Building Sustainable Sanctuaries

The Arcus Foundation is a private grantmaking foundation that supports organizations around the world working to advance lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) human rights, as well as conservation of the world's great apes. Founded in 2000 by Jon Stryker, the mission of the Arcus Foundation is to achieve social justice that is inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and race, and to ensure conservation and respect of the great apes. The Foundation works globally and has offices in New York City, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Cambridge, UK.

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Arcus Great Apes Program The long-term survival of humans and the great apes is dependent on how we respect and care for other animals and our shared natural resources. The Arcus Foundation seeks to increase respect for and recognition of the rights and value of the great apes, and to strengthen protection from threats to their habitats. The Arcus Great Apes Program supports conservation and policy advocacy efforts that promote the survival of great apes in the wild and in sanctuaries that offer high-quality care, safety and freedom from invasive research and exploitation.

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Contents

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You know what you would like your sanctuary to look like next week, next year, and in 10 years — but does anyone else?

1 Introduction

It is inevitable that at some point in the future you will hand over the management of your sanctuary[1] to someone else, but what is not inevitable is how this happens. You may be caught up in the day-to-day management of the sanctuary, and it can be a struggle to think about or plan for the future. But what would happen if you became ill or had to go away, even for a short period of time? Dying is a taboo subject, but it can happen at any age. Is there someone who can fill your shoes? Would that person understand your vision for the sanctuary, both now and in the future? Is donor giving tied to you personally, and would donors continue to give in your absence? These issues apply whether you are the founder or a second- or third generation director, salaried or not.

What if your senior keeper were to leave? Is there someone who could do the job without compromising animal welfare? This person retains a wealth of knowledge through years of experience. Has it been passed on? Can anyone else identify the individual animals? Are key operating procedures written down so his or her replacement would know what to do? Ask the same question about each of your senior staff. You do not do this work for the glory or the money. It's for the animals, and this introductory guide will help you think about what needs to be done to secure your legacy whether you want to take a break, leave, modify your role, or simply be more effective.

Board members: You share this legacy and have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the sanctuary is solvent, well-run, and meeting the needs for which it has been set up. Imagine the director suddenly leaves: Who can quickly step in? What is the cash-flow situation? Where are the files? If all goes wrong, the responsibility rests with you, legally and financially. Start now to ensure sanctuary sustainability.

This introductory guide is written for sanctuary founders, directors, boards, and key staff, all of whom have critical roles to play in sanctuary sustainability. It has two main goals: to demystify succession and strategic planning so that the sanctuary community can take up challenges without unnecessary fear or concern, and to provide a framework for planning activities. We explain the benefits of planning and describe important systems, tools, approaches, and steps to facilitate sanctuary sustainability. We hope you will realize that planning is not something to be dreaded or ignored, but an opportunity to sustain success. We also hope that donors will better understand what sanctuaries need to become sustainable and will support their requests to help develop the described systems and tools.

It is important to understand that each sanctuary has its own unique leaders, culture, and needs. Therefore, we encourage you to use this information in a way that best suits your sanctuary, and to modify the systems and tools to address your specific structures and needs.

The best way to secure high standards of care for the animals in your sanctuary both now and in the future is to ensure that you have the right systems, tools, and people in place.

[1] The term sanctuary is used to describe all forms of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centers including those that provide short- , long-term and lifetime care, and practice reintroduction.

2 The benefits of planning for sustainability

Listen to any sanctuary founder and you'll hear that it all started with a single animal and pure compassion. Most do not start with a formal plan, and some still do not have one written down, but the majority see the need. There are many benefits to formalizing planning. It can bring peace of mind — knowing that if something unexpected happens, the sanctuary can continue to function with little or no disruption. It can also instill donor confidence. Potential donors care that a sanctuary has a plan — after all they are considering entrusting you with their money. Increasingly, donors request copies of strategic plans with funding applications; they want to understand your vision and how you plan to get there, and to be assured of diversified funding strategies for fear of dependency. Your members and supporters want the sanctuary to be successful and sustainable in the long-term.

Sanctuary director *"We currently have over 600 animals. We rarely hold more than four to five months of funding in our bank accounts, and this terrifies me. Although we have managed like this for almost 20 years, and the funds still come in, the world is changing too fast and we cannot continue like this. Realistically an animal arriving at our sanctuary today could live until 2045, and we have no idea what kind of world or global economy we will be looking at by that time. All of the animals in our sanctuaries belong to the state, so we have a safety net of sorts, but this does not mean that the standards of care that the animals have been used to would be maintained under government control."*

The concept of succession planning is often equated with age, death, and replacement. Replacement planning, on the other hand, is focused narrowly on identifying specific back-up candidates and does little to change leadership readiness. In contrast, effective succession planning is an ongoing and pervasive process that supports the development of talent at all levels, laying the foundation for perpetuating and growing the impact of the sanctuary beyond the person(s) at the top. In countries where access to local expertise is problematic, capacity building needs to be viewed with a long lens and requires prioritized investment. While increasingly applied to non-profit and charitable organizations, the notion has not yet received much attention from the sanctuary community. As with strategic plans, however, donors are increasingly looking to see if sanctuaries have a succession plan (or can demonstrate they are actively thinking about one) together with the systems, tools, and culture that will facilitate its application. Sanctuaries often have duty of care for large numbers of long-lived and complex species, and stakeholders want to know that the choices and plans of today are fit to deliver the outcomes of tomorrow.

Donor *"There is a subtle and strong shift of major donors to think more carefully about the best place for their money to ensure they are getting a bang for their buck. It's about analyzing the money you have. Donors look at organizations to see if they have the right structure. There are institutions I have not given to as I think they have real organizational issues and a lack of succession planning."*

CASE STUDY Wild Animal Orphanage, U.S.

In 2010, the Wild Animal Orphanage was forced to close its doors. Containing over 300 animals, including lions, tigers, bears, chimpanzees, macaque monkeys, and baboons, the sanctuary and partners were faced with the challenge of finding alternative and appropriate homes. At the time of closure the board announced that the sanctuary was overpopulated, underfunded and understaffed, and had inadequate housing for the animals in its care (WAO Board of Directors, September 6, 2010). The elements contributing to its failure are complex and diverse; they developed over time and progressed exponentially in the final year. The question is: could this situation have been prevented? Passionate beliefs are important and they characterize and drive the sanctuary community, but they can lead to over-commitment, and to a board blindly accepting the passion and intentions of the director, leading to a lack of oversight. Passion can also, of course, steer excellence but needs to include: a commitment to strategic planning, sound business (management and financial) plans, adoption of and compliance with relevant standards (including accreditation and/or membership in a sanctuary alliance), and a board that is proactive and understands what is meant by governance. In this case however, the board waited too long to confront suspected serious deficiencies.

3 A checklist for sanctuary sustainability

So what can you do to ensure that your sanctuary continues to thrive and provide excellent standards of care in the long term? There are 10 simple systems and tools that can help strengthen your sanctuary both now and in the future. As you work through this list think about what is currently missing in your sanctuary or could be updated.

3.1 *A strategic plan with goals and objectives for the near term (i.e., up to three years), including objectives for leadership development.*

So what is a strategic plan and do you really need one? Strategic thinking is a process during which you develop a vision for your sanctuary and then work backwards to develop a plan to accomplish that vision. Without vision, a sanctuary will have no direction, and it is impossible to achieve a vision without a strategy. To determine where your sanctuary is heading, you need to look at where you are now, decide which direction you want to go and how you will get there, and then establish whether you have achieved your stated objectives. The resulting document is called the "strategic plan" and is the lynchpin to succession planning and sanctuary sustainability. It is a management tool that offers additional ways to look at the organization that will allow the sanctuary to grow — not necessarily in size but in strength. It helps focus energy, ensure commitment, and enable the sanctuary to continually assess and adjust direction in the face of changing and even hostile environments. Importantly, it will provide a clearer focus for the sanctuary, thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Quite often, you will already know much of what will go into your strategic plan, but its development will greatly help to clarify the organization's plans and ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Sanctuary co-founders and co-directors Jack and Jill both juggle full-time jobs alongside their fulltime roles at their sanctuary, where they manage all aspects of day-to-day operations. Jack and Jill would like someone to help them and the board plan for the future. *"We survive each day, day by day, we are 24-hour people. We recognize, however, that we need to start thinking about the future. We have been making links with other sanctuaries and organizations as a starting point as we realize we cannot do this alone. The youngest primate is 4 and may live to be 30 and we need to ensure its continued care."*

The term "strategic plan" sounds very corporate and may have people thinking it is neither for them, nor relevant for sanctuaries. Perhaps, though, your sanctuary is already planning strategically but just not realizing it. Getting ill is not an option for Jack or Jill: their jobs provide the funding for the sanctuary and one of them is always on site once his or her day job has ended. They know their primates may outlive them and that they, together with the board, need to think about their future and the sanctuary's sustainability. While this form of planning is not explicitly systematic, Jack and Jill are thinking about the future and just need help to take it to the next level.

Sanctuary co-founder and co-director *"For the first 25 years, I got in a truck and rescued animals. In between mad dashes, we would build cages for new arrivals. The trade is slowing down now and I like to think we have contributed to that. It is an appropriate time to think about succession, a word I never thought about or previously understood. It is good to bring in the next generation with energy and fresh perspective, and saying that out loud was totally positive. The alternative would be sad: that the sanctuary is ill prepared. Our funders, supporters, constituents, and workers want to know we are forward thinking. With good care the animals exceed their wild lifespan, and it is incumbent on us to do our best to ensure they are cared for. We went for quality rather than quantity, a strategic plan that is simple yet comprehensive. At the front end it was scary and difficult and it was this that had stopped us from doing it earlier. Once we realized it did not need to be cumbersome, it was a relief. The plan will grow and change as the sanctuary does and it will provide guidance for this change. We could have put it off forever and ignored the issue but it is a very useful tool and exercise. I really wish we had done it earlier."*

While most boards assume that the founder or director is the keeper of the organization's purpose and direction, this responsibility is actually generally the board's. When a plan is established to attain the vision that will be adhered to by staff, leadership, and the board, an individual employee (even the founder or director) or board member can come or go, and the direction of the sanctuary will not be dramatically affected.

Far more important than the strategic plan is the strategic planning process. The value of planning is developing a common language, articulating assumptions, and learning to make decisions together. If you feel you are not being heard, or frustrated by limited opportunities to contribute, going through the strategic planning process can help identify weaknesses and lay the groundwork for seeking solutions. The process and areas included in a strategic plan are specific to each sanctuary as each has different structures, focuses, geographic scopes, programs, services, and levels of management skill. For guidance on what makes a good strategic plan, see Box 1. It need not be a complex process, and the tip is to keep it simple so that the plan is a useful document rather than additional clutter in your already busy life. Remember to keep the time frame of the plan workable and short (e.g., three years). Try to bring someone experienced to work with you on this; he or she can work to ensure everyone's participation, which is crucial to gaining buy-in to what is only the beginning of the process. Buy-in at the planning stage will encourage those involved to work harder to carry out the activities outlined in the plan. Remember to include objectives for leadership development. Not only will this approach build capacity of current staff but it should attract skilled and talented people and, importantly, encourage them to stay.

Finally, remember that the plan is never finished. It is a living document and must be communicated, put into action, integrated into daily decision-making, and regularly reviewed, monitored, and updated. For guidance on the process and the basic elements that compose a strategic plan, see Annex I. Once you have completed the strategic planning process, the need will emerge for other plans such as a fund-raising plan to guide fund-raising strategies.

Sanctuary director *"It is important to look at strategic plans and action plans at least twice a year. We often get so busy putting out fires, answering emails, and other daily tasks that those actions necessary to meet the bigger goals fall by the wayside. The plans help you focus on the bigger picture and allot time to those tasks."*

3.2 *The director of the sanctuary has the necessary skills for the position, and is subject to an annual evaluation by the board on general performance and achievement of strategic goals.*

When the founder and director are the same person, often there may not be a written job description, so who knows what you do? Board members, do you really know what the director does each day, each week? If something happened to the director tomorrow, would you know the type of person and skills to recruit? Sanctuary directors by necessity often do the work of several experts combined, but which experts? Where could other staff step in (with or without training and support), and what are the areas for which you would need to recruit? Writing this down will help attract and recruit suitably qualified candidates, and evaluate their performance.

