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INFORMATION AND DATA HANDLING, ACCESS AND RELEASE POLICY AND PROTOCOLS

1. Policy

The principal objective of MIKE is to make monitoring information available to guide the conservation of elephants and to guide any decisions at the site, national, sub-regional and global levels that may impact on their long term future. It is inherent in that objective that the information be publicly available, be transparent, be objective and be trusted. By participating in MIKE, the Range States undertake to support and uphold these principles. Nevertheless it is important that there be protocols that guide the implementation of this policy.

2. Protocols

2.1 Definitions

- Information is here defined as the outcomes of the analysis of the data, including the presentation of trends and relationships, among others.
- Data is here defined as the facts gathered under MIKE processes. This covers data collected in the MIKE forms, spatial data, survey data and any other data that have been primarily collected under MIKE auspices to facilitate MIKE analyses. Data that are provided voluntarily will be governed by the decisions of the data provider. Data collected under collaborative arrangements will respect the needs of the collaborator. Data already available in the public domain are excluded from this definition, but not from possible use in any analysis
- Public domain in the MIKE context refers to information and data provided in published reports or placed on the CITES web-site. Included in this context in regard to Asian population surveys, is information and data available in the Asian Elephant Action Plan of the IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group and in regard to African population surveys, information and data provided to the African Elephant Database (AED). In this latter context, it is also agreed that the AED will continue to be the repository of all African population estimates produced for MIKE sites.

2.2 Handling

- The raw data will be made available on a monthly basis by the site officer to the national officer. The national officer will in turn submit the raw data on a quarterly basis to the Sub-regional Support Officer (SSO), who will also pass it on to the MIKE Central Co-ordinating Unit (MCCU). The SSOs and MCCU will be bound by the access and release protocols in regard to such data. Access to the raw data, as described above, will facilitate the quality control of any analysis.
- The initial analysis of the data will be undertaken at the MIKE site level on a quarterly basis with an annual reanalysis. This information will then be passed on to the MIKE National Officer, who will undertake further analysis, particularly where more than one site occurs in a Range State on the quarterly and annual cycle.

- The National officer in turn will pass on this information to the SSO. The SSO will undertake the Sub-regional analysis on a quarterly and annual basis and submit it for consideration to the Sub-regional Steering Committee members. This latter process will normally be undertaken by correspondence on a quarterly basis and by a specific meeting on an annual basis.
- The SSO will in turn send on the information to the Director/Data Manager in the MCCU. The MCCU will undertake to put together the information in a Regional context on an annual basis and consult the members of the Steering Committees.
- In preparation for the CoP, another data analysis effort will be required over the inter CoP time period and this will be presented in draft form to a regional meeting.

2.3 Access and Release

- The MIKE data and information belongs to the Range States. Until such time as the data and information pertaining to any Range State is in the public domain, any requests for access to and use of such data and information will be made to the designated MIKE contact for that purpose in that country - normally the MIKE National Officer. In this context, the Range State concerned may continue to place some restriction on data, after information is made public. Under these circumstances, any request for data must continue to be made to that Range State. For any data and information relating to a particular range state, then, once the authority has been given, the National Officer will provide the data and information. A country may decide at any time to release information and data into the public domain
- Following review and acceptance by the Sub-regional Steering Committee, information synthesised at the Sub-regional level will become public. For any information relating to the Sub-regional level, then the SSO will make such information available.
- Following review and acceptance at the Regional level, such information will be provided to the MIKE sub-group, the CITES secretariat, the public domain and when so required to the CoP.
- The MIKE staff will maintain the confidentiality of the data and information at all times, until such information is placed in the public domain

2.4 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

- The MIKE Technical Advisory Group will oversee, *inter alia*, the design, testing, modifications and improvements to the analytical framework and the analytical process.
- In the event of any challenge being offered to any analysis and production of information, the TAG will further review such analysis and information and provide written comments.