Summary of IUCN Guidelines for Responsible Translocation of Displaced Wildlife

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CONSERVATION TRANSLOCATION SPECIALIST GROUP

About CTSG

The vision of the IUCN SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group is a world where courageous action repairs nature's past damage and guards against threats of the future. This is supported by its mission to empower responsible conservation translocations that save species, strengthen ecosystems, and benefit humanity. https://iucn-ctsg.org/

Citation: Sherman, J., Massingham, E., Menon, V., Kock, R., King, T., Luz, S., Ashraf N.V.K., Soorae, P., Moehrenschlager, A. (2025). Summary of IUCN Guidelines on responsible translocation of displaced wildlife. v.1 Abu Dhabi, UAE.

This publication was made possible in part by funding from Mandai Nature and Panthera.

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Introduction

What these Guidelines Cover

The IUCN Guidelines on responsible translocation of displaced organisms (Sherman et al., 2025) provide comprehensive guidance to ensure that human-mediated movements of organisms already displaced by human activities are conducted ethically and effectively for conservation, cultural, or animal welfare purposes, while minimizing risks to wild populations, ecosystems, and humans. These guidelines build on existing IUCN guidance for conservation translocations (IUCN SSC, 2013) and management of live confiscated organisms (Maddison, 2019) and help practitioners determine when displaced organisms are suitable candidates for responsible translocation, how to plan and implement these translocations, and what alternatives exist when translocation is not appropriate.

What is a "Displaced Organism"?

A "displaced organism" is an individual or group of animals, plants, or fungi that has been recovered from legal or illegal trade, driven from its habitat by human land-use changes or conflict, displaced or incapacitated by catastrophic events (like fires or floods) or climate change, or captured or collected by humans.

These Guidelines:

- Focus specifically on organisms that have already been displaced by human activities, climatic events, or disasters - not planned translocations. They complement existing IUCN guidance for reintroduction, confiscated organisms management, and human-wildlife conflict.

- Do not cover mitigation translocations (pre-emptive movements for human development), assisted colonisations (moving species outside their range for climate adaptation), translocations for primarily economic purposes, wild-caught founders, captive-bred individuals for planned conservation programs, or free-ranging wild organisms.

Why do we need guidelines for translocation of displaced organisms ?

All responsible translocations require rigorous risk assessments, careful planning and monitoring, and release into suitable habitats within the species' native range.

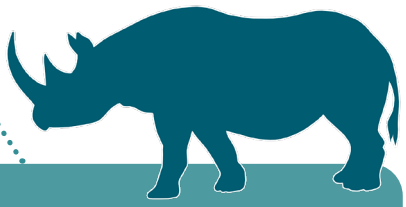
Responsible Translocations Can:

Be a valuable source for conservation translocations or conservation breeding programs that benefit species populations and ecosystems.

Be especially important when captive breeding options are limited, and wild captures would further threaten imperilled populations.

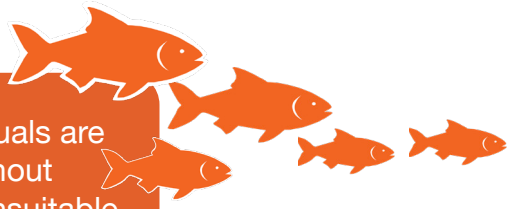
Responsible Translocations

Restore cultural values.



Improve individual welfare, provided harms to conspecifics, other wildlife, ecosystems, and people are avoided.

Irresponsible Translocations of Displaced Organisms Pose Serious Risks:



Massive numbers of individuals are released annually, often without health screening and into unsuitable habitats.

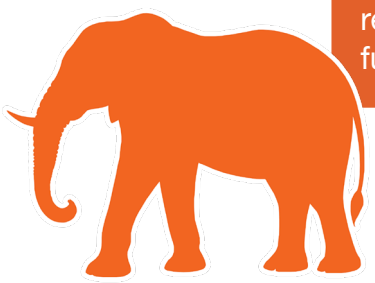
Introduction and establishment of invasive species has caused major biodiversity losses and causes billions of dollars annually in damage and management costs.

Scale and impact of Irresponsible Translocations

Genetic and behavioural risks, such as hybridization, social disruption, and increased competition put wild populations at risk.