Is the current sanctuary director also a board member? If so, how is the director's performance evaluated? The advantages of having the director on the board include engaging the board in the 'real' work of the sanctuary, bridging the gap between strategy and implementation, promoting a true partnership between governance and management, and elevating the director's responsibility, all of which force strategic thinking. Strictly speaking, though, it is considered bad practice to have the director of an organization as a voting member of the board. It can create a conflict of interest in votes on issues in which the director has a direct interest, strain relations when the director votes against the board on a particular issue or vice versa, confuse the distinction between board and director duties, and cause donors and others to view the organization as less accountable than it could be. A common compromise is for the director to serve as a non-voting member of the board, taking no part in decisions concerning any issue in which he or she has a direct interest, such as pay or other benefits. A director who serves as the chair of the board can undermine accountability throughout the organization.

Sanctuary board member *"It is really important that people understand what a strategic plan is, that it has a short time frame (three to five years) and is understood to be a living breathing document."*

A good strategic plan is one that…

BOX 1

- **Starts with a "plan for a plan."** Ignoring this recommendation risks a plan that is not relevant, is unrealistic to apply, and sits untouched on shelves. *This can lead to disillusionment and reticence to re-engage at a later date.*
- **Selects the right approach.** Goals- or issues-based planning? Goals-based planning works from the future to the present and is where achievement of specific goals is tied, e.g. three years into the future. Issues-based planning starts from the present and works to the near future (e.g., 12 months) by identifying major issues facing the organization right now. Goals-based planning is ideal for organizations with sufficient resources, few current challenges and a history of being able to implement plans. Issues-based planning is better suited to organizations with very limited resources, several major and current challenges, and ones that struggle to implement a plan. This strategy can be followed by goals-based planning once the organization is stronger.
- **Involves the right people.** The contents of the plan are largely determined by who takes part. Those involved should include decision-makers (board and director) and those responsible for implementing the plan (senior management), people who are knowledgeable about the sanctuary and sector, and, where possible, key stakeholders (including donors). *The ideal size of a strategic planning team is 6 to 12 members, plus an outside facilitator.*
- **Uses a skilled external facilitator to support the process.** They can bring experience to the process, keep it on track without personal involvement, and allow team members to fully engage and work as equals. *Provided you get the right person, the investment should be cost effective in terms of results.*
- **Takes the time it needs:** neither rushed nor protracted. A one-day retreat is not strategic planning; it is brainstorming. Plans should be carefully considered and written over a series of meetings for discussion.
- **Includes realistic, achievable, and actionable goals, objectives, and strategies for the time frame.** *To that end, start each statement with a verb, and remember to include objectives for strategic leader development.*
- **Has measurable outcomes.** To evaluate progress, it is important that goals and objectives are measurable and that measurements are realistic given data availability and staffing constraints.
- **Includes an action plan.** This provides crucial detail on responsibility, timeline, and required budget and is most effectively done by the teams or departments responsible for getting the work done.
- **Is easy to read and understand, and is well organized.**
  - Succinctly communicates what the organization is about, what it plans to accomplish, and how it plans to do it within the time frame. *Ask a layperson not familiar with your sanctuary to read the plan and see if he or she is able to grasp what your organization is about and where it is headed.*
  - Label the goals and objectives with a consistent numbering structure.
  - Use the principles of good layout to make it easy to navigate. *Good design goes a long way.*
  - Keep the length readable. *If it is too long, no one will read it.*
  - Focus on an internal version first and then think about external communication.
- **Acts as a living document.**
  - Openness. While it is not usually practical to have everyone involved in an organization attend planning meetings, the ongoing results should be available to all employees with suggestions welcomed from all.
  - Good strategic plans should be referred to frequently. All staffing levels should use the strategic plan to guide their work so that the work being done supports the direction of the sanctuary.
  - Be open to changing the plan; plans are rarely implemented as first written.
  - Create a team to monitor implementation on a regular basis. *Regular review of indicators can guide mid-course policy or operational changes to better achieve goals, objectives and strategies.*

A good strategic plan is one that is actually used.

Sanctuary board member *"I became a board member because I wanted to make a difference to the sanctuary, to have more of a say, although I am not sure I am doing this. I was not involved in the strategic planning process and we never look at it. It was developed by the founder/director. I would like to do more as a board member, such as be given specific tasks and meet more often. It would be nice to have a review of the board; we need a bigger, more diverse and dynamic board, and one that does not simply exist to rubber stamp what the director wants. For this to happen we need more openness and a change of mindset from the director. Charity watchdogs are being more vigilant of non-profit management and governance as are donors, and maybe this will change the mindset of the director more than the board members can."*

The case of founders needs further consideration. Having the founder/director as a board member may be particularly crucial in early days to get the sanctuary up and running, and also when board members are inactive or unsupportive. But founder/director board participation could also be about control and fear of what might happen if control is lost. Most active founders in the sanctuary community do sit on the board and many serve as chair. From their perspective, it is easy to understand why they would want to continue to have a voice and exert control over something that has demanded so much hard work. Each situation is unique, but it is very important for sanctuary sustainability and credibility that responsibility and decision-making are shared equally and that the board works hard to ensure this. Retired founders or long-serving directors may prefer to take an advisory role, which allows them to make a contribution but remain less involved and enjoy their retirement.

3.3 *The board, based on its annual self-evaluation, is satisfactorily performing its major governance tasks: financial oversight and fundraising, executive support and oversight, policy development, and strategic planning.*

Each year, as with staff, the board should be subject to an evaluation, in this case a self-evaluation. It is important not only to evaluate performance but to assess what skills are on the board and to recruit for deficient areas (deficient areas can also include race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, political affiliation, and financial status).

Commonly asked questions are: why do we need a board, why is it so important? Can the advantages outweigh loss of autonomy and control? Starting a board and maximizing its usefulness may not be high on your list, but if you want your sanctuary to be sustainable, having an active board can provide significant advantages. It is something you may not have a choice about, as in most cases having a board is required by law. But whatever the legal requirements, satisfying laws is only the first reason for this vastly underutilized resource.

International animal welfare organization director
"As an organization that develops and supports several sanctuaries in different countries, our approach is to establish registered entities with active boards in the region to access locally appropriate knowledge and expertise, and regional funding opportunities. We see this as essential for sustainability."

Sanctuary director *"It is important to have people on the board who are passionate but independent, and with important skills. We cannot be masters of all trades, we need to focus on the sanctuary and allow others with relevant expertise to help guide."*

Assuming the board that has been selected is indeed performing its major governance tasks effectively, we can illustrate why boards are so supremely important. A board can step in when the organization is heading in the wrong direction or is being mismanaged. In this sense, the board is the conscience, the part that is supposed to provide and uphold accountability, which is one of the reasons funding agencies pay close attention to who is on a board. A board represents the sanctuary, like a banner telling potential supporters: "Hey, we are here to make sure that whatever support you give us will be well-used; we are here to make sure that this sanctuary does what it says and is true to its mission, to the best of its ability." To this end, a board can be crucially important in helping the sanctuary to obtain the funds it asks for and needs. It is not surprising then that the grant proposal evaluation process used by many government agencies and private foundations includes a section on how effective the board appears to be. Board composition is often one of the key components that decide whether an organization gets a grant or not.

Donor *"Historically we have been very accepting and perhaps neglectful with not enough due diligence. If a sanctuary presented well and had a plausible story we took them at face value. Now if we are going to develop an ongoing relationship; we require checks in place. For any long-standing arrangement the sanctuary must have accreditation by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), an independent test mechanism. This is particularly pertinent in North America but also elsewhere. We give out quite a few small grants, often tied to specific activities, and if that is just a small part of an organization's overall costs, we may not have the time nor think it appropriate to go over all the other stuff. So long as the grantee reports back on grant specifics, the overall picture is probably not checked. GFAS accreditation means that we can all be assured that this overall check has been done with the right questions asked on governance and overall standards. We need to look more closely at governance support: that there is a strong board with relevant skills and expertise in place, what the board understands by governance, and that they know what is required to move from a backyard facility to a professionally run sanctuary."*

Perhaps your sanctuary is a small, family-run affair and your main partners are already working with you. You may think you do not need a board, but in fact nobody needs a board more than you. Why? A board provides a unique opportunity to look at a sanctuary objectively and from every angle. It forces you to work on strategy, the "big picture" stuff, and beyond day-to-day activities and tactics. It allows time to develop new ways to improve the sanctuary. Do not underestimate the impact that formalizing a board can have.

The board can also provide important technical expertise (or access to it) which is why many contain lawyers or accountants. This is not to say, however, that boards avoid the need to hire the services of those types of professionals. A board can also play a big role in partnership development by directly providing or accessing funding and accessing non-monetary resources which can translate into substantive financial value. Ideally, a board exists to supervise (govern), as opposed to actually run the sanctuary or directly deal with day-to-day events and circumstances (manage) — this is left to the staff, more specifically, the director. This does not mean that the staff has nothing to do with strategy or that the board members never contribute on the day-to-day level, but that there is a fine but important line between governance and management. The underlying assumption is that good governance and the separation of management and governance, make possible the checks and balances that ensure the sanctuary is well-run. If we think back to the case study of the Wild Animal Orphanage, if the board had been more pro active (utilizing these 10 systems and tools) and stepped in earlier, the outcome for the animals and sanctuary may have been very different. For more information on what is meant by governance and how to develop and maintain an effective board, see Annex II.

Sanctuary director “*I realized a few years ago that we needed a strategic plan. Donors were asking for one, and I saw the importance of writing down what was in my head. Although I thought it would be a staff project, the consultant who helped us suggested we include the board in the process too. I knew that this would be a new demand on board members and predicted they would not be enthusiastic; after all, it was hard enough getting them to show up for meetings! But at a meeting facilitated by the consultant, our board members were surprisingly engaged. To my amazement, they had good ideas about where we should be heading and even offered to get more involved in fundraising. Afterwards I worked with the chair to draw up long-term goals. The staff fleshed out the plan, and then the chair and I presented it together at the next board meeting. Since then the board has insisted on being part of the planning process. Every year the board reviews the plan and updates the goals as needed. In our sanctuary, planning has become a board-driven process. I feel pretty good about that — I know that I can rely on them and do not have to take all the responsibility on myself.*”

But what kind of board is right for your sanctuary? As with strategic plans there is no "one size fits all" and you need to develop one that is fit for your purpose.

There are two basic kinds of boards: advisory and fully mandated. An advisory board does just what it says: it is a board that provides feedback and advice, but its views are not binding. The second type, a fully mandated board, has real power and accepts fiduciary responsibility for the organization. The kind of board you choose depends on your needs. Go with the advisory board if you just want advice but do not want decisions mandated by a majority. At a minimum, an advisory board can increase your community outreach. If there are people you regularly turn to for advice, consider making the relationship more formal. This will provide a good entry point to working more collaboratively, to enhancing the sanctuary profile, and towards a fully mandated board. A fully mandated board is a good option if you are ready to take a step back from ultimate decision making. It can provide you the expertise and legitimacy you need to take the sanctuary to the next level. Either way, a board is a great way to bring in expert, trustworthy advisers to help you make the big decisions.

Sometimes a traditional board set up may not be immediately appropriate. This may be particularly relevant for sanctuaries in developing countries with limited access to resources and expertise. Establishing a collaborative initiative combining international and national organizations in a formal partnership system may be a more practical and effective approach. The board could be fully mandated or have defined areas of responsibility (in the form of a signed memorandum of understanding) and run in conjunction with a mandated board. Such a system allows other organizations to be involved without the legalities attached to being part of a fully mandated board. This approach may also work well for a sanctuary whose main board is geographically remote from the country of operation, while providing access to in-country expertise and resources. The Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Uganda, demonstrates how this structure works.

CASE STUDY — Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Uganda

Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary was established in 1998 as a program to care for orphaned confiscated chimpanzees from natural habitats with no chance of survival in the wild. At the time of establishment there was limited capacity in Uganda to create a board in the traditional sense, with few individuals or organizations having expertise in governance, captive management and animal welfare, conservation, and education, or able to provide the necessary financial support. Demonstrating the right ethos and understanding of the sanctuary mission, a combination of national and international partner organizations officially joined forces under The Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust (CSWCT) with a formal constitution signed by all trustees outlining the objectives and management of the trust and function of the board. Geared toward developing and implementing a long-term strategy for the conservation of chimpanzees and their habitat, the CSWCT had the immediate purpose of establishing a chimpanzee sanctuary on Ngamba Island in Lake Victoria. Meeting twice a year, the international partners combine technical expertise and experience in governance, while national partners, including the government wildlife authority, assist with advocacy and issues surrounding land tenure. Within the board, a finance committee meets twice a year and a technical committee meets as needed.

