**An Introduction to the Amphibian Red List Authority (RLA)**

**Version 1.0 – April 2010**

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## 1    What is the Amphibian Red List Authority?

**Red List Authorities** are groups of people who ensure that all species within their jurisdiction are correctly assessed against the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria at least once every ten years (assessments that are older than ten years are flagged as requiring an update, given that the status and any supporting documentation provided may no longer be correct; such assessments should be used with caution). Assessments or reassessments should also include the necessary minimum documentation required and should be done in as consultative a manner as is possible. The objective is that every new species assessment included on the IUCN Red List will have been reviewed by at least two members of an appointed Red List Authority or by at least two evaluators/reviewers appointed by IUCN Species Programme staff. This review system places greater responsibility on the Species Survival Commission (SSC) network and its partners to ensure that what appears on the IUCN Red List is credible and scientifically accurate.

The **Amphibian Red List Authority** (**Amphibian RLA**) is a group of people tasked by the Chair of the IUCN SSC with overseeing the process of updating, maintaining and curating amphibian assessments in the IUCN Red List (http://www.iucnredlist.org/initiatives/amphibians). The Amphibian RLA is established within the IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG), and is considered to be part of IUCN SSC, so RLA members are by definition also IUCN SSC members. Amphibian RLA members are professionals dedicated to the study and/or conservation of amphibians, and who are, at the same time, qualified (through training in the several tools regularly used in amphibian assessments) to assess and evaluate amphibian assessments in the IUCN Red List.

## 2    Background to Amphibians on the IUCN Red List

In 2001, an initiative spearheaded by IUCN in partnership with Conservation International and NatureServe to undertake the first comprehensive assessment of the conservation status of all known amphibian species had begun. This initiative, known as the Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA), was completed in 2004 for all known amphibian species at the time. The GAA was first housed in an independent website (www.globalamphibians.org; which is no longer active) kindly provided by NatureServe, while details of its migration into the IUCN Red List were being finalized. The data in the GAA and the IUCN Red List are one and the same; subsequent updates in the IUCN Red List but not the GAA (as it was being phased out) sometimes led readers to believe that they were two different databases. Following on from the discontinuation of the GAA website, the term "Global Amphibian Assessment" was also retired, so the ongoing assessment of amphibians is now referred to as "Amphibians on the IUCN Red List" (see http://www.iucnredlist.org/amphibians). Again, this was to avoid any confusion that the GAA was a separate process to the IUCN Red Listing of amphibians.

Since 2004, there have also been changes in the central coordinating team of the GAA/Amphibians on the Red List. Dr Simon Stuart is now the IUCN SSC Chair, Janice Chanson has retired from her position as Data Manager within the Biodiversity Assessment Unit (from where the GAA was operated), Mike Hoffmann is now the Senior Scientific Officer at the SSC Chair's Office, and Neil Cox is now Acting Manager of the Biodiversity Assessment Unit (BAU).

Because of these changes, and given changing priorities and budgetary restraints stemming from the current economic climate, a new approach had to be devised. Thus, the Amphibian RLA is now the new central coordinating team responsible for keeping the IUCN amphibian database updated. Keeping this database updated is an ongoing endeavour which relies heavily on the expertise of hundreds of herpetologists around the globe.

## 3    Sustainability

One of the major challenges that the IUCN amphibian database faces is that of sustainability. Once a global assessment is completed, often times priorities (and funding!) change to other taxonomic groups that still require a first, comprehensive assessment. However, because the conservation status of plants and animals can change as new information comes to light, it is key to keep conservation databases as current as possible, so as to better inform conservation action and policy. This requires funds to conduct workshops and hire staff.

We are exploring a new major mechanism to keep the amphibian database current. This involves the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA), a new strategy proposed during the Amphibian Conservation Mini-Summit held in London in August 2010. The ASA is a voluntary alliance of institutions which would help implement the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan at a global scale. Structural, logistic and financial details of the ASA are currently being worked out, but once in place, it may be possible to make the amphibian database sustainable through some of the funds channeled towards amphibian conservation via the ASA. The RLA Focal Point will keep RLA members abreast of any developments on this front.