Spread of communicable diseases and novel pathogens have caused some species extinctions and population declines.

Translocations to address human-wildlife conflict often fail because translocated animals are killed, return to capture sites, or cause further conflicts.



Guiding Principles for Responsible Translocation of Displaced Organisms

The Precautionary Principle

Responsible translocations must pose low risks (minimal consequence and likelihood) that released organisms will harm wild conspecifics (including by infectious disease risk, negative genetic effects, harms to social cohesion or culture, competition for resources, or negative impacts to birth rate), other wildlife, ecosystems, or humans. Risk is the likelihood of an outcome multiplied by severity of its consequences. Because some consequences including harm to wild populations, other wildlife, ecosystems and people, lethal disease, and negative genetic effects can be catastrophic, risks can be high even when they are unlikely to occur. If there is uncertainty or insufficient data to reliably determine a translocation would be low risk, it must be assumed to present high risks, and alternative solutions should be pursued.
Conservation of the wild population always takes precedence over potential welfare benefits to released individuals or other values. Responsible translocations follow 2013 IUCN Guidelines using expert pre-release assessments that confirm translocation is ecologically sound and likely to be low risk to wild conspecifics, other wildlife and ecosystems, and human communities (IUCN SSC, 2013). Pre-release assessments monitor and minimize health/welfare risks, address threats in release habitat, and establish post-release monitoring of released individuals and recipient populations.

Prevention First

Prevention and mitigation are preferred over translocation for human-wildlife conflicts. Priority should be given to protecting organisms in their natural habitats rather than removing them, working with indigenous landowners, local communities, and land managers to find in-situ solutions. This approach is generally less costly and more effective in the long term.

Qualified experts and assessments

Responsible translocations require input and assessment by qualified experts. Health assessments must be conducted or overseen by a suitably qualified veterinarian (a professional with appropriate education and a registration or license issued by the relevant veterinary statutory body of the nation to practice veterinary medicine) or similarly qualified plant specialist. Experts who have in-depth knowledge of the species in question are needed to identify unknown species, assess behavioural suitability of release candidates, suitable release habitats, and the conservation, genetic and social risks of translocation.

Maximising conservation benefit

It may be possible to maximise the conservation benefit of translocations using displaced organisms. This is most easily achieved by incorporating displaced organisms into an established, species-specific programme for conservation translocation or conservation breeding that is well planned, consistently monitored, and transparent. Where responsible translocation is feasible, conservation benefits may be maximised by selecting suitable release sites within the species range where expert assessments indicate that translocated individuals are not likely to harm wild conspecific populations, other local wildlife, the ecosystem or people, and where:

- Wild conspecific populations have disappeared.
- Wild conspecifics populations are below the threshold for viability or are locally threatened by habitat fragmentation and lack of natural immigration or gene exchange.
- Translocation would facilitate improved conservation management of the release area that would not likely occur otherwise.

In all cases, these programmes should involve monitoring to determine outcomes for the individuals and the recipient wild populations.

Common Displacement Scenarios

Many organisms from trade or captive setting are exotic species and cannot be released locally.

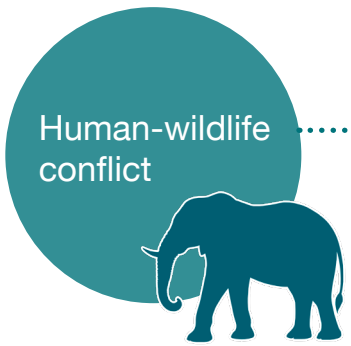
Even native species that have been captive cannot be released unless:

- The species is identified, as well as the subspecies and source population (animals) or subspecies, variety, population, and strain (plants and fungi).
- Upon examination by a suitably qualified veterinarian, release candidates appear healthy and are without symptoms of ill health, disease, or injury. Where concerns are identified, individuals must be confirmed clear of carrying disease-causing organisms via laboratory testing.
- The identified taxon is native to the release area.

Individuals from known home ranges can be returned after health assessment by a qualified veterinarian or plant specialist.

Healthy animals trapped or isolated in wells, trenches or other human constructions can be released in place after examination by a qualified veterinarian.