As a direct consequence of this partnership, CSWCT is now respected as a serious conservation partner by the government and the NGO community — combining a sanctuary with on-the-ground conservation activities to address the drivers that led to its creation. The illegal trade in live and dead chimpanzees in Uganda has been significantly reduced through CSWCT's awareness-raising programs and campaigns that ran in national media and schools and through government, community and private-sector partnerships. 500 wild chimpanzees and their habitat are being protected by working with private land owners. As a founding member of the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) and verified by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), CSWCT is officially recognized for providing excellent care of rescued chimpanzees. Ngamba Island is the first sanctuary in Africa and the first conservation organization in Uganda to receive ISP 14001 environmental certification. Now a registered NGO in Uganda and non-profit in the U.S. with 501(c)3 status (Friends of CSWCT) CSWCT owns the land upon which the sanctuary is established.

“We had momentum, we had people whom these organizations trusted, and we had the right person to steer the process with an understanding of the different partners, where conflict issues could arise, and how to engage and leverage their skills to pull together even with the differences. The core team of founder trustees really cared and understood what had to be done and had the professional expertise and background to pull it off.”

The formal collaboration was initially envisaged to help establish the sanctuary during the start-up phase, but partners committed to a longer-term involvement to further strengthen the CSWCT and support sanctuary sustainability. During this time, international trustees were asked to make an annual financial pledge (with a specified minimum). In recent years this requirement ended because the current economic climate presented challenges to maintaining trustees with annual financial commitments. Despite this obstacle, the partnership continues to thrive, providing access to resources, valuable expertise, and enhanced organizational profile and recognition.

“The aim is to have dynamic members of the board who not only provide financial assistance but other services such as legal, communication, fundraising and advocacy, and support that can easily translate into financial value. If the management team is able to generate operational revenue from external sources, in the long term we could have completely local board representation. This would be a true indicator that we have accomplished what we set out to do: Ugandan capacity to manage and support a wildlife welfare and conservation organization.”

The CSWCT partnership has worked well because it included:

- Setting of a long-term vision and planning.
- A combination of appropriate and committed national and international partners.
- A good governance business approach.
- A signed constitution outlining trust objectives, management, and functions.
- National ownership and capacity building.

Other sanctuaries are adopting and adapting the model. Having established a local board to meet national legislative requirements, one sanctuary has created a management advisory group (MAG) to access national and international funding and expertise. The MAG currently comprises national partners including the government authority responsible for protected area and wildlife management and natural scientific research, with international organizations representing development, conservation, and captive management. The current challenge for the MAG is to attract international partners able to provide a mid-term (e.g., five-year) financial commitment.

Wherever you are located, and whatever your focus, combining relevant partners and formalizing the structure could support sanctuary impact and sustainability.

3.4 *Management team that shares leadership responsibility.*

An effective management team:

- Supports one another and reaches decisions efficiently and harmoniously.
- Shares leadership with the director, providing input to all major decisions.
- Can lead the sanctuary in the absence of the director.
- Has the authority to make and carry out decisions within their respective areas of responsibility.

This is about good management practice, getting the right people in place, and letting them lead, all key steps to sanctuary sustainability (see also 5.3 and 5.4).

Sanctuary director *"An organizational flow chart is important to define lines of reporting and outline where the gaps are in the organization. We have recently produced such a chart showing where we are today and where we need to be in three to four years, a great exercise in getting people to talk about where they see their roles heading, plus the areas for which we need to recruit."*

Are key operational policies written down to guide staff decision-making in the absence of the director? If not, what would guide their decision-making? Guesswork? Is that good enough? Board members, do you know what the operational policies are, if they are written down, and where they can be found? If not, you need to find out. Do not be daunted by the process of developing these policies — other sanctuaries have them, so borrow and adapt.

For example, what guides the decision-making process on the animals you accept? Do you have an animal acceptance policy? Saying yes and taking all animals without due consideration can have a negative impact on both existing populations and sanctuary sustainability. If yours is a designated facility accepting government confiscations you may have little choice in what you do and do not accept, although you will need to incorporate this unpredictability into your plan, and raise awareness of the authorities so that they fully understand the challenges faced. There are staff, facility space, and financial issues to consider. How will the new arrival affect your existing population, and will accepting the animal further your mission or instead simply add to the problem (e.g., will the owner replace the animal with another one)? Do you have a non-replacement policy document that owners are asked to sign? Animals and their owners may arrive at any time, and senior staff must be able to make sound decisions in the absence of the director.

Sanctuary board member *"As tragic as the founder's death was, it required and allowed us to establish operational policies so that key staff could make decisions in the absence of the director. It is necessary to do these things to be efficient and effective."*

3.5 *Another senior staff person or board member shares important external relationships maintained by the sanctuary director.*

It is normal for the identity of the sanctuary founder (or long-term director) and sanctuary to be one and the same, and perhaps even necessary in the beginning to get supporters on board for the cause. For sustainability, though, the challenge is for the sanctuary to have a separate and independent identity that can attract and maintain funding. And this is not just about money, as relations with government authorities and local communities — crucial to the smooth running of the sanctuary — may also be tied to the director. It is important for other key staff to share these relationships so that progress can continue and relations can be maintained in the absence of the director. This is a gradual process and it takes time — so plan ahead and start now.

Sanctuary director *"I was hired as our founder was already past retirement age and he knew that he needed to get a new face in place. I make sure that all our senior staff get to know our donors so if I or the founder disappears under a bus tomorrow we will still have a team in place that our most important donors are familiar with and are confident with in their abilities. That said we still expect to feel some impact when the founder is no longer with us as many of our individual donors are committed to our cause through their connection with him."*

3.6 *A financial reserve is in place with a minimum of 3 months (25%) annual operating capital (12 months for privately registered entities and for sanctuaries that rely on a single donor).*

A financial reserve in this context refers to unrestricted surplus funds available for use at the discretion of the board. An organization may need financial reserves to make up unexpected shortfalls in revenue, to meet unexpected demands on resources (e.g., an emergency), to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities, to allow for normal day-to-day fluctuations in income and expenses (e.g., currency exchange rates), to enable sudden change in direction when needed, or to survive those instances of less than perfect judgment when that grant application you thought was in the bag turns out not to be. They should not, however, be used to cover long-term or permanent income shortfall. Since operational reserves are most valuable when they are reliable, it is also important to have a realistic plan to replenish them.

Building an operational reserve helps to ensure that sufficient funds are available and maintains financial flexibility.

It may allow you to accept government grants whose administration and payout may be lengthy. In volatile economic times, a financial reserve may sustain your sanctuary without the need to cut programs or services and without any impact on animal welfare. It can help promote funder and donor confidence that the organization is stable and that funds invested will have a long-lasting impact. Having no reserve means you will of necessity be focusing on the short term and therefore less likely to engage in long-term planning.

CASE STUDY **Montana Large Animal Sanctuary and Rescue, U.S.**

The failure of the 15-year-old Montana Large Animal Sanctuary and Rescue underscores the importance of these systems and tools. The sanctuary collapsed when one of the founders became ill, and the major donor, a board executive, took a lower-paying job and could no longer provide funding. The lives of 1,200 animals, including llamas, camels, horses, cows, emus, and pot-bellied pigs, were all put at risk. In 2010, when the sanctuary founders sought help from the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), it had no operating funds for anything other than the mortgage and payroll, and it was down to three days' worth of hay for all the animals. GFAS persuaded the donor to maintain mortgage payments for two months while they coordinated new homes for all the animals. Dozens of animals however were too sick or malnourished to be saved and had to be euthanized. The sanctuary is now closed but this situation could have been avoided. The sanctuary had several major problems, which were easy to identify and would have been relatively easy to address. Among them: llamas and cavies were allowed to breed uncontrollably, there were merely four people to look after all of the animals and just two of those were caregivers (the other two were managers), and there was only one major donor and no reserves.

Financial reserve — how much is enough?

BOX 2

The question is not whether you can afford an operating reserve but whether you can afford not to have one. So what is a reasonable sum to keep in reserve? Guidelines range widely, from three months to three years of annual operating capital, but there is no one size fits all. It is better to look at your own organizational needs in conjunction with external economic and political conditions. Even if you cannot achieve the ideal, start small and add to it when you can. The message is to start training the habit.

To answer the question of how much, your sanctuary must begin by examining the common risk factors at play. The greater number or magnitude of risks your sanctuary has, the greater the need for a substantial reserve. The wisest approach is to prepare a few scenarios including the worst possible case, and to calculate how much you would need to deal with each scenario. Ask yourself these questions:

- How much do you rely on annual grants for your operating funds? When do you find out how much you will receive and how long does it usually take to receive the funds?
- To what extent are you dependent on one or two major donors? *It is important to diversify funding streams to avoid relying on a single source.*
- How dependent are you on funds raised from special events or seasonal activities? How vulnerable are those events to shortfalls based on things beyond your control?
- Do your funders have rules about reserves? *It is important for organizations that appear wealthy (i.e., with more than 12 months' budget in the bank) to explain to prospective donors and stakeholders why there is a need for additional funds. Not doing so will make it difficult to attract the required resources and maintain those reserves.*
- What is the likelihood of natural (e.g., floods, fires) or man-made (e.g., civil unrest) disasters impacting the sanctuary?
- To what extent will an economic downturn or other events affect demand for services (either upwards or downwards)?
- Are you anticipating any major changes in your expenses? How well have you planned for major equipment replacement or building repairs?
- Are there any regulatory changes that will impact resources?

When you have considered these questions, write your decisions into a policy on reserves (how and when reserve funds can be used, who is authorized to use them, and how this is reported to the board) so that the rationale and logic are clear and can be communicated to future senior staff, board members, donors, and funders.

Sanctuary board member *“At the moment we have an operational reserve of about two months, but it is part of our strategic plan to grow that sustainability. Rather than think in months the aim is to be able to survive a 30 to 40% loss of income over a given period of time. If we get an unexpected bequest or money, we take 10 to 20% and immediately put it into our reserve and consider this good planning.”*

For financial strength and viability it is important to seek diversified sources of funding. While a single donor might seem like every sanctuary director's dream (not having to put all that effort into grant-writing and fund-raising events), it can be dangerous to assume that a donor will always be there. When the major donor to the Montana Large Animal Sanctuary and Rescue could no longer support the sanctuary, it was unable to survive, animal welfare standards were significantly impacted, and dozens of animals had to be euthanized. Low tourist numbers have drastically reduced revenue for operations at The Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust in Uganda. The trust has been proactive and is developing a diversified funding strategy for long-term financial sustainability including the establishment of a trust fund invested in assets to provide a reliable income stream. Assets include the purchase of land and development of offices for rent, with a projected return on investment in seven years.

Nearly all large private companies have a budget for corporate social responsibility, and many sanctuaries are exploring possibilities of partnership and investment. But remember, never rely on a single source no matter how attractive it might seem. Diversification includes accessing all manner of resources. Sanctuaries receive lots of in-kind support: equipment, knowledge, and technical skills that can translate into substantive financial value. Look at other non-profits in your country of operation and speak to other sanctuaries to find out what they are doing. Maintaining an operational reserve and diversifying revenue streams and resources will help sustain the sanctuary even in difficult economic climates.

3.7 *Financial reports are up to date and provide the information needed by the board and senior managers responsible for the sanctuary's financial strength and viability.*

Are finances reviewed at every board meeting? Board members, do you know what the finances look like? Do you understand what you are looking at? We are not all natural born accountants, but it is important to learn how to read (understand) the financial information that is being presented. What kind of accounting structure is in place and how are funds accounted for? This will vary if the sanctuary operates in a cash versus check economy system. Are financial records well organized? Is the person receiving and handling the funds also the signatory of the checks? This is an issue of transparency and accountability.

Have you identified "costs centers"? Do you know the annual costs associated with caring for individual animals across different age groups? Considerations of captive animal management change across an animal's life, as do associated costs, and due to excellent standards of care, many will live longer than their wild counterparts. This information will help guide your intake policy (see Section 3.4). How much does an enclosure cost to build and maintain? How much is spent on staff salaries? This is important information to have close at hand to facilitate decision-making for sanctuary financial viability.

Sanctuary co-founder and director *“We discovered upon the death of the co-founder and then director that animal records had not been kept up to date. This problem was compounded by staff members who left soon after the founder's death, and who were the only ones who knew the monkeys individually. We had to microchip every monkey, give many of them new names and start some records from scratch without any history. We have worked hard for this not to compromise animal welfare and the sanctuary. This is something that could have been prevented had we known about it.”* While it is not the responsibility of the board to develop or maintain the database, they should know it exists, that it is updated, and how often it is updated.

