Contract title: Policy Influencing specialist

Reports to: Director, Counter-Wildlife Trafficking-Asia, Wildlife Conservation Society

Period of Performance: 6 months, April 1st 2020 – September 30th 2020 (With potential for renewal)

Work station: Bangkok, Thailand (Other Southeast Asian countries with WCS offices engaged in this initiative would be considered)

Wildlife Conservation Society

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a US-headquartered non-profit, tax-exempt, private organization established in 1895 that saves wildlife and wild places by understanding critical issues, crafting science-based solutions, and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity. With long-term commitments in dozens of landscapes, presence in more than 60 countries, and experience helping to establish over 250 protected areas across the globe, WCS has amassed the biological knowledge, cultural understanding and partnerships to ensure that vibrant, wild places and wildlife thrive alongside local communities. Working with local communities and organizations, that knowledge is applied to address species, habitat and ecosystem management issues critical to improving the quality of life of poor rural people whose livelihoods depend on the direct utilization of natural resources.

Time to end the trade of live wildlife in Asia

Over 3000 people have died and over 95,000 have been infected globally in the current coronavirus (COVID19) global public health emergency that is thought to have originated in wildlife markets in Wuhan, China.

Wildlife is commonly traded and used in China and a number of Asian countries for meat, pets, skins, traditional medicine or display in private collections. Animals from a wide range of species are sourced from across the globe and include those trapped from the wild or originating from captive-breeding facilities. From source to market, the wildlife supply chain (both legal and illegal) can involve conditions that present a high risk for the emergence and transmission of zoonotic pathogens which could potentially cause future pandemic threats such as COVID19, as evidenced by SARS, H5N1, and Ebola: Firstly, different species of wildlife are kept in close proximity to each other and to domestic animals in restaurants, pet shops, wholesale markets, wholesale trader warehouses, commercial breeding farms or in shipments as they pass international boundaries. Secondly, during time in transport and storage, wildlife is often kept in close conditions where vermin, people, and fomites pass between them. Husbandry conditions are often poor leaving animals in a stressed, weak and immuno-compromised state.

In the wake of this latest outbreak, a number of Asian Governments have increased enforcement and regulation of wildlife trade. Most notably the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress in China has banned the hunting, trade, transportation, and consumption of all terrestrial wild animals whether captive-bred or wild caught, yet only when the end purpose is to eat (i.e. not for pets, furs, TCM, or zoos). The policy and enforcement reactions to date are encouraging yet insufficient to remove the risk of future zoonotic outbreaks. Prohibiting the live trade in wildlife in Asia can create a win-win situation by vastly reducing the risk of future zoonotic virus outbreaks, while also protecting a range of species harvested illegally or unsustainably from the wild.

Scope of work - Achieving a win-win for people and wildlife

WCS has launched an initiative to leverage high-level political commitment within Asian Governments to take sustained actions to end the trade of live wildlife and prevent future zoonotic pathogen outbreaks. In the initial stage this initiative focus will be on establishing the required commitment within Governments; as that is achieved our work will evolve into supporting our government counterparts to implement actions as required. A core component of this initiative is
the development of strategies in a number of Asian countries that will establish the required political commitment within governments to end the trade in wild animals.

**Activities and Deliverables**

- Provide direct technical inputs to WCS country program staff in the design of five strategic plans (Plans will be costed out and identify national and international influencers, core information needs, develop localized messages, and the key partnerships required with media, local academics and CSOs)
- Training to five WCS country programs in managing and monitoring the plans
- Analysis of regional and global policy (including public health, wildlife) to identify opportunities at international level to influence commitments to end trade in live wildlife in Asia
- Coordinate WCS desk review of relevant legislation (including but not limited to wildlife protection, animal health, biosecurity, and quarantine) in five countries to identify the highest priority pieces of legislation provide recommendations on specific articles in that legislation that would provide the legislation to end the trade in live wildlife

**Requirements:**

- Commitment to the conservation of wildlife
- Undergrad/Postgrad qualification in a relevant field, including international relations, international development, public policy, social sciences or law
- At least 5-years experience in the design and implementation of advocacy strategies and campaigns to influence policy at national or multi-lateral level
- At least 5-years experience implementing projects of a similar nature in the non-profit sector at a country level
- Demonstrated experience with policy analysis, research and writing related to issues of global development, public health preferred
- Proven ability to work with national programs, develop partnerships and build coalitions towards a common strategic objective

**Applications:**

Interested candidates should send a Cover letter and CV to sroberton@wcs.org

**Deadline for applications April 1st**