**4    Structure of the Amphibian RLA**

The Amphibian RLA is comprised of a Focal Point, Full-time RLA members and Part-time RLA members. The **RLA Focal Point** is responsible for training in the tools necessary to conduct Red List assessments and evaluations, coordination of RLA activities, liaising with IUCN's Species Programme, Red List Unit and Amphibians on the Red List partners, and ultimately the overall governance of the Amphibian RLA.

**Full-time RLA members** are those members who perform RLA activities on a regular basis over the course of their quadrennial tenure. Full-time RLA members can act as evaluators/reviewers for any amphibian assessment, regardless of the region/country or scope (global/regional) of the assessment (see **Roles and responsibilities within global assessments** for further details on assessors and evaluators/reviewers). They can also act as assessors in those instances where they have taxonomic and/or regional expertise. Full time RLA members can also supervise Part-time RLA members where the opportunity for a joint global/regional assessment arises (see below). Full-time RLA members have access to all of the amphibian data housed in SIS on an ongoing basis.

**Part-time RLA members** are typically people that would already be involved in a national or regional reassessment, and would ONLY be involved in the reassessments – both global and regional – of their particular region/country. In other words, part-time RLAs would only act as such when the opportunity for a joint regional/global assessment arises. Part-time RLA members are therefore temporary RLA members. Once the regional update in question and its global counterpart are completed, the Part-time RLAs' involvement with the assessment process is also concluded. Given that the Part-time RLAs would need to work closely with the Full-time RLAs from the country/region, they would be under the direct supervision of the Full-time RLA member(s), where possible. Part-time RLAs have evaluator/reviewer rights to sign-off on endemic assessments for both global and regional assessments; however, in these instances we request that Full-time RLAs (those not directly involved with the assessment process) conduct random consistency checks on a 10% of these assessments to make sure that the categories and criteria were being interpreted properly. Part-time RLA members only have access to specific working sets (those holding the species of the region/country in question).

All Full-time Amphibian RLA members need to be ASG members or need to be brought into the ASG prior to commencing their work.

**5    Governance and decision-making processes**

The Amphibian RLA has a consensus style decision-making governance structure. Decisions regarding the RLA's involvement in joint global/regional processes are consulted between the RLA Focal Point and the RLA member(s) from the region in question. Decisions involving a global update process (once every 10 years) are to be consulted with all Full-time Amphibian RLA members.

In terms of assessments, the decision-making process is undertaken by the assessors who are facilitating compilation of information in consultation with each other and with contributors to a particular species assessment. Where evaluations are concerned, the decision-making process on a particular assessment is a joint effort between all evaluators/reviewers involved, so exchanges between RLA members involved in any one given evaluation are strongly encouraged.

In those instances where there is a difference of opinion between evaluators/reviewers, a third party can be brought into the consultation process (either a third Full-time RLA or the RLA Focal Point).

## 6 Terms of service

The terms of service for the Amphibian RLA Focal Point and Full-time Amphibian RLA members will typically coincide with the SSC Chair's quadrennium period (currently Dr Simon Stuart, 2008-2012). Upon conclusion of the quadrennium (15 September 2012, to coincide with the next IUCN World Conservation Congress), the RLA Focal Point will contact each Full-time RLA member individually to review past activities, compile suggestions/recommendations, and discuss individual RLAs' tenure for the following quadrennium. The Focal Point will in turn discuss his/her tenure with the new elected SSC Chair.