3.8 *Operational manuals for key systems and an animal database exist and are easily accessible and up to date.*

While it might be time consuming to write everything down (and to conduct regular reviews and updates) and keep the animal database current, without this both animal welfare and human health and safety can be compromised.
If animal information stays in one person's head, what happens if he or she is gone tomorrow? This information belongs to the sanctuary and needs to stay there. This will safeguard the future care of the animals.

Sanctuary director *“We refer to it as the "truck factor"… how many people need to be hit by a truck for us to lose vital information. If a particular role seems to have a truck factor of one then we need to get someone else trained in that role and the duties written down ASAP!”*

3.9 ***Key staff have documented their key activities in writing and have identified another staff member who can carry out their duties in an emergency.***
Sanctuary development and management is an industry that often attracts very passionate people who may feel that they are indispensible and hence reluctant to put measures in place to allow for someone else to do their job. While having a written job description may seem obvious, it does not mean that such documentation exists or that there is a system for unplanned absence. Viewed in all time frames — short, medium and long — this approach ensures that key leadership and administrative functions, as well as organizational services (e.g., animal rescue and veterinary care) can continue without disruption. Without this you will not know who will or will not step up, or who needs help.

Sanctuary directors and board members
A number were asked what would happen if the director left suddenly.

“It would be a disaster for the animals. We have nothing written down, there is no strategic plan, and all the funding comes from one source.”

“There are so many people helping us I cannot imagine they would not continue. But it is a big problem as they will not do it for free like us. I cannot imagine the government taking over — our only chance would be friends or another NGO. We cannot send the chimpanzees elsewhere as everywhere is full.”

“We would be ok on day-to-day operations and animal care, but fundraising and grant reporting would suffer, which would inevitably impact every part of the organization.”

“Very little to none and I am proud of that. I took maternity leave some time ago and it was not a problem. We have looked through what would happen if x dropped dead tomorrow, and all the key staff are now replaceable. Each key role can now be undertaken by at least one other person. Everything is written down.”

We need to ask the same questions for key staff as we do for the director. If there is not a written job description, who knows exactly what they do on a daily basis? You may think you know, but do you really? Write it down. It is important to plan for absence as well as possibilities of absence — people need to go on holiday, it is good for them and forces planning.

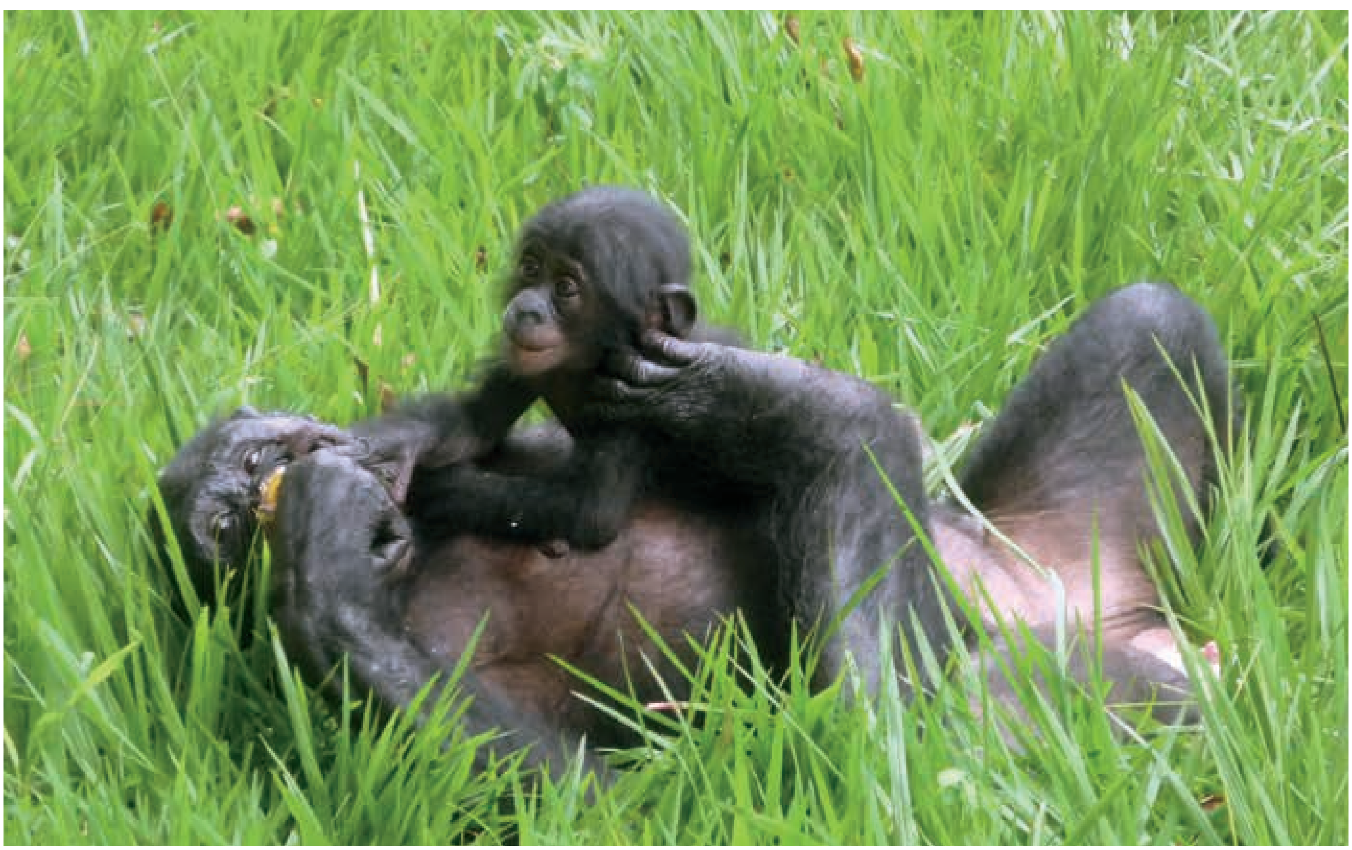
3.10 ***Legality to operate***
Some sanctuaries take a legal risk because the status of their founders has allowed them to operate without full legal accountability. This can unravel as soon as the founder retires or dies. It is essential that every sanctuary is legally authorized to operate. This includes correct registration in the country of operation, security of land tenure, staff employment contracts, payment of all taxes and, most importantly, full legal authority to hold animals. For sanctuaries in many developing countries this will often be a memorandum of understanding with the relevant government authority. It may take time to acquire but is an important goal.

Finally, while not exactly a tool, system, or legal requirement, becoming accredited by an external mechanism such as the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) and joining a national or regional sanctuary alliance or network such as the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) can help your sanctuary in many ways. Where accreditation or membership is tied to specific criteria and adherence to standards, it can help distinguish your facility from other non-member sanctuaries and provide a “stamp of approval” for donors and support organizations. It can help build capacity by providing opportunities for networking with colleagues to share expertise and experience, and/or through the provision of training and learning opportunities where applicable. Simply knowing you are not alone in your daily struggles can be extremely empowering, and having a network of people to turn to for advice may provide important answers to a healthcare issue or crisis situation. This affiliation not only builds individual capacity but can impact the drivers of animal exploitation and counter threats through collective voice and action. These organizations can also provide important support in times of crisis. Concerned that an organizational failure may be seen as a personal failure, people often wait too long in the midst of a crisis to ask for help. It is not always possible to predict crises, but if you see one coming you need to tell the board and reach out to others. Help may come in the form of finances or the provision of technical assistance, advice, and guidance. There will be someone out there who has faced a similar challenge. Explore what is available in your region.

Sanctuary co-founder and co-director *“It is very important to be part of the PASA (Pan African Sanctuary Alliance) — our family — it is opening our eyes to the future — so many have made mistakes in the past, and it is important to not make them in the future. We can share problems and not be alone. We get so much from the meetings and workshops — they help us with our vision.”*

Do not panic — this list and process may seem big, daunting, and unattainable, but break it down and do it gradually. This guide is not designed to be a detailed step-by-step but an introduction to key areas of support. We provide information on references and websites to consult but you are not alone. It is important to make contact with other sanctuaries, animal alliances, and planning experts. Start now, reach out, speak to others, and create a viable future for you, your sanctuary and the animals in your care.

10 Systems and Tools	Delivers	Outcome	Impact
Strategic plan	Direction to achieve vision	Effective and sustainable organization and programs	Sustained high standards of animal health and welfare
Skilled & evaluated director	Experienced leadership to achieve mission		
Effective governance focused & evaluated board	Services & support to achieve mission		
Management team with shared leadership responsibilities	Effective & supportive structure to achieve mission		
Important external relationships shared	Continued progress to achieve mission		
Financial reserve	Maintenance of services & programs		
Up-to-date & comprehensive financial reporting	Decision making & fiscal management		
Current, accessible operational manuals & animal database	Sustainability of services & programs		
Documented job roles with identified alternates	Sustainability of services & programs		
Legality to operate	Sustainability of services & programs		



4 Tough issues to think about and discuss

4. *Tough issues to think about and discuss*
A central theme running through the highlighted systems and tools in Figure 1 is people and staff development. These tools include a strategic plan with objectives for leadership development (3.1), an effective governance-focused board (3.3), and a management team that shares leadership, authority, decision-making (3.4), and important external relationships (3.5), with identified substitutes who can fulfill their duties in an emergency (3.9). Crucial is the issue of succession planning, including considerations surrounding the difficult yet inevitable day of the director's departure.

Sanctuary director *"I can envision doing this job for the rest of my life, but I will never use that as a basis on which to operate. We are always working towards a day when I can fly off into the sunset."*

Asking a sanctuary director, "Do you think you will want to leave, and when might that be?" may seem simple. Some directors will want to spend their whole working lives managing the sanctuary. With such a wealth of knowledge and expertise to contribute, as long as you continue to perform well, why should you leave? But remember, it is inevitable your role will change; in fact it may have already done so, and gradually you will have to hand over some responsibilities and, inevitably, leadership. Some may clearly see a time when they will leave the sanctuary, while others may want to stay but actively change their role. There is no right or wrong answer, and everyone is different, but to think a director will stay forever is poor planning. The question is not a simple one — it is highly emotional, and there are few people if any to talk to about ideas and possibilities without risking instability for the sanctuary or undermining what has been a hard-fought-for position. This issue is much harder for founders because emotions and ties run deep, and boards need to be sensitive to these issues. The board and external people may not understand why you would ever want to leave. Romantic images of famous animal champions are widespread across the sector and set an unrealistic stage. Some sanctuaries may court this image to get supporters and donors on board, but in reality, while extremely rewarding, it is a hard life, rarely paid, and with little, if any, time for a personal life.

Sanctuary founder *"I was ashamed to start talking about it [leaving]. There was no one for me to speak to, I could not speak to my family as they were fed up with what it was doing to me. I was put on antidepressants and referred to a counselor. I told the board I was tired and fed up but not the personal stuff such as the guilt and fear about loss of respect. The board did not get it — they could not understand that I could not and did not want to continue. I was hoping that I would get ill so that I would have to leave and it would not be my fault."*

Sanctuary founder and director *"After having my daughter I realized that there would never be a day until I die when I would not be consumed by motherhood. And this is how it is with the sanctuary and the chimpanzees — I am completely invested in their future. When I am away, and the phone rings, the first thing I think is, is that the sanctuary? If I am away from my phone I am nervous to not be contactable. I will be involved until the very end — I will never walk away completely. It will always be my "baby" but my role will and has changed. My association and affiliation with the sanctuary needs to be sustainable for me as I age and ensure that I remain valuable to the sanctuary."*

The departure of a director raises many challenges. As highlighted earlier (3.5) it is quite common for the identity of a founder (and long-term director) to become fused with the sanctuary. While stakeholders might know other staff at the sanctuary, success and failure are often attributed solely to the founder/director, and donor funds may even be tied to his or her continued presence. This mix is unavoidable and means it can be difficult to discern the difference between the identity of the director and the sanctuary. While for the director the challenge of leaving is to re-establish an identity separate from the sanctuary, the sanctuary itself has to convince stakeholders that it can exist and is sustainable without the director. This can take time.

