the range States agreed to provide letters of support for the implementation of MIKE Phase II in Southeast Asia for use in submitting funding proposals. Such funding proposals would be shared with national MIKE Officers and other relevant government agencies for their inputs. A suggestion to organize a meeting for donors, as had been agreed in South Asia, might not be needed or even possible in Southeast Asia.

d. Feedback loop (MIKE data analysis, recommendations and site analysis)

The lack of knowledge about the results and outputs of the MIKE programme, and of feedback from higher-level analysis to the field should be addressed on a country-by-country basis. This will be followed up with individual range States and MIKE Sites in the context of the WCS consultancy.

e. Expand and consolidate partnerships with stakeholders interested in elephant conservation and management

The existing partnerships with NGOs such as WCS, FFI, WWF and TRAFFIC should be maintained. New partnerships with IGOs or relevant international agencies could be explored such as IUCN, UNEP, FAO, and the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (chaired by Thailand).

f. Assist National and Site Officers in communication, data collection, data transfer and analysis

Range States should nominate MIKE National and Site Officers and notify CITES MIKE about eventual changes in their MIKE staffing. These Officers should receive targeted support and training to adequately perform their MIKE responsibilities. It was agreed that the issue of assistance will also be followed up with relevant individuals in the context of the WCS consultancy.

A subregional network of MIKE officers should be reestablished to facilitate communication and sharing of information.

g. Rationalize MIKE institutional arrangements

As reported by certain range States in the questionnaire concerning the national status of implementation of the MIKE programme, there is need to
streamline the institutional arrangements for linking Sites with National authorities and sharing information. These problematic situations will be addressed in the context of the WCS consultancy.

h. Staff turnover

Frequent staff turnover at site or national level is a recognized problem that hampers the normal MIKE data collection and information flows, and prevents the programme to run smoothly. The participants agreed that institutionalizing training standards and programmes, and the development of MIKE manuals and information tools could help addressing this problem. Such materials should handed over when one staff person leaves and a replacement comes in.

i. Identify training and capacity building needs

The participants agreed that the training and capacity building needs at the national and sub-regional level had to be determined for the full implementation of MIKE. This will allow developing and providing targeted, pertinent training packages and assistance.

Translations of patrol forms and MIST databases need to be considered for all range States/sites. Local language patrol forms are already in use in Cambodia

j. Connect/integrate MIKE with other in situ efforts and with national or regional elephant conservation and CITES work

It was agreed to identify possibilities for connecting MIKE activities with pertinent biodiversity conservation efforts in sites and range States, particularly tools deployed in the context of tiger and rhinoceros conservation activities. Examples include: databases applied by Tigers Forever (Panthera/WCS); Rhino Protection Units that could be use to partially implement the MIKE programme; sharing of elephant data collected by tiger or rhino patrol teams, and the reverse for tiger and rhino data collected under MIKE LEM activities.

k. MIKE as a regional platform for elephant management and conservation

The commonly implemented MIKE programme offers opportunities to range States to exchange management experiences and best practices in elephant conservation, share technical expertise and resources, develop joint policies, etc. As such, solid MIKE structures enhance regional collaboration and coherence in Asian elephant conservation efforts and the implementation of relevant CITES provisions. This was recognized by the participants.

l. Ensure coherent implementation of technical and scientific recommendations emanating from the MIKE Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The recommendations from the TAG concerning MIKE data collections forms, MIST, MIKE equipment, elephant populations survey standards and other
technical aspects of the MIKE programme should be communicated to MIKE Officers in the subregion, integrated in capacity building and training, and implemented at all levels.

10. The participants from the Range states agreed to collate their carcass records and to submit annual or monthly elephant carcass summaries by 1 August 2009.

11. Recent analyses of ivory trade data collated in the context of ETIS (Elephant Trade Information System) indicated changes in the relative importance of certain Southeast Asian countries in domestic trade. The data suggests that China has increased regulation of its domestic trade. Of special concern was the increase in illegal trade in Thailand as evidenced by the lowered ratio of in-country to out-of-country reports of ivory seizures, an indicator of reduced enforcement efficiency. Ivory seizure data indicated changes in the trafficking routes with increasing amounts of African ivory being smuggled through ports in Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand) to consumers in China. The ETIS Director explained his intention to visit Thailand and Vietnam after the meeting to inform local CITES Management Authorities of the new trends, and to seek their cooperation to improve levels of enforcement and compliance with relevant CITES provisions concerning the trade in ivory.