## 7 Tools and technical documents

The Amphibian RLA has a series of tools and technical documents available for conducting and evaluating amphibian assessments. Technical documents include:

1. The **IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria Version 3.1** (http://www.iucnredlist.org/documents/redlist_cats_crit_en.pdf)
2. A **Summary Sheet for the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria** (http://www.iucnredlist.org/documents/2001CatsCrit_Summary_EN.pdf)
3. **Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria** (http://www.iucnredlist.org/documents/redlist_guidelines.pdf), and
4. **Documentation Standards and Consistency Checks for IUCN Red List Assessments and Species Accounts** (http://intranet.iucn.org/webfiles/doc/SpeciesProg/RL_Standards_Consistency_1_1.pdf).
5. **A Crash Introduction to IUCN's Species Information Service (SIS) System Version 1.0** (http://www.iucnredlist.org/documents/Crash_Intro_to_SIS_version_1.0.pdf)

In addition, there are other useful resources pertaining to IUCN's Classification Schemes (see http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes), some of which have recently changed (please see Salafsky *et al.* 2008. A Standard Lexicon for Biodiversity Conservation: Unified Classifications of Threats and Actions. *Conservation Biology*, DOI: 10.1111/j.1523-1739.2008.00937.x for further details; if not easily accessible, please contact the Amphibian RLA Focal Point for a copy).

The IUCN Red List website also has a page with a number of useful Red List training materials (see http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/red-list-training), which include documents, translations of essential documents, presentations and case studies. We encourage Amphibian RLA members to make use of these resources.

The most important tools used in assessments and evaluations/reviews are IUCN's **Species Information Service (SIS)** database (http://sis.iucnsis.org/SIS/index.html), where all of the amphibian (and all other) assessments are housed and which feed directly into the Red List, and ESRI spatial data software [please email the Amphibian RLA Focal Point

(ariadne.angulo@iucn.org) if you require this software]. SIS is constantly being revised and improved, so that assessment work is facilitated through these improvements.

We are currently exploring the possibility of signing into a repository of online references, which would allow the Amphibian RLA to access recently published literature.

All Full-time RLA members should receive training in both the Red List Categories and Criteria and SIS prior or concomitant to commencing their RLA work. Part-time RLAs will also receive training on these tools prior to addressing the endemic species that would be common to both the global and individual regional/national initiatives.

## 7.1    Guidelines for Assessment Work

Four essential technical documents are available for the Amphibian RLA to undertake amphibian assessment work (see links for downloading these documents under **Tools and Technical documents**):
1)  The IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria version 3.1
2)  Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria version 7.0, and
3)  The Documentation Standards and Consistency Checks for IUCN Red List Assessments and Species Accounts version 1.1
4)  A Crash Introduction to IUCN's Species Information Service (SIS) System Version 1.0

All assessments and evaluations/reviews are done directly in the SIS live site (http://sis.iucnsis.org/SIS/index.html), which can be accessed using Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome or Apple Safari (Internet Explorer does not use the same standards as these browsers and should not be used), although preference is given to Mozilla Firefox given that SIS is known to work best in this browser. We ask that all Amphibian RLA members read *A Crash Introduction to IUCN's Species Information Service (SIS) System Version 1.0* prior to working on the live site and also that they trial out the SIS test site first (http://sistest.iucnsis.org/SIS/index.html), as this site does not feed into either the Red List or the SIS live site. Where draft assessments in the live SIS site are concerned, Full-time RLAs can create their own working sets, give access to or be given access to existing working sets. Similarly, where evaluations/reviews are concerned, RLAs will be given access to those working sets grouping assessments that need evaluations.

At the present point in time updates to the IUCN amphibian database are conducted reactively, i.e. we are not actively seeking out new material, but are rather working on material that is being sent to us. The reason behind this approach is because of our currently restricted capacity and resources. In order to help us prioritize incoming material, we have developed a **priority tool** or priority list for references spreadsheet, whereby an incoming publication or email is quickly eyeballed and a determination is made on where it would fall in the scale of priorities. This tool will be made available to all Amphibian RLAs for their perusal and feedback. The tool does not include information from joint global/regional assessments, which are handled separately by the respective liaising RLA members. The priority list keeper is the Amphibian RLA Focal Point, so if RLA members become aware of new material relevant to updating the amphibian database, we kindly request them to forward this information on to the Focal Point so that the priority list can be updated.

Figure 1 depicts the steps involved in the IUCN Red List Process (this figure is also shown in the Red List Authority Terms of Reference sent to all Amphibian RLA members at time of invitation). It is also possible to have some variations to the approach depicted in the figure (for

example, under the RLA process, have non-RLA members contribute to the assessment process). The details to each of these steps are provided in the RLA Terms of Reference; should any RLA member not have these Terms, please contact the RLA Focal Point for a copy.