Sanctuary founder and director *"I am very aware that some sanctuary founders and long-term directors are not very happy, and that they want to leave or pull away but cannot see how to do it, and this makes them resentful. It is difficult for founders to pull away, it is hard to visualize themselves without the sanctuary, and their I.D. is so caught up in it. I do not want to feel that way, to resent my sacrifice or my time. I want to be able to maintain my role although it will inevitably change, and make it work for me emotionally."*

Sanctuary founders and directors often enjoy respect and influence in their communities because of their leadership positions, and indeed this can sustain professional longevity. There may be a fear that this high esteem may be lost when they step down. Letting go of this sense of power and control can raise questions of self worth, as well as fears about becoming surplus to requirements.

Sanctuary founder *"After about 10 years I recognized I did not have the same energy levels to keep telling the stories, and I felt less efficient than in earlier years. I initially thought that spending time away from the sanctuary would be enough but although I was physically away my head remained and leading a double life was no less exhausting. Having that time away though made me realize that I needed to leave and that it would be better for the sanctuary and for me. Following a handover I stayed away and provided remote support to the new director. It is not possible to develop a full life outside of the sanctuary (and country) when you are constantly taking yourself back there — you need to fill the hole it leaves and staying away forces you to move on to the next chapter of your life. It is possible to still be involved but at a distance. I had no one to talk to or help with the transition and it was hard. The fact that I can talk about this now without becoming tearful is new. Even a year ago I could not have had this conversation. Regardless of the emotional rollercoaster I experienced, my departure has been positive for the sanctuary and for me personally — we now have someone in place with new energy. Having a strategic plan helped to ensure the direction stayed in place."*

Often exhausted or stressed, sanctuary directors may feel that they have to leave but do not really know how, or for how long. They typically feel too much guilt to even take a long vacation and so often wait until things are so bad that they feel as if leaving permanently is the only solution. Sometimes a renewal of energy might be found in a long vacation or a short sabbatical; sometimes a simple respite from some of the duties is enough. Such a break can, however, also lead to the realization or reinforcement of the need for a bigger position change. This is particularly hard in the case of sanctuaries created in the grounds of the founder's home, or for founders who have made the sanctuary their home.

Developing and managing a sanctuary is a special and unique profession. Not surprisingly, it can be difficult to envisage what you might do next — your days are probably so full that there is little time even to think about it. There is also the fear that nothing could replace what you are doing now. Determining what to do next means you will have to reconnect with other interests or make new ones. This means having a personal vision and plan.

Some directors simply fear any talk of succession and will not talk about it until they know they can control the result. But by planning in advance it is possible to control the process and protect all your hard work. Boards may want to talk about this but fear raising the topic in case the director feels undervalued and unappreciated. This misguided loyalty can lead to silence, director underperformance and a drift away from the sanctuary vision. The fear of appearing disloyal to those who have helped build and support the sanctuary, such as key donors who he or she fears might withdraw support at the mere mention of leaving, or even to the founder who employed the director, are other facets of the loyalty issue.

Sanctuary founder and director *"Many years ago someone visited me from another facility, and as I was taking them around I had to go and feed the animals. They said you should not be doing this; you should be out there trying to solve the problem. They were right and that is what I am now doing — the sanctuary can now run without me and I am working on legislative issues to try and end the problem. When dealing with day-to-day sanctuary management there is little time to address the bigger picture."*

Sanctuary director *"I will continue in this position for another two years but then I will either change my role or leave. I see many other sanctuary directors whose lives are tied completely up in their work and I have worked hard to maintain space for something else. I have thought about being on the board after I leave but if asked I would leave it for at least two years to give the new director time to find their feet. Otherwise it would be too difficult for them."*

To the question of whether the sanctuary can survive without you, the answer will likely always be no. Indeed this may be true if you do not have the systems and tools described in this guide. You may also fear personal or professional embarrassment if the sanctuary fails to thrive after your departure. These concerns may be legitimate, as many founders and sanctuary directors are not paid a professional level salary if, indeed, they are paid at all, or are filling multiple positions that would have to be replaced by several individuals, increasing costs to the organization and adding to financial worries. Sanctuary directors, particularly in moving to retirement, may simply not have the means to enable them to leave.

Do not be daunted; these challenges and issues can be overcome, but it takes time and it should not be done alone. Thinking about your personal future, and what you want your legacy to be, will highlight the importance of getting these systems and tools in place to support leadership development in those around you, and to think about areas for which you may need to recruit. This will help counteract some of the challenges.

Ask yourself these questions and seek answers to them:
Determine your plan:

- When do you think you will want to leave/step back/change role?
- What future employment concerns do you have?
- What personal financial concerns do you have?
- How will you manage potential loss of identity and status?
- What unfinished business do you have in your current role?

Determine the support you need:

- Who can help you address these issues?
- Who needs to know about your personal plan?
- How do you integrate your personal plan into your sanctuary legacy plan?

Once the departure of the director is announced, relationships and roles immediately shift. It can help if:

- The board is provided with a clear picture of what must be done during the interim.
- Priorities are shifted to short-term actions that the director and the board agree will strengthen the organization before the director departs.
- The board appoints a transition committee and gets ready to recruit.
- The director works with the board to undertake a thorough "getting ready" assessment and lets this analysis drive the interim strategy.
- The director should discuss the position with the board and transition committee and provide advice but avoid being actively involved in selecting the successor.
- The board should get outside help rather than relying on the director to undertake important and outstanding tasks.
- The director needs to accept that there will be a lot of mixed feelings and talk about them.
- The director says goodbye in a way appropriate for the individual, and must be direct in expressing preferences concerning the ways his or her years at the sanctuary should be celebrated. Board members should honor the legacy; it is a vital part of caring for the director and helps smooth the way for successful transition.
- Each of the players in a transition — the board, the founder, the director, the successor, and the staff — recognizes that transitions require time. It can take at least a year, and sometimes longer, after a new director is in place before uncertainty surrounding the change wears off.

Sanctuary board member *"It is rare for a person to have uniform skills — there are always strengths and weaknesses. It is important to assess where these voids are and to look at how to fill the biggest ones until the new director is in place. It will not be the same as before but it will work until a replacement is found. It is also a good time to get more first-hand information on the strengths and weaknesses of senior staff."*

5 Steps to sanctuary sustainability

Having highlighted the benefits and approaches to planning, shared important tools and systems, and considered tough questions and challenges that will need to be faced, where do you start? There are four main steps to support sustainability of your sanctuary:

5.1 *Envision the legacy.*

The first step is to visualize the legacy and this is where the planning process starts. As described earlier, this involves describing your vision. Think about what you want the sanctuary to look like in the future.

5.2 *Determine how to realize your vision.*

You know what you want the sanctuary to look like, you can see it, but what will it take to get there? This is where you need the strategic plan with its goals, objectives, and action plan.

Sanctuary director *"It was difficult coming into the sanctuary with the former director already gone. We had to start from scratch. A written plan would have really helped us to better know its direction."*

Within any sanctuary — and this will be clear in your plan — there are three kinds of resources: human, financial, and infrastructural. For example, your vision may include reintroduction of animals back to the wild. A release program will require the formation of an advisory group of relevant experts, field surveys, selection of a release site, the cooperation of local people, and the right staff, equipment, and processes. What will it take to get this? Jack and Jill see a time in the future when they will need to step back but want to ensure that their sanctuary remains strong and continues to provide high standards of captive care. How can they best achieve this? The Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust wants to establish a trust fund for financial security. What will it take to get this? The immediate response is usually money, but raising capital needs good people. Whatever we want to do, it will always point back toward human effort and action — to human resources.

Sanctuary co-founder and co-director *"We need to develop human capacity. Yes, money is important and we need a lot, but when we see what we have done and achieved in five years it is incredible — and others the same — we just need the right people with us."*

Remember, it is not only the strategic plan (and more importantly the process) that determines how to realize your vision. Do not forget the other complementary systems and tools. If you do not have them in place, list them in your action plan with timelines for completion.

5.3 *Get the right people in place.*

In your vision, who is there and what are they doing? The most effective approach to sustaining your vision and sanctuary is integrating staff development into its daily working life. Investing in people with potential maximizes real competition for target positions and ensures the sanctuary vision and legacy continues. Again this takes us back to the strategic plan. For each activity in the action plan you need to think about what staff you need, how current staff members fit, what positions you will need to hire for, and ideas on who the candidates might be — whether existing staff members or someone new. It also requires reflection on management systems and tools. Is the director equipped with the right skills and performing as expected (3.2)? Is the board performing its major governance tasks correctly (3.3)? Is the management team sharing leadership, responsibility (3.4), and important external relationships (3.5)? And are experienced alternates available for all key positions (3.9)?

Sanctuary director *"Although expatriates are often bought in "to do a job that locals cannot do" it is amazing how few have a defined local counterpart who they are actively training to fulfill their role. Expatriates almost always leave, so although investing in local staff may take longer and seem to be harder work, it is ultimately the only way that you will ever create a sustainable sanctuary."*

Since the sanctuary sector is defined by limited financial means you will need to be creative in rewarding and retaining your best performers. Not all employees are scrambling up the career ladder, but this should not mean that they are excluded from the process, as succession planning should not be restricted to senior roles. Good succession planning allows people to make cross-boundary career moves — movement within the organization can be horizontal as well as vertical.

Donor *"I see a major problem in many organizations because they have not thought about succession. When I get to know an organization, I am more interested in meeting and knowing the second and third in command as the first is already doing a good job. If young talent is not being groomed for succession, they will leave and join another organization. Not doing enough to bring along the next generation is bad planning."*

Succession planning not only concerns career movement but creating an organizational culture that values and empowers all staff with the sanctuary vision, regardless of level and duties. For example, many sanctuaries have guided on site and outreach education programs communicating key messages about animal welfare, conservation, and environmental management. Are staff ever the direct target audience of these programs, or is it assumed that they come to the job with this knowledge, or simply absorb these messages during their daily work? Are staff returning from conferences or placements asked to share their experiences and new knowledge with other members of the team? It is important that all staff understand and support the sanctuary vision — everyone has the capacity to become a leader or visionary at work, at home, or in their community. For more information on considerations surrounding staff development see Box 3.

Sanctuary co-founder and co-director *"It is the last thing on my mind but I know one day I will need to step back and away. I am always looking for that perfect person who can take over but I have not found anyone yet — passion cannot be passed on."*

Sanctuary co-founder and director *"I have seen many get stuck in their projects as they feel they are the only good guys and do not give the opportunity to others. I believe in my staff."*

Learning needs and learning environments

BOX 3

What does integrating staff learning and development into the daily working life of the sanctuary actually mean?

- Capacity building activities must be tailored to the individual sanctuary and start with asking: Building capacity for what? It is important to link learning and development opportunities to the achievement of your strategic goals and objectives (Section 3.1 and Annex I). This means thinking about the knowledge, skills, and experience you need for the sanctuary both now and in the future. Ask questions such as, what do people need to be able to do, do differently, or do better in order to deliver the sanctuary's future vision? The key task is to identify the "skills gap" — the gap between where people are now, and where they need to be in the future. Then the focus is on how to fill that gap.
- With your strategic plan in hand, a first step is to undertake a training and learning needs analysis, ideally conducted at three interlinked levels: organizational, team, and individual —balancing the needs of the organization with the interests of specific individuals. You can use a number of methods to gather information including: annual appraisals, regular progress meetings, questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. A strategic plan and detailed job descriptions (with person specification and objectives) are important tools in this process.
- Identifying learning needs is not just about what needs to be learned, it is also about how best to do it. There are a number of informal and formal ways to support learning and skills development including: sending staff to conferences, courses, and workshops (academic and vocational); coaching and mentoring; seeking advice from others or work shadowing (inside or outside your sanctuary); e-learning; internal knowledge-sharing events; job rotation; job exchanges and work experience; and reading books, articles, and watching DVDs. For more information on these different options, see Annex III.

  If the chimpanzees in your sanctuary are all infants and young juveniles, your staff will need the necessary knowledge to care for them when they are older. What organizational and infrastructure changes will you need to make, and what skills and experience will your staff need to manage the chimpanzees as their needs change (e.g. physically, socially, nutritionally) and they become bigger, stronger, and potentially dangerous. The director and/or chimpanzee care team leader may visit different facilities to seek advice on appropriate types of caging and fencing, protocols, and policies. The chimpanzee care team leader may also benefit from temporary work in a facility managing adult chimpanzees for hands-on experience.