Young animals are often not abandoned and should be left in place or returned to their original location so their parents can find them. If young animals cannot be reunited with family, they may need species-appropriate rehabilitation. If rehabilitated, these individuals can be assessed to determine if they are behaviourally suitable for translocation and confirmed healthy and free of pathogens of concern by a qualified veterinarian.



Mitigation of drivers and direct causes of conflict is a longer-term, more sustainable solution than translocation. Where translocation is needed, confirmed healthy individuals can be moved to suitable habitats only after risk assessments confirm low risk of potential harm to resident populations, ecosystems, and humans.

How to determine if a displaced organism can be responsibly translocated

Species Identification

The precise taxonomic identity (species, subspecies, variety, strain, population) of release candidates must be established to prevent hybridization, genetic issues, or the release of non-native taxa. Local experts and genetic testing can aid species identification.

Conservation Program Integration

Translocations, especially for rare species, should ideally be part of existing well-planned and monitored conservation programs with clear goals, risk assessments, and adequate resources. Displaced individuals from threatened species should be expeditiously transferred to species-specific conservation programs with capacity for rehabilitation and potential translocation. Release sites must be within species range where populations have disappeared, are below viability thresholds, are isolated, or where translocation can facilitate improved management.

Individual Suitability

Animals:
Release candidates must be healthy, free of injury, and without clinical symptoms of illness, as confirmed by a suitably qualified veterinarian with species expertise. Candidates must also be genetically suitable, adequately rehabilitated individuals that have passed appropriate health evaluations and disease-risk screening and exhibit age-appropriate wild behaviours, without being human-dependent or overly acclimatized to humans. Dependent young animals must be old enough to be independent or undergo significant rehabilitation. Nursing infants and altricial young cannot be translocated until weaned or independent, with some species requiring extended rehabilitation or release with parent(s) or mentors.

Plants:
Release candidates must be genetically suitable, healthy, acclimated, and free of weeds, pests, or pathogens, as determined by a qualified plant specialist. Soils and potting material where the plant has been stored must also be screened.

Welfare Assessment

Responsible translocations consider welfare of released individuals and wild populations, ensuring good welfare through adequate nutrition, environment, species-specific social and cultural requirements, health, and behaviour while reducing suffering. Translocation always causes some stress, but it should not exceed expected thresholds for the taxon after post-release acclimatization. Acceptable mortality risk varies by species (requiring species-specific expert assessment). Translocation teams and stakeholders must collectively define post-release management actions if acceptable risk levels are exceeded.

Suitable Release Site Identification:

- The release site must be within the species' native range.
- Evidence-based assessments must show the habitat has adequate ecological conditions and resources for the species and its offspring, without harming resident conspecifics or other native taxa.
- Healthy or viable wild populations of threatened species do not need to be supplemented, and adding translocated individuals creates competition with wild individuals for food and other habitat resources and may depress breeding success.
- Threats to the species (e.g., hunting, habitat encroachment) must be addressed or actively managed.
- There must be low risk of conflict with human communities.

Optimal Methods

Identify whether there are proven translocation methods for this or similar species that incorporate species-specific knowledge of welfare, stress tolerance and needs while avoiding unacceptable stress, injuries and mortality and optimizing post-release survival and adaptation. Capture, rehabilitation, and translocation methods must follow best practices, taking into account the species' tolerance for stress. Supplemental feeding or care may be needed following release. Collection and storage of biomaterial and live cells (biobanking) is recommended for disease surveillance, genetic understanding, and post-release health monitoring.

Legal Compliance and Local Consultation

All translocations require consultation with local communities and compliance with applicable local, national, and international laws, policies, and conventions (e.g., CITES). Where export and transboundary movement are needed, pre-screening must include health checks by government-certified official veterinarians or plant health specialists.

Post-Release Monitoring

Post-release monitoring is crucial to determine success, identify risks, and refine processes. It is always recommended, and is especially important for threatened species, long-distance translocations, or previously captive individuals.

- Monitor a representative sample of released individuals to accurately determine the outcome of the translocation. It is often not possible to monitor every individual but all released individuals should be marked.

- Track survival, adaptation, breeding, and any negative impacts on conspecifics, other wildlife, or humans.

- Intervention protocols for potential recapture, further rehabilitation or long-term care, and humane euthanasia must be in place to address illness, injury, poor welfare, or negative impacts of translocation.