**Fig. 1. The Red List Process**
From Raw Data to Red List

**Red List Authority (RLA)**
(SGs, Partner organizations, other institutions)

**Pre-Assessment** (see step 1.1)
RLA members review data sources and compile data appropriate for Red List assessments.

**Assessment** (see step 2.1)
Carried out by one RLA member working alone; or a small group of members working together; or a large group of members in a workshop; or contributions from the whole membership through a workshop or email/internet forum.

Assessments submitted directly to RLA focal

Assessment rejected by Reviewers

**Review** (see step 3.1)
RLA focal point arranges review by at least two appropriate experts in Red List Assessments

RLA comments returned to Red List Unit

Reviewed assessment accepted by RLA

Un-reviewed assessment referred to RLA (see step 3.1)

**Species Programme & Partner Projects**
(Includes Global Biodiversity Assessments and Regional Assessments; often involves RLAs & Partner organizations)

**Pre-Assessment** (see step 1.2)
Data source review and data compilation done by project staff, expert consultants, and project participants.

**Assessment** (see step 2.2)
Assessments prepared through workshops, peer review, consistency checks, etc.
Post workshop review and consistency checks carried out.

Assessment rejected by RLA

**Review** (see step 3.2)
Project coordinators contact appropriate RLAs to arrange review.

Reviewed assessment accepted by RLA

**Consistency Check** (see step 4.2)
Project coordinators check criteria use, supporting documentation, consistency, proofreading and formatting before submission to the RLU

**Red List Unit**

Problem detected

Problem detected

**Submission** (see steps 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
Red List Unit scans assessments submitted from above projects for obvious errors and checks consistency between projects.
Red List Unit checks criteria use, supporting documentation, consistency, proofreading and formatting for:
- Evaluated assessments from RLA.
- Unevaluated assessments from outside IUCN SSC network.

Problem detected by RLU / assessment rejected by RLA

Reviewed and checked assessments accepted for publication on Red List

Assessments submitted directly to Red List Unit

**Assessment** (see step 2.3)
Assessments from individuals working alone, academia, National Red List projects (endemic species), etc.