  Building individual capacity builds organizational assets

- Regardless of the method of learning, it is important that new knowledge and skills are shared across the whole of the sanctuary to maximize the impact of investment. Simply getting someone to write a report on the learning experience does little to enhance organizational capacity. Ensure that returning staff are given opportunities to apply and share the learning. For example, all sanctuary staff will need to understand the implications of managing adult chimpanzees. The director and team leader could deliver a presentation to all staff, and as new management policies and practice are designed, provide in-house training. Work experience for other team members may also be beneficial.
- Human resource development, like most critical priorities, is a matter of culture. It is important to create an organizational culture supportive of learning; one that enables, encourages, values, and rewards learning. Reward mechanisms can include building learning responsibilities into job descriptions, ensuring that they are seen as enhancing career prospects. Learning should be seen as a legitimate activity and an integral part of work responsibilities not something just to be done in the individual's own time. It is important to remember, training (e.g., a course) is an event, but learning is a long-term process and you may need to free up time and resources to do it well.
- Importantly, the organization needs to learn from successes and challenges in staff development. Evaluation of these activities can demonstrate the value of training and learning, and help plan for future training activities.

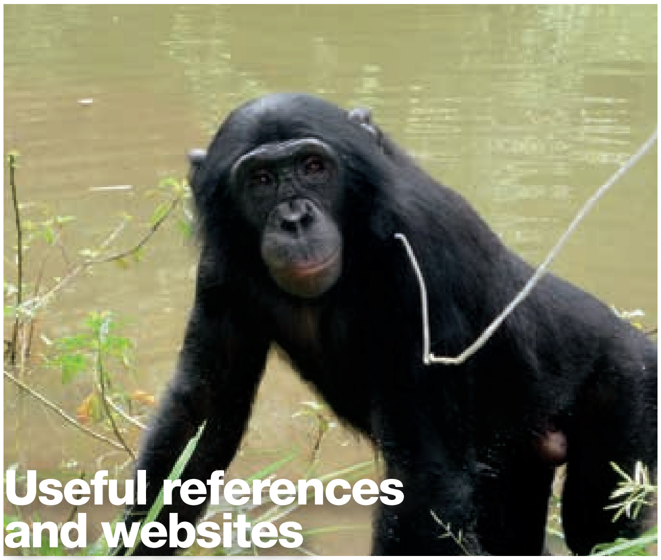
5.4 *Let them lead.*

Is it really true that it is not possible to pass on passion? Inspirational people can and do influence who we become and what we do. Leaders need to surround themselves with the right people with the right skills and to manage them appropriately, ensuring that they are given the opportunity and necessary support to grow their capabilities. This takes us to the best approach to building sustainable sanctuaries, one that views staff development as an ongoing and integrated process, and provides the right culture in which to grow and retain talented people.

Sanctuary founder and director *“We have a highly visible and detailed training system for our keepers, based on the traffic light system: red (stop — first level trainee), yellow (caution — second level), green (go — third level), and navy (highest level — master keeper), with each level wearing the appropriate colored t-shirt. A detailed training program is attached to each level so that keepers know exactly what they need to do, and years of service required, to progress. There is a real prestige attached to getting to wear that navy t-shirt as it is a clear signal of seniority and expertise.”*

Sanctuary director *“We have made it sustainable for keepers to stay on as they get older despite changing personal priorities and commitments. We have keepers who have been here for 20 years. They have not lost their passion so we need to support them. We are still working on improving salaries, but we have generous annual leave and a rota system that allows keepers and other staff to take sabbaticals as long as it is related to the work of the sanctuary.”*

The important message is that it all comes back to people — and getting more people engaged in the vision and legacy. It is not possible to do it alone. As leadership relates more to vision than hierarchy, all employees have the potential of exercising it. Once you think you have found the right person(s), inspire with your vision and always work to increase leadership potential and capacity. Like any form of planning, it is not about predicting the future or even being prepared for it — it is about creating the future that your sanctuary wants and needs.



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www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/trustee-governance/publications

Useful websites

Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It provides free access to a variety of publications that are applicable to other sectors. **www.aecf.org/AboutUs.aspx**

BoardSource provides information on building nonprofit boards and inspiring board service (requires membership to access publications). **www.boardsource.org**

Charity Commission provides information about being a board member and hallmarks that characterize an effective NGO.
www.charity-commission.gov.uk/index.aspx

CompassPoint provides free access to publications on leadership and management topics
www.compasspoint.org/research-reports

Creating the Future (www.creatingthefuture.org) contains free access to useful resources on topics such as board governance and mechanics, resource development, and founder syndrome.
www.help4nonprofits.com/H4NP.htm

Free Management Library has a vast array of free downloadable information on topics that include strategic planning, board responsibilities and management, leadership development, succession planning, and founder syndrome including a very useful guide on what to do when transitioning to a new director.
www.managementhelp.org

KnowHowNonProfit provides guidance on a variety of topics including governance, strategy, management, and fundraising. **www.knowhownonprofit.org**

The Global Forum on NGO Governance is a worldwide forum that supports resource-sharing and idea exchange for all who work with, or serve on, the boards of non-governmental organizations. The forum is sponsored by BoardSource and receives content contributions from organizational partners working with NGOs throughout the world **www.ngoboards.org**

The National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) provides information on strategy, governance and leadership, finance, and fundraising **www.ncvo-vol.org.uk**

TrusteeWorks provides information on board role descriptions, recruitment, and building effective boards.
www.reachskills.org.uk/trusteeworks

Annex I
Basic steps of strategic planning

There are many different models and action steps for strategic planning. No single approach is correct and the key to successful planning is fitting the tools and techniques of planning with the organization's culture, capabilities, working environment, and desired outcome. One approach is summarized below and assumes a cooperative effort between board and staff, perhaps with a special strategic planning committee of board members and staff taking responsibility for the effort. Some of the work can be done in committee, while board and staff planning sessions or retreats are also likely to be required. Typical steps are outlined below, along with some suggested approaches.

1. *Agree on a strategic planning process.*
This may be done at a board meeting with key staff present, or may require a special meeting or retreat including board, key staff, and some external stakeholders. The session should include:

- An understanding of what strategic planning is, its potential value to the organization, and how it is done.
- A consideration of the costs of doing strategic planning in terms of time and resources, and whether it is the right time.[2]
- A consideration of the best approach, e.g., issues-based (perhaps 12 months) or goals-based (maybe three years) planning.
- Agreement upon a process and establishment of responsibilities for the various steps.

2. *Define or review the organization's vision, mission, and values.*
These terms are commonly used but also commonly confused. Adding the letters "ary" to vision and mission can make the distinction much easier to understand.

VisionARY: A visionary is someone who sees what is possible, who sees potential. The organization's vision is likewise all about what is possible and serves as the overall goal that strategies aim to achieve.

MissionARY: A missionary is someone who undertakes that work. The mission describes the approach the organization will take to achieve the vision.

Values are a set of beliefs, principles, or standards that govern the actions and choices of an organization. They are an extension of the vision and mission.

The development of vision, mission, and values is usually best accomplished as part of a planning retreat or at a special meeting; the process will usually take some time

[2] If the sanctuary is in crisis, or financially or organizationally unstable, it may be difficult or unwise to enter into the process until the immediate problems and needs have been successfully addressed.

Sanctuary founder *"Developing a strategic plan was a difficult and emotional process for me — sharing public what would happen in the future, something that had previously only been in my head — but it was a good chance to get it out there, share and modify it. While it was difficult for me, it was great for the staff, getting them together and involved was really energizing."*

and should include the board and at least senior staff. It is a great way to unite everyone while producing a consistent message for internal and external communications. For small sanctuaries, a joint board-staff process may be practical. For a larger sanctuary, a two-stage process might be useful, with staff working together, followed by the board and key staff (or planning committee) participating in a similar process to review and refine the language. Even if the organization already has a vision and mission statement, it may be useful to go through a series of exercises that either affirm the existing statements or provide a basis to modify them.

There are many methods that can be used to develop these statements, but starting with the vision statement, gather the group and get each individual to draw their vision using these questions as a guide:

- What is the long-term vision for your sanctuary?
- What will success look like?
- What is the sanctuary doing and what has it accomplished in 10, 15, or 25 years?
- What will your sanctuary look like in the future?
- Who is there and what are they doing?

Then get the group to share what they have drawn, what it was like to draw their vision, and learn about how others see the future of the sanctuary. Sanctuary directors who have done this exercise say:

- "I have done this before as a written list, but drawing made it more real."
- "I have thought about it but not systematically. It was reassuring to have the same vision as others."
- "It feels like a luxury — to dare thinking beyond a year feels ambitious and presumptuous."
- "I am not ready to be replaced, but then I started imagining…it has caused me to question if I want to stay another 10 years and if I am the most effective person in this post."

Next try to reach a consensus; if this is not possible you may have uncovered a basic tension that needs to be addressed. Express the consensus in one or two short, energetic sentences. Show the results to a few staff and to people not associated with the sanctuary. If appropriate, ask representatives of the local community and business sector to find out what they think the sanctuary does and its purpose. What do they think? Does everyone understand it? If the answers to these questions are yes, then you now have a vision statement. If not, you need to work on the words some more.

Next ask why the vision exists. What is its purpose? The purpose, the reason the sanctuary exists, is the same as the mission. Or, try answering the question, why did I start this sanctuary? Think broadly – while the mission statement should not be an exhaustive list of what you do, it should ideally fit in all the services that you currently do and foresee doing in the future. Try to reach a consensus and turn it into one or two short vibrant sentences. A basic template to follow is: "The mission of [name] is to [verb] the [population served] of [location] through [core services]." As with the vision statement, show it to staff and external persons and see what they think.

Example 1: Gibbon Rescue Center

GRC's vision is: Gibbons are valued and protected by governments and local communities, secure in their natural habitat, and no longer threatened.

GRC's mission is: To protect the gibbons of Vietnam through rehabilitation and reintroduction, community partnerships and education.

Example 2: Chimpanzee Rescue Center

CRC's vision is: Chimpanzees live in natural environments and are free from exploitation and abuse.

CRC's mission is: Provides lifetime care in a safe and healthy environment for chimpanzees rescued from the entertainment industry, from research, or as pets in North America.

Clarifying and reaching consensus on values (also known as principles) is very important because it is this that provides a basis for making difficult decisions. Get the same group (although it is ideal to get all staff involved in this process) to brainstorm the values of the organization. This involves listing key terms that describe how the participants believe the organization should act, treat its staff, each other, the animals in their care, and external partners and stakeholders. You can use the vision statement and ask what values are implicit in it, look at your mission statement, or consult values statements of other organizations. Once a list is generated, narrow it down to fewer than 10 phrases or words and discuss their importance (ranking can help refine the list). You need to end up with ideally three to five phrases or words. Avoid using one-word values, such as "respect." You must clarify respect for what. As with the vision and mission statement show them around and see what others think.

Example 1: Gibbon Rescue Center

A value statement for the Gibbon Rescue Center might say "We work collaboratively with all sectors of society including local communities, respecting their cultural as well as economic needs, to develop practical and durable conservation solutions".

Example 2: Chimpanzee Rescue Center

A value statement for the Chimpanzee Rescue Center might say "We inspire trust and confidence in our sanctuary by adhering to the highest professional standards of captive care guided by best available knowledge and scientific information."

These statements do not just state "work collaboratively" or "inspire trust" but explain what these terms mean contextually and how they are connected to the sanctuary mission. Values need to be communicated throughout the organization and to partners and stakeholders. Just having them written down is insufficient; everyone must understand that the organization is going to demonstrate its values through its behavior.

3. *Conduct an environmental scan.*

The next step is to assess the impact of conditions and trends in the external environment (physical, social, economic, and political) and internal strengths and weaknesses (organizational capacity and performance) on the organization's ability to achieve its vision and carry out the mission. This process is often referred to as a SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.[3] The goal of SWOT is to identify factors or conditions to which the sanctuary can build strategic responses. It will not be possible to involve everyone, but a short survey sent to key stakeholders to get feedback on strengths and weaknesses can work well. The methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, research) used to gather the information for the analysis is based on availability of financial and human resources.

- **S**trengths: Attributes that promote the organization's ability to meet its vision/mission.
- **W**eaknesses: Attributes that hamper the organization's ability to meet its vision/mission.
- **O**pportunities: Internal and external factors that would enable the organization to meet its vision/mission.
- **T**hreats: Internal and external factors that would hamper the organization's ability to meet its vision/mission.