Alternatives when Responsible Translocation is Not Feasible

When responsible translocation is not feasible, displaced organisms may contribute to conservation by being part of well-managed breeding programs run by accredited facilities or incorporated into education collections at reputable sanctuaries or accredited zoos, aquariums, or botanical gardens with high care and welfare standards. Displaced individuals can also contribute to controlled and monitored test translocations that can improve species translocation methods. If no options will provide suitable welfare, humane euthanasia may be considered as a last resort. Habitat protection and conflict mitigation are key solutions to protecting wildlife that cannot or should not be translocated.

What Makes a Translocation Irresponsible?

Critical Risk (Do Not Translocate)

- Unknown species, subspecies/source population, variety, or strain, as appropriate for the taxon.
- Non-native organisms.
- Individuals not assessed for infectious diseases of concern.
- Medium or high risk of harm to conspecifics or other resident wildlife due to increased mortality, decreased fitness, aggression, communicable disease, hybridization, social disruption, resource shortages or competition.
- High human-wildlife conflict risk and/or local communities not consulted.
- Animals with significant physical/psychological damage.

High Risk (Translocation is Not Advised)

- Animals overly habituated to humans or lacking necessary wild behaviours.
- Release into unsuitable habitat.
- Uncontrolled threats in the release habitat.
- Release into habitats with high risk of harmful endemic diseases.
- High risk of poor post-release welfare.

Decision Tree ◆ Animals

Legend: Organism source | Questions | Critical actions and considerations | Irresponsible release scenarios | Translocation and care decisions | Resources

Organisms in distress

- Found in human-modified landscapes
- Immature individual(s) found alone, possibly orphaned
- Found injured or ill
- Found trapped by human infrastructure (wells, trenches or other developments)

Legal trade

- Purchased/recovered from trade
  Formerly kept as a pet

Catastrophic events, climate change, human development and actions

- Displaced or harmed by climate change or disaster
- Displaced from habitat by human activity, development

Hunting, poaching and illegal trade

- Seized from a poacher or illegal shipment
  Found in trade/as pet/as tourist attraction
  Caught in trap or snare

Human-wildlife interactions and proximity to humans

- Damaging crops or property, injuring or killing livestock or humans
- People feel unsafe and want animal removed
- Harmed, harrassed, or orphaned by hunting or other human actions
- Potential for negative interaction with humans

Report the incident and give any available evidence to appropriate enforcement officer

Unharmed individuals of indigenous species/subspecies which are found near their natural habitats are best left undisturbed, or, if trapped should be released in place

Many species leave their young for extended periods. Uninjured young individuals of local species found alone are best left undisturbed or returned to the area where their family lives

Are the individuals unharmed?

YES → Whenever possible, leave individuals undisturbed if isolated, or if trapped, free and release them in place

NO → Can the individuals be left undisturbed or reunited with their families?

YES → Whenever possible, leave individuals undisturbed or return them to their home range

NO → Consult with local wildlife rescue experts or IUCN taxonomic specialist groups to determine if further action is needed

Is the organism's species (and subspecies, if applicable) identified?

YES → Is the species or subspecies vulnerable, threatened, endangered or otherwise at risk of extinction?

NO → **Organisms cannot be released responsibly at this time. Release may be possible after identification**

Unknown taxa could be non-native, may hybridise with native species, disrupt behaviour, decrease generic fitness, breeding and survival of the native species. Non-native taxa can have large economic costs if they become invasive

Identify the species, and the subspecies if applicable

Seek help from IUCN taxonomic specialist groups and local wildlife experts if needed

See resources at IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict task force

Unharmed wild organisms are best left in place, with actions taken to mitigate or prevent conflicts with humans

Removal of the organism from its habitat may reduce viability of local species population or negatively impact its breeding and social structures

Have the individuals been captured?

YES → Is the species or subspecies vulnerable, threatened, endangered or otherwise at risk of extinction?

NO → Whenever possible, leave individuals in place and seek non-translocation solutions to address potential conflicts

Organisms taken from their home range and translocated to another habitat are at risk of disease transmission, stress and decreased welfare, and may cause increased conflicts with humans

Is the species or subspecies vulnerable, threatened, endangered or otherwise at risk of extinction?