**Pre-Assessment** (see step 1.3)
Review of data sources and compilation of data appropriate for Red List assessment

**Publication** (see step 5)
Assessments added to SIS database and appear on appropriate IUCN Red List web site update.

**External Assessors**
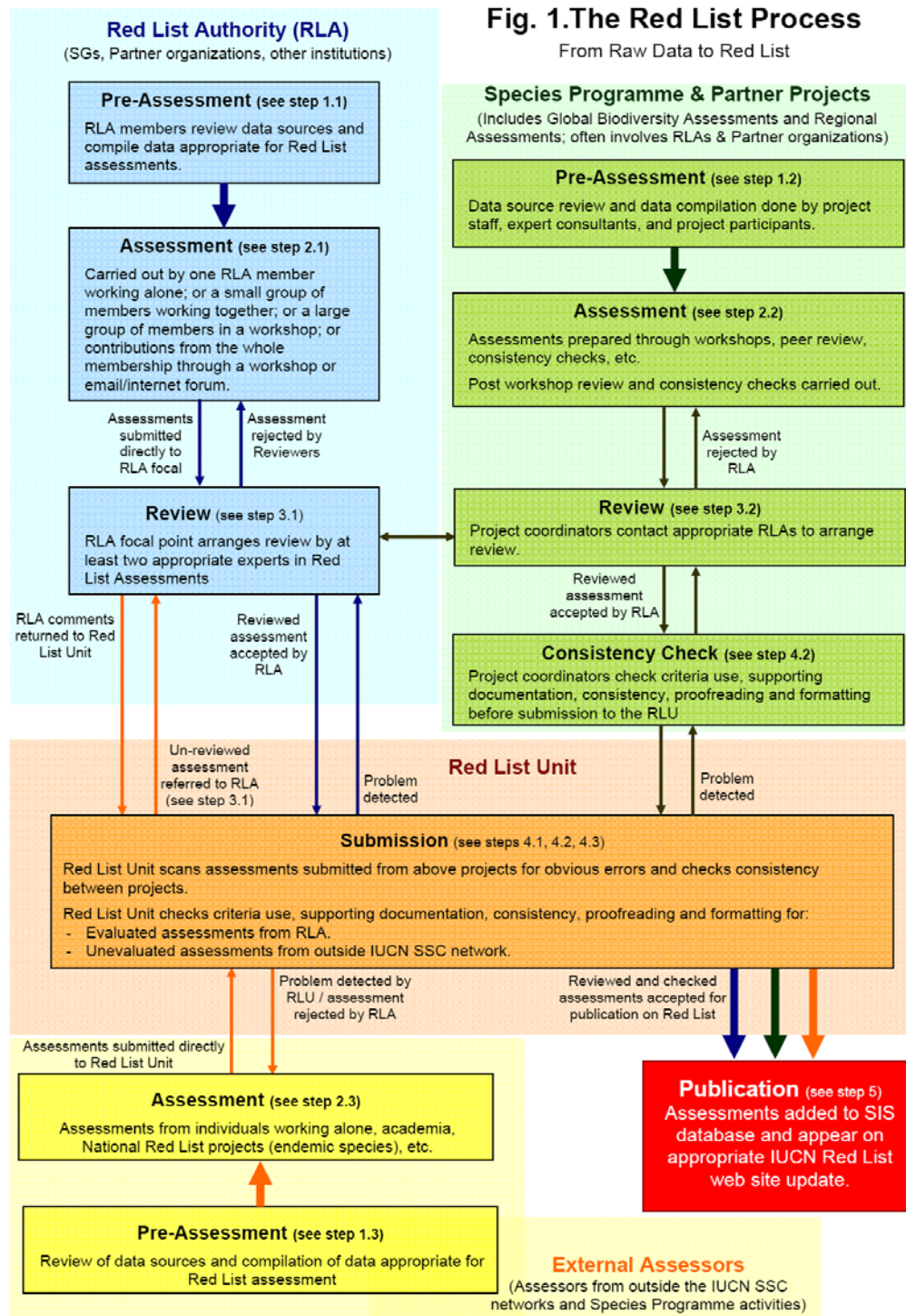(Assessors from outside the IUCN SSC networks and Species Programme activities)

Figure 1. Steps involved in the IUCN Red List Process

### 7.1.1    Guidelines for Assessment

Full-time Amphibian RLA members may be involved in individual species assessments where they a) have played a part in the species description, b) have been involved in the assessment of another species that may need to be reassessed as an outcome of a new species assessment, c) are involved in a regional/national reassessment initiative, and d) are involved in a taxonomic or conservation revision of a particular group of species. In b), the RLA member will likely be contacted by the Amphibian RLA Focal Point first, whereas contact in a), c) and d) can be initiated by either the Focal Point or the RLA member. When doing an assessment for the first time in SIS, we request that the Full-time RLA member leading the assessment coordinate this with the Amphibian RLA Focal Point, so that they can jointly go over the assessment and ensure that information is being captured according to current protocols.

*Working sets*: If a Full-time RLA is involved in assessing and/or reassessing a group of species, he or she can create his/her own working sets. When doing so, we request that you please keep a list of what these working sets are, which species they contain, and forward them on to the RLA Focal Point, so that we can keep a repository of amphibian working sets.

*Published assessments:* These should not be edited in any shape or form, as they are already published on the Red List and any change on a published assessment will transfer directly over to the Red List. Any new assessment or reassessment work needs to be developed within draft assessments (and not user assessments – please do not use these, as once these are created they cannot be deleted). If you become aware that a published assessment requires some minor editing, please let the RLA Focal Point know about this.