For example:

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Active, working founder/ director • Well managed and equipped sanctuary • Competent and committed staff	• Over-dependence on founder/director • Limited physical space for expansion • Reliance on a single donor
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Interest of local communities • Recognition of role in law enforcement • Membership in a regional alliance	• Continued influx of animals • Continued destruction of natural habitat • Inadequate funding and resources

[3] Other commonly used approaches include PEST — Political, Economic, Social, Technological; PESTLE, which adds two extra categories, Legal and Environmental; Stakeholder Analysis, Cost Benefit Analysis, Scenario Planning; Risk Analysis, etc., although SWOT is one of the most often used.

4. ***Identify key issues, questions, and choices to be addressed as part of the strategic planning effort.***
One of the pitfalls of making a strategic plan is being overwhelmed by having too many things that you would like to accomplish. This is where it is important to identify strategic issues. The planning committee may be able to discuss and quickly come to consensus if there are a few things that emerge as clear priorities. If however a lengthy list is generated, you may want to use a more formal process to prioritize. There are different ways of doing this but whatever the method used, there needs to be agreement.

Based on data generated from the environmental scan, planning committee members could each select a specified number of issues and indicate why they are strategic. The discussion should also include both the benefits and negative consequences of addressing each issue, and the ability of the sanctuary to deal with them. The strategic issues should then be prioritized in terms of importance, timing, and feasibility. The following ground rules should also be used to select strategic issues:

- Choose no more than five. Keep the list short. There are countless issues that affect your sanctuary but the more you have, the less you can focus on those that are the most important.
- Select issues that you can affect. Stick to what you can change and be realistic in that assessment.
- Donor interests are relevant but not overriding. It is important to understand donor interests and priorities but only as input to the sanctuary's decisions.
- Each external issue will be mirrored internally. Internal capacities are needed for external effect.
- Come back to the mission. Each strategic issue should relate to the mission statement.

5. ***Define strategic goals and objectives.***
When you have something you want to accomplish, it is important to set goals and objectives. Strategic goals are the desired outcome of each strategic issue; they are generally long-term and open-ended. It is usually a short step from vision to goals, and sometimes the statements describing the vision are essentially goals statements. Goals might cover a variety of categories and include external and internal dimensions: program, status, resources, relationships, institutional development, and governance.

Strategic objectives summarize the tasks and activities that must be undertaken to achieve a strategic goal. Where goals may be fairly general, objectives are specific, concrete, and often quantifiable outcomes to reach in moving toward goals. There can be a tendency to choose too many with the end result being a lengthy description of everything the organization does rather than focusing on a few critical objectives that will successfully realize the goals and vision. Fifteen or so objectives should be sufficient and remember to include strategic leadership. Looking for the following characteristics will help to prioritize objectives:

What makes a good objective?

- It must be **S**pecific — *is it meaningful and focused?*
- It must be **M**easurable — *what milestone/s will you use?*
- It must be **A**chievable — *is there a realistic path to achievement?*
- It must be **R**ealistic — *do you have the resources or can you get them?*
- It must be **T**imely — *is it the right time and is there enough time?*

Example 1: Gibbon Rescue Center
The SWOT analysis revealed that threats to the organization included the continued influx of gibbons and habitat destruction. At the same time, interest shown by the local community was identified as an opportunity. Lack of awareness, alternatives, and opportunities were identified as key issues preventing local people from sustainable natural resource use, a challenge to the organization's vision, and a strategic priority.

Goal 1: Increased sustainable use and management of natural resources in x (area) by x (year).

Objective 1.1: Promote and support methods of environmentally friendly cooking practice in x (communities) to reduce the number of trees cut down for firewood.

Example 2: Chimpanzee Rescue Center
The SWOT analysis revealed the weakness of relying on a single donor and threat of inadequate funding and resources. At the same time the rescue center benefits from competent and committed staff. The need for professional input and guidance on fundraising and financial management was considered a priority.

Goal 1: Increasingly stable and diversified funding base by x (year).

Objective 1.1: Increase the number of active and professional members of the board capable of providing guidance on fund-raising strategies and financial management to the sanctuary director.

Objective 1.2: Establish an operational reserve representing x% of annual income.

6. ***Make an action plan.***
The next stage is to turn objectives into actions, i.e., what are the steps you need to take to accomplish the objective? It may be daunting to add precise detail to Years 2 and 3, so focus on Year 1 and then add more detail to later years as the plan is regularly reviewed. The annual work plan should feed into quarterly and monthly work plans. For each objective and activity the following questions should be answered:

- What will you do and who will do it?
- When will you do it? Do not schedule complex projects to occur at the same time.
- How much will it cost?

Here is one way to present the information:

Goal	Objective	Activity/strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	Resource allocation	Progress notes
1.	1.1	1.1				
		1.2				
	1.2	1.2.1				
		1.2.2				
		1.2.3				

Objectives and work plans for the board and institution are as important as program-related ones. Program-related activities may have specified annual objectives and work plans due to funder requirements, while only a strategic plan is likely to require the board to think about its composition, skills, and involvement, or about organizational structure and administrative functions. The board should approve the action plan, and staff can do much of the development of the written plan. This is an area of staff expertise since implementation of programs and other strategies based on policies set by the board is a staff function.

7. *Finalize a written strategic plan.*

The strategic plan should summarize the results and decisions of the strategic planning process. Be sure to document not only the plan but also the process so you can improve upon it in each cycle. There is no set format but be sure to include the outputs of each major step. Box 4 provides one possibility. The action plan can be included in the strategic plan or an annual addendum to it.

The strategic plan is primarily an internal document to be used for guidance and evaluation; however donors increasingly require organizations to submit them, so the plan should be designed attractively. You may want to develop an internal and external version, the latter omitting some of the detail. A well organized plan will enable the reader to find and understand its most important elements. Whenever possible, avoid the use of jargon and describe acronyms that may confuse lay readers and future generations of leadership who may review it. Have it available electronically, and avoid hard copies as they go out of date quickly.

8. *Implement, monitor, evaluate and update the plan.*

It is important to establish a schedule to monitor and evaluate periodically the progress of the sanctuary in implementing the various objectives. If internal or external conditions have changed, it may be necessary to revisit the planning process and assess the validity of the goals and objectives. The board plays a critical role in reviewing progress; staff should carry out the documentation required to generate ongoing data for the review, as well as conduct periodic monitoring and make reports to the board. Have procedures for taking advantage of unexpected changes. Use the plan as a compass but not an inflexible blueprint for action.

- Expect the board and committees to use the plan as a guide for their responsibilities and work, and to report on their progress.
- Refer to and review the status of the plan at board and committee meetings.
- Regularly review, assess, and refresh the plan so that it becomes a living document (be sure to keep an archived copy of the original plan).
- Regularly dedicate time to work on the strategic plan.

BOX 4

Sample format for a strategic plan

1. **Cover page**
   Name of the organization, logo, title including the words Strategic Plan, scope of plan, date the plan was completed and/or revised.
2. **Contents page**
   Some readers may be interested only in certain sections. Number each page and make sure the table of contents is accurate.
3. **Summary**
   1 page describing the most important elements of the plan, including its purpose, scope, and strategic goals.
4. **Introduction and methodology**
   1-2 pages containing summary background of sanctuary, need for a strategic plan, and how the plan was developed.
5. **Organization vision, mission, and values**
   (or operating principles)
6. **Environmental scan**
   6.1 Organization history and structure
   6. 2 The external environment
   - *National situation and trends*
   - *Local situation and trends*
   - *Summary of opportunities and threats*

   6.3 The organization
   - *Scope of activities*
   - *Operating model*
   - *Management and governance*
   - *Summary of strengths and weaknesses*
7. **Goals and objectives**
   You can include supporting information/rationale for each goal and summary of activities under each objective
8. **Monitoring and review**
   Plans for monitoring, reviewing, and refining the plan
9. **Action plan** (may be prepared separately)
10. **Attachments**
    Environmental scan data and other supporting information. Make sure the attachments are numbered and properly sequenced as they are referenced in the text.

Annex II
Board basics

To help your board maintain effectiveness, it is important to understand the following:[4]

1. *What is a board?*

- Board members (also known as trustees, directors, and governors) are usually unpaid volunteers who act as trustees of the organization, and represent and are responsible to the sanctuary's community, donors, supporters, government, etc.
- The board is responsible for seeing that the sanctuary keeps the promises described in vision and value statements and for assuring that it is accountable and acting within the constitution and governing legislation.
- The board only acts as a group. Individuals on a board should have no individual power except that which is expressed as a majority vote of the board.
- No matter what the size, mission, age, or budget of the sanctuary, most models of governance emphasize four main areas of board responsibility:

Mission	The board safeguards the mission by making sure there is a clear sense of mission shared throughout the sanctuary, a good mission statement, and appropriately planned and evaluated programs and services.
Values	The board defines sanctuary values and sets the standard for professional conduct through its own behavior as well as in the policies it establishes for others to follow.
Resources	The board ensures that the sanctuary has adequate resources — human, material and financial — by hiring and monitoring the director, monitoring the financial health of the sanctuary, ensuring the acquisition of sufficient resources, and assisting in resource mobilization.
Outreach	The board promotes the sanctuary in the community and serves as a link with members, donors, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

2. *What does a board do?*

These four areas of responsibility translate into the following range of activities:

- Attend and participate in board, committee, and other important meetings. *Board members must meet as often as needed to do sanctuary business and to make well-informed decisions. This can range from two to four face-to-face meetings per year with contact in between as required. Committees will also need to meet.*
- Take on specific board roles such as chair, treasurer, and secretary. *These special roles will require extra time commitment.*
- Prepare for meetings, review and comment on minutes and reports.
- Volunteer for and willingly accept assignments and complete them thoroughly and on time. *Some organizations estimate the number of hours required per month.*
- Get to know other board members to build a collegial relationship.
- Visit the sanctuary and engage with sanctuary staff so they know the board is committed to the sanctuary mission.
- Actively participate in evaluations and planning efforts.
- Participate in fundraising and inform others about the organization. *This may involve representing the sanctuary at specific events.*
- Keep informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs.
- Keep up to date on developments and issues facing the sanctuary and sector.
- Help to develop and review the board information pack and board manual, and other board tools and processes (described in this annex and guide), and actively participate in the annual self-evaluation.
- Recruit other board members.
- Recruit, manage, and evaluate the director.

3. *Who should be on the board?*

Members of the board should be assembled very carefully — they will be responsible for the success or failure of the sanctuary and play an integral role in its future as far as reputation and integrity. Important qualities include:

- **Time and work ethic:** Board members, whether they are independent persons or representatives of partner organizations, should have the time available to invest in attending meetings and to undertake the work required outside of meetings.
- **Commitment**: They should demonstrate a passionate commitment to the sanctuary and to the mission of the organization.
- **Relevant expertise:** Board members should have some skill, talent, or access to resources that can benefit the sanctuary. You will need to assess the skills, knowledge, and expertise the board has and needs. This may range from legal, financial, or fund-raising to education and learning, organizational development, or experience of the sanctuary working environment (geographically or species-specific). If you are developing a collaborative initiative of agencies (that may or may not be a fully mandated board), selection will be dictated by the type and mission of organizations that you believe will provide the necessary expertise and connections.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Board members need to have good

[4] Establishing and maintaining a board may seem like a daunting process but if you need help developing any of the systems and tools described in this guide, ask other sanctuaries and see if you can borrow and adapt. There is no need to start from scratch.

interpersonal skills and like to work as part of a team. A willingness to speak one's mind and offer advice, guidance, and feedback is important but so is the ability to listen to the viewpoint of others without being controlling. Board members need to be able to network, to make good contacts and build rapport and relationships.

- **Community ties:** This is where the sanctuary can become political, which is hard to avoid. If your board members have no ties to the local community then it will be that much harder to gain recognition as an organization. Retired people, former politicians, and local media personalities can make excellent starting members for your board — but only if they have the time and commitment.
- **Diversity:** A great board has several members that have different backgrounds and ways of thinking. This creates checks and balances for your board that will help with making decisions, accountability, and public confidence. This can include different races, ethnicities, backgrounds, and financial status. People of different affiliations can be invaluable because they will draw support from different media. In the case of partner organizations this is equally important, for example, including development organizations alongside conservation and captive animal management for a sanctuary in a developing country context.
- Give and get: Board members should accept responsibility for the principle of "Give and Get." That means that board members should agree to give a minimum and/or predetermined monetary amount per year or get an equal contribution from another source. *This may not always be appropriate as board members can bring non-monetary resources such as invaluable skills, experience and networking, which can translate into substantive financial value.*

So how do you achieve this eclectic mix? Focus on work ethic, commitment, and important skills, and look for the best fit of other attributes in the applicants.