YES → Does a conservation translocation programme already exist for this species?

YES → Whenever possible, pursue opportunity for organisms to contribute to an existing conservation translocation programme via release or breeding, following steps below

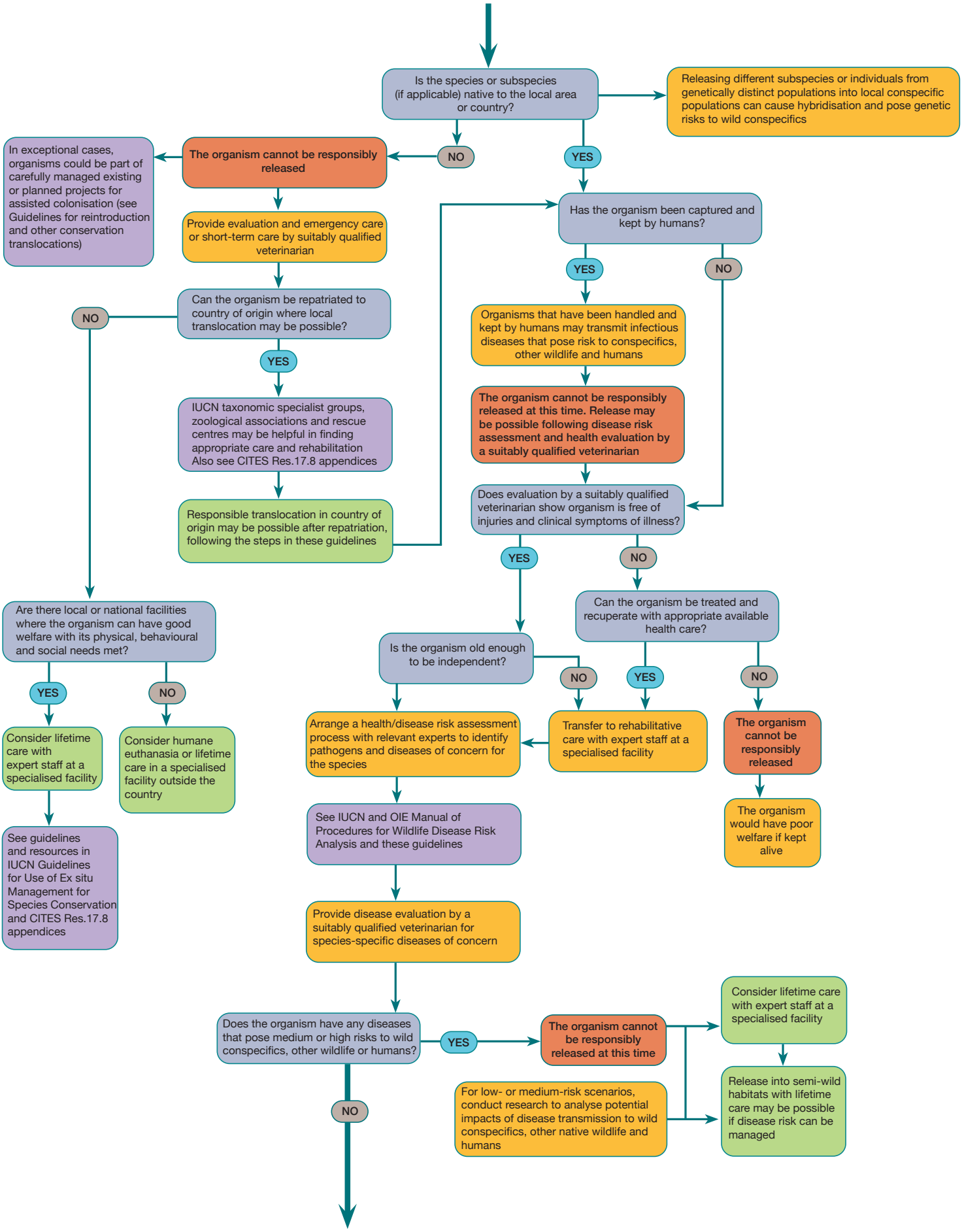
NO → Would establishing a conservation translocation programme provide species or ecosystem benefits?