*Using the criteria calculator:* SIS comes with a built-in Quick Criteria Generator, which is an algorithm that uses numerical information in quantitative fields to calculate the appropriate category and criteria for a particular assessment. The amphibian data were compiled in a database system that did not have this tool at the time of the Global Amphibian Assessment and were also revised in a format where application of this tool might have been difficult (workshops), so nearly all of the amphibian assessments have been made without this tool. While it is a very useful tool, its main limitation is that it does not use all of the documentation to inform a species assessment (i.e. textual information). Amphibian RLA members are encouraged to trial out this tool; however, if they find that it is too time-consuming, we recommend that they continue with assessments protocols as in the past. Also, if there are contradictions between the criteria calculator results and members' own assessments, RLA members are advised to go with their own assessments. In doubt, we request RLA members to please contact the Amphibian RLA Focal Point.

*Adding names to assessors/evaluators(reviewers)/contributors fields:* There have been changes within SIS as to how assessors, contributors and evaluators/reviewers get added to their respective fields, and there are future additional changes lined up in this regard. If any of these fields appears as being greyed out, it will not be possible to type in a person's name. Under these circumstances, a person's name can only be added if that person is entered into SIS as a user (even if not an active one). Please click on the Add user button underneath the respective field and search for the person's first and last name. If the person is in the system, then just drag the name from the Possible users field into the Selected users field and click on Save. If the person's name does not turn up please contact the Amphibian RLA Focal Point so that he or she can be added in to SIS (a valid email address will be needed for the person to be added into SIS). Please

note that using this Add user functionality in a non-greyed our field will erase any existing names already listed in that field.

*Mapping:* IUCN Red List maps are developed as polygons in a *shapefile* format. Unfortunately, at the present point in time we do not have the capacity to support spatial software training and data analysis. If there are RLA members who know how to use GIS software and spatial data and would like a copy of ESRI software, we will explore mechanisms to get them the software, and also send them the data sharing agreement documentation and data requirements to accompany spatial data. If there are RLA members who would be willing to learn the minutiae of GIS software on their own and would like to have access to this software, we ask that they contact the Focal Point to this end.

### 7.1.2 Guidelines for Evaluation/Review

Unless assessments are being submitted from regional/national processes (in which case, Full-time RLA members associated to the region in question will likely be submitting assessments for evaluation on behalf of regional/national processes), most assessments will typically be channeled through the Amphibian RLA Focal Point. The Focal Point will contact at least two Full-time RLA members and/or other experts qualified to evaluate assessments (i.e. IUCN's Species Programme staff, Red List Unit staff) to review submitted assessments. Full-time RLAs should then examine all of the supporting documentation, inclusive of spatial data, and review the assessment and justification provided for the assessment. If both RLAs agree that the categories and criteria have been interpreted and used according to the IUCN Red List Guidelines, then they can both sign off on the assessment and consider it as "Evaluated", provide a date for the evaluation, and then select its status as "Passed". If both RLAs consider that there needs to be returned for improvements, then they can select "Returned for Improvements", and indicate clearly in an email to the RLA Focal Point what are the issues with the assessment and what needs to be improved. If both RLAs believe that the assessment is not suitable, then they can select its status as "Rejected". It is very important that if this situation ever arises, a very detailed and sound explanation be provided to justify this rejection, given that this will go straight back to the assessors. Sometimes some proposals for specific assessments do not really follow IUCN's methodology, because they are being proposed on the basis of criteria other than IUCN's Red List Categories and Criteria (e.g. phylogenetic uniqueness, research or funding strategy, policy or politics, etc.). This is why it is CRUCIAL that in these instances the best possible justification is provided for a given evaluation/review.

If, for some reason, the two evaluators/reviewers do not agree on a particular assessment even after improvements have been solicited and included, then the assessment can go to a third party (another Full-time RLA, Species Programme, Red List Unit staff or Amphibian RLA Focal Point) who, together with the two evaluators/reviewers, would seek to resolve the assessment's status.

## 8    Citation

Given the wide range of citation formats used by the different IUCN Specialist Groups, SIS allows for a variety of approaches to be used within its platform. This gives the different user groups greater flexibility on how to cite assessments, in such a way that what is listed in the Assessor(s) field can be completely different to what appears in the citation (Red List Assessment Authors field under Red List Assessment section>Publication Information tab). The default

setting in SIS is that if the citation field is not filled in, then it uses whatever is in the Assessor(s) field.