4. *What does a board look like?*

National guidelines or your constitution may specify the minimum number of board members required. The actual number should preferably be more than three and use an odd number set-up, for the sake of avoiding tied votes.

Some board members are known as "officers" and have special responsibilities. These include the chair, treasurer, and secretary. The chair is mainly responsible for coordinating the work of the board and serving as the liaison with staff, particularly the director. The treasurer will ensure that proper accounts are kept, and help set financial and investment policies. The secretary takes meeting notes and ensures that they are circulated and filed. However, when it comes to making decisions about the sanctuary, board members must take them together.

Sanctuary board member *"Advice for people considering becoming a Board member? First, make sure you know the sanctuary enough to understand board discussions — it took me a year — by going to the sanctuary and meeting and talking to the people there. Second, and most importantly, in two sentences you need to be able to say what the sanctuary does so that when you are at a dinner or a party and have a chance to say something you can say it automatically — have those two sentences right at hand. Lastly is the issue of commitment. You have to come with a desire for this mission — not just to be on a board, any board, or to put it on your resume, but a desire to help this sanctuary and support this mission."*

To facilitate quick decision-making and streamline meetings and efforts, boards will frequently establish sub-committees or task force groups to complete necessary research of ideas and to make recommendations to the board as a whole. Committees are usually of two types: standing (permanent) e.g., financial, and special or ad-hoc (temporary) e.g., technical. Membership is usually composed of board members and sometimes staff who have special expertise in the area. The board may also recruit to committees external people with specific skills or those who do not have the time for a fuller commitment. This can be a good way for the sanctuary to get to know them and to introduce them to the commitment required for being a board member, the scope of work, and to see if they want to join the board later.

5. *Board recruitment.*

This is sanctuary- and context-dependant but start by looking close to home, to your largest and/or more consistent donors and supporters. Ask friends, colleagues, or stakeholders. They may have an idea of someone suitable. This may seem counter to popular board development mythology, but imagine how many times Ms. Prominent Personality gets asked to be on a board. Members are often recruited as they are judged to be "important" in some way, but these people are often too busy to really pay attention to the needs of an organization and may miss meetings or not pay proper attention to its affairs. Consider whether they would be better placed as a patron, providing supportive quotes and appearances to sanctuary activities. The same can be true for representatives of partner organizations.

For board diversity however, looking outside of the immediate circle is also recommended. More formal avenues include advertising in a newspaper or online (sanctuary website or others). There are numerous websites where non-profits in need of board members and people interested in becoming board members advertise, although they are not always free. Finding the right partner organization requires research on prospective partners, both sectorally and geographically.

Before you start looking, does the sanctuary have an information pack for applicants? Even though board members should not be paid for their work, a written job description is still useful. It can help board members understand what is expected of them, the difference between governance and management, how to behave on the board, and prioritize activities. It should set out the job description and overall role of the board — from the composition, purpose, role, and responsibilities (of general and special roles), to job descriptions for committees. It is about letting people know what they are getting into, and research has shown that organizations are more effective if board members feel informed about their responsibilities and duties. It should also include information on the sanctuary, programs, activities, and the strategic plan so that they can get to know the organization. An information pack to attract prospective partner organizations is equally important.

6. *Developing and maintaining an effective board.* Maintaining a board is an ongoing task and it is not always an easy one. Boards get tired and frustrated. Old members leave, new ones replace them, and sometimes with an inadequate or incorrect understanding of how the board or sanctuary works. The following can help maintain an effective board over the lifetime of the sanctuary:

6.1. *Develop a system to assist board members in understanding the board and their roles.*
This can include:

- An information pack for prospective board members (see Section 5).
- A board manual for members (resembles an employee handbook) — relevant information will also help support a non-mandated advisory board.
- Work plans for each board member.

A board manual can include information on:

- Legalities: articles of incorporation/constitution and other legal information.
- Board affairs: information on duties and responsibilities, term of office, the review and removal procedures, election processes, conflict of interest policy, etc.
- Board directory: contact information for board members, staff and volunteers.
- Committees: name of chair and members, purpose and responsibilities.
- Sanctuary history, programs, and activities.
- Sanctuary budget (and most recent audit if applicable).
- Summary animal list.
- Strategic plan and action plan (and any other important planning documents).

Some sections will change annually and need updating — a simple, helpful way to do this is to provide a loose-leaf folder so that pages can easily be added or replaced.

Sanctuary founder *"The board is reactive and not proactive, and their support ebbs and flows. A consultant advised getting a larger and more diverse board. We advertised and recruited new members; one left soon after as they did not have enough time and the other is on a leave of absence. Two others have since left. It is a problem finding people with the right skills to commit and be active."*

Inevitably some people may simply underestimate how much free time they actually have or their own commitments may change, but a board information pack will provide prospective members with the necessary information to understand areas of board responsibility and the level of commitment required.

6.2. *Understand the difference between governance and management*
While addressed in 6.1, this issue deserves a special mention as it is crucial to the smooth running of any organization. Board members (and staff) need to understand the distinction between governance (performed by boards) and management (performed by senior management). Where board and management are effective and share common values, board interventions will be limited and it can concentrate on governance. A strong board with weak or divided management or a weak board with strong or domineering leadership blurs the governance-management line, precludes accountability, and threatens sustainability. In a non-mandated board, members will need to understand what they are, and are not, responsible for.

Governance	Management
• Develop and approve strategy and policy	• Develop strategy and policy
• Appoint, manage and evaluate the director	• Appoint, manage and evaluate staff
• Recruit board members	• Support governance
• Manage governance	• Implement board decisions
• Offer insight, wisdom, and judgment	• Deliver programs
• Monitor strategy and performance	• Measure performance

Ways to achieve an effective governance board include:

- Roles, responsibilities, and key functions of the board and management, particularly the chair and director, should be clearly defined.
- Ideally staff should not serve as board members and vice versa.[5]
- The director who sits on a board should be a non-voting member.[6]
- Board members should not become directly involved in decisions designated to management but instead ensure

[5] In the case of smaller sanctuaries, board members may be directly involved in operational issues. Those concerned should make a clear distinction between their board and operational roles. To avoid confusion, management for the operational task should be via the director.
[6] Active founders are frequently voting board members but they should not be present however, nor allowed to vote, on issues concerning their performance or remuneration.

that senior management has the authority to discharge their duties and be held accountable through the director.

- There should be a process to monitor the clear division of responsibilities between the board and management.
- Board members should identify and declare any conflicts of interest.
- Board members should not benefit from their position beyond what is allowed by the law and is in the interests of the organization.
- Effective governance is characterized by a diversified board with no single stakeholder group dominating.

6.3. *Design a process for welcoming, training, and mentoring new board members.*

How you design this will reflect your sanctuary, how often the board meets, how often new members join the board, and how formal or informal you want it to be. It could include formal presentations, informal mentoring from a designated board member, and/or presentations by sanctuary staff with a sanctuary tour.

6.4. *Maintain a healthy, effective relationship with staff. This can include:*

- Inviting staff members to meetings. In many or even most organizations, the director and key staff person attend board meetings as a matter of course. In some organizations, staff give presentations at board meetings which can help to update board members on the immediate needs, progress, and opportunities.
- Making sure the staff is getting the support they need. Board members should regularly ask the director what would be helpful in getting things done. They can also ask other staff members, who might be less willing to approach the board.
- Creating opportunities for the board to better understand the work done by staff. For example, by visiting the sanctuary and experiencing other program areas.
- Although the director, in particular, is often responsible for maintaining a healthy and effective relationship with the board, both sides need to do their part.

6.5. *Hold effective meetings. Strategies can include:*

- Developing procedures to give structure to meetings.
- Using a consent agenda system to streamline meetings, leaving more time for items requiring board discussion.[7]
- Occasionally switching meetings to somewhere more unusual, for example, holding it in the sanctuary education center as a reminder of what it is all about.
- Allowing some social time for board members to get to know one another.
- Bringing in experts/staff to lead discussions on various topics.
- Making sure everyone says something during the meeting. If chairing, invite quieter members to speak by asking them directly for their opinions, or through encouragement in a private conversation.
- Finding a balance between dealing with the immediate and the concrete, and the longer-term and more general. This may not be best achieved in meetings but perhaps "offline" in smaller task groups.

6.6. *Maintain a sensible work level for board members.*

If there is nothing for a board member to do, he or she is less likely to feel effective, to stay committed, and to stick around. If there is too much to do, the board member is also likely to look for an exit. It is a question of balance, of finding something for each member to do, but not too much. This responsibility can be shared by the chair or other board officers, the director, and management team.

6.7. *Develop a policy for dealing with urgent (and not so urgent) matters between meetings.*

This is the work that goes on between meetings, which often makes up much or even most of the work. This includes committee and task group work, informal contacts, and so on. This may involve having a designated "point person" who distributes information to everyone. The board should have a procedure for contacting and polling members so that remotely submitted votes are legitimate.

6.8. *Define terms of board membership and perform an annual self-evaluation.*

The board needs to think about and answer the following: How will you choose your officers, will the term of office be limited and staggered, and how will you ensure diverse membership? Every board does this differently and it is important to try to find a system that works for you. Evaluation is one of the key tools for sanctuary sustainability (refer to 3.3), and the process of board self-evaluation will need to be determined.

6.9. *Organize an annual retreat.*

This can be informal or formal; it may just be an annual, longer-than-usual meeting with the purpose of planning for the year ahead. It is important to have a regular block of time set aside for looking at the "big picture." Evaluation of what has already happened should always be the first step in planning ahead.

6.10. *Celebrate accomplishments.*

If board members feel useful and appreciated, they are more likely to contribute and feel an obligation to share their passion and expertise. Valuing and rewarding hard work should be an integral part of any organization, for staff, volunteers, and board members (see also 5.3). It can strengthen relationships, boost morale, and provide a moment for reflection.

[7] A consent agenda groups together items that do not require discussion and can be approved in a single vote, for example, meeting minutes and program and director reports. Board members are responsible for reading consent agenda items before the meeting and if any board member believes an item on the consent agenda warrants further discussion, it can be removed and added to the meeting agenda.

Annex III
Supporting learning and skill development

The particular methods you choose to meet learning needs will depend upon how people prefer to learn, the number of people who need training, and your budget. They include:

- **In-house courses**
  Developing a course to be run at your sanctuary and tailored to the needs of your staff can be useful if the training need is widespread or quite specific to your needs. Training can be delivered by an external trainer or someone with relevant expertise within the organization. If the latter, you might need to ask whether there is a need for some “train the trainer” training to ensure that the leader can communicate his or her knowledge effectively.
- **External training courses**
  Attending external training courses has the advantage of allowing the individual to network and learn from people in other sanctuaries and organizations. For example, the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust runs a variety of courses ranging from project management and facilitation skills to education and captive care. If the training need is widespread across a regional sanctuary alliance, it might be possible to tailor-make the course and minimize costs. For example, the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance runs annual capacity building workshops for educators and veterinarians at member sanctuaries.
- **Conferences and events**
  Conferences are ideal for getting up to date with knowledge and developments, and for networking and learning from others. For example, The Shape of Enrichment hosts several conferences and workshops on enrichment, as well as offering a range of other resources.
- **Coaching and mentoring**
  Coaching consists of a series of structured one-to-one meetings focused on improving skills and performance. Mentors are typically experienced managers (but not line managers) who meet junior colleagues to help them perform better and develop them for career advancement.
- **Shadowing and work experience**
  Shadowing involves spending a short period time with someone in a different job, either within your own sanctuary or externally. This might include observing how day-to-day tasks are performed.
- **Secondment (job exchange)**
  This allows an individual to temporarily change job roles within the same organization or transfer to another organization for an agreed period of time, often several months. These opportunities can be valuable in helping an individual learn about different ways of doing things, and offers professional development opportunities especially within flat organizational structures where promotion may be limited. A common example is keeper exchanges between range-state sanctuaries and zoos in Europe and North America.
- **Action or collective learning**
  Action learning is a form of learning by doing. It involves working in small groups meeting on a regular basis, working through real problems with the support of the group.
- **E-learning (distance learning)**
  E-learning is increasingly used to supplement traditional site-based learning and includes academic and vocational options. For example, Australia’s Murdoch University offers distance-learning opportunities for its Master of Veterinary Studies in Conservation Medicine. E-learning may include live sessions, e.g., the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries runs webinars on several topics including grant writing, strategic planning, and succession planning.
- **Books, journals, and DVDs**
  Sometimes the learning need can be met by reading a suitable book or buying an appropriate toolkit.

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