In the specific case of amphibians, in June 2009 a proposal to change the Global Amphibian Assessment citation system was sent out to ASG Regional Chairs for their assessment. Development of this proposal was prompted by feedback relating to the system implemented in the 2004 comprehensive assessment and our own experience in conducting updates to the database.

The key proposed change was a modification as to how individual amphibian species assessments are cited on the IUCN Red List. Previously, the citation format would list all of the experts who have ever been involved in determining a species' conservation assessment i.e. all of the "assessors". The evaluators/reviewers for these species would be, in most cases, the GAA Coordinating Team. Over the course of database updates subsequent to the 2004 comprehensive assessment, several issues around the use of this format became obvious to us, i.e. if a species is reassessed, should we remove all previous assessors (and include only the new assessors) or leave them there? How do we determine order of assessors for the purpose of citation, especially if additional people assist with assessment updates?

The IUCN Red List amphibian database changed its base operating system in 2009 and is now housed within IUCN's Species Information Service (SIS) system. This is a standardized system used for all assessments and all taxonomic groups within the Red List. The new system now includes, in addition to assessor and evaluator/reviewer fields, a field for contributors. This additional field provides us with the opportunity to change the way we cite individual assessments. Our proposal was to use this additional field to standardize the citation format for all individual species as follows:

Assessors: IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG)
Evaluators (this term will be changed to Reviewers in the future): Evaluator/reviewer names, Amphibian Specialist Group Red List Authority (ASG RLA), e.g. Jane Doe (Amphibian Red List Authority) and Joe Blogg (Amphibian Red List Authority)
Contributors: A list of all the people who have contributed to the assessment, past and present, listed in alphabetical order

Implementing this proposal changes how amphibian species accounts on the Red List are cited. An example of how this new arrangement would read would be as follows:

> IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group. 200x. *Amietophrynus brauni.* In: IUCN 2009. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1

In certain circumstances, partner groups or organizations may be included as assessors and evaluators/reviewers external to the RLA may be included as evaluators/reviewers. This approach is similar to the system used by BirdLife International, the Red List Authority for birds.

The citation proposal received generally limited feedback, but from what was received most comments were positive. The citation change has not yet been implemented, but we should start transitioning to the new system as new groups begin to take on the role of assessors.

## 9 Roles and responsibilities within global assessments

The implementation of three different Red Listing fields in SIS [assessors, evaluators (reviewers) and contributors] allows for a better division of labour within the assessment process. The three main types of roles within amphibian assessments are outlined below:

**Assessors** are groups of people, either as organizations or as groups/alliances/consortiums that contribute to the development of the assessment per se, i.e. extracting data from published literature, populating assessment fields, providing feedback to populate assessment fields, creating distribution polygons, revising distribution polygons, and proposing a category and criteria for every assessment. People are not listed by their individual names but rather their organization/group is the one that is listed in this field.

**Evaluators (Reviewers)** are people who provide an independent review of an assessment and its supporting documentation, so evaluators/reviewers cannot have been previously involved with an assessment that they are reviewing. Evaluators/reviewers will be individuals who are familiar with the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, and are in a position to ultimately decide whether a proposed category and supporting criteria are signed off for publication on the Red List. Evaluators/reviewers may typically include members of the former GAA Coordinating Team, members of the Amphibian RLA or another Specialist Group RLA, or members of the IUCN Species Programme Unit. Each assessment should typically have at least two independent evaluators/reviewers, who are listed by name (with their evaluator/reviewer affiliation in brackets) in every assessment. Evaluators/reviewers need not be taxon or regional specialists, so Amphibian RLA members may evaluate assessments from other regions.

**Contributors** are people who have contributed to an assessment either by providing direct information, referring relevant literature, proposing a category and/or criteria and facilitating development of an assessment. All people who were previously listed as assessors are now to be listed as contributors in alphabetical order. Contributors may not necessarily agree with a particular assessment, but this is a way to acknowledge their valuable input in any given assessment.

## 10 Role of Amphibian RLA in regional assessments

Often times, when national or regional initiatives are about to begin or are already conducting regional reassessment processes using IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, the IUCN Red List or individual taxonomic coordinating teams are contacted to explore how a symbiosis or collaboration might be established between the global and individual regional assessment initiatives. The value in this, of course, is that assessments in common between global and regional assessments (i.e. endemic species) can be harmonized accordingly, and also that assessment work may be optimized by avoiding duplicity of efforts (so that a single assessment process informs both global and regional/national assessments).

Potential collaborations will vary in scope and detail depending on the regional/national assessments' and our own funding and human resources, as well as their expectations and what we can effectively offer (i.e. the extent of our involvement). Unfortunately, one of the Amphibian RLA's greatest limitations is a lack of resources to fully implement harmonization of regional and global assessments. Therefore, if representatives of any region or country approach a member of the Amphibian RLA to explore the possibility of harmonizing assessments, it would be important

that the RLA member contact the Amphibian RLA Focal Point and discuss this possibility together with other RLA members from the same country or general region.

If a collaboration is established between the global and a particular regional assessment, the RLA member(s) from that country or region then become the liaison member(s) between the global and the regional assessment processes. This Full-time RLA member also becomes the direct supervisor of Part-time RLA members who will be involved in global/regional reassessments of endemic species.

Amphibian RLA members should feel free to direct any interested parties to the National and Regional Red Lists website (http://www.nationalredlist.org/site.aspx) while further discussions regarding potential collaborations are carried out. This website contains a suite of valuable information, including a link to the Regional Guidelines, explanations of regional processes, who to go to for assistance and tutorials and case studies.

## 11   Updates on the Red List

Amphibian assessments that have been signed off by evaluators/reviewers in SIS are not automatically updated on the Red List. Once updates and/or new assessments/reassessments have been evaluated, they still require an additional consistency check, carried out by the Red List Unit, in Cambridge, UK. In addition, amphibian updates need to coincide with Red List version launches and not all launches include amphibian updates. There are several updates planned for 2010, with 1-2 updates for amphibians. Amphibian RLA members will be notified of upcoming deadlines for submitting material for inclusion in the Red List.

The form and process of updating the Red List is currently undergoing revisions at this time, and might change in future versions of this document.

## 12   Taxonomy

Amphibian taxonomy on the IUCN Red List database follows the American Museum of Natural History's Amphibian Species of the World (ASW; http://research.amnh.org/vz/herpetology/amphibia/) as a taxonomic standard. In a few instances the IUCN Red List database may depart from the ASW standard to include very newly described species or to record a new split/merge which are not yet listed in the published version of ASW. Please consult with the RLA Focal Point concerning issues with any given taxonomic arrangement/proposal.

Taxonomic changes (either merges or splits) or additions (e.g. new species) are done through the RLA Focal Point; if RLA members are aware of any new species or taxonomic changes that are not in the Red List, please contact the RLA Focal Point.

It is important to note that when new taxonomic changes are implemented in SIS, they are always automatically updated on the Red List each time it is launched. If there are no "passed" draft assessments tied to the new taxonomic change, then the new taxonomic arrangement will be associated with the old published assessment, which means that they will be out of sync and will likely have contradictory information. Therefore, it is very important to try to finalize the reassessment of any species already in the Red List which has undergone a recent taxonomic change.

Newly described species that do not have any synonymy associated to them (i.e. have not been called by another name in the past) are straightforward additions to SIS; however, those new species that have been associated to another name in the past require additional attention not only to determine the nature of the taxonomic change, but also because those species that have been associated to that biological population in the past need to be reassessed. In other words, assessments are done on the taxonomic concept associated to specific biological populations; if one of those populations is considered to be a new species, then the taxonomic concept changes, and a reassessment has to be made on the remainder of the populations associated to the existing concept.

**Please note that this is a working document and as such it is open to suggestions and subject to changes and additions; all future versions will be given a new version number. Your feedback is important, so please feel free to email ariadne.angulo@iucn.org to provide comments and/or suggestions on this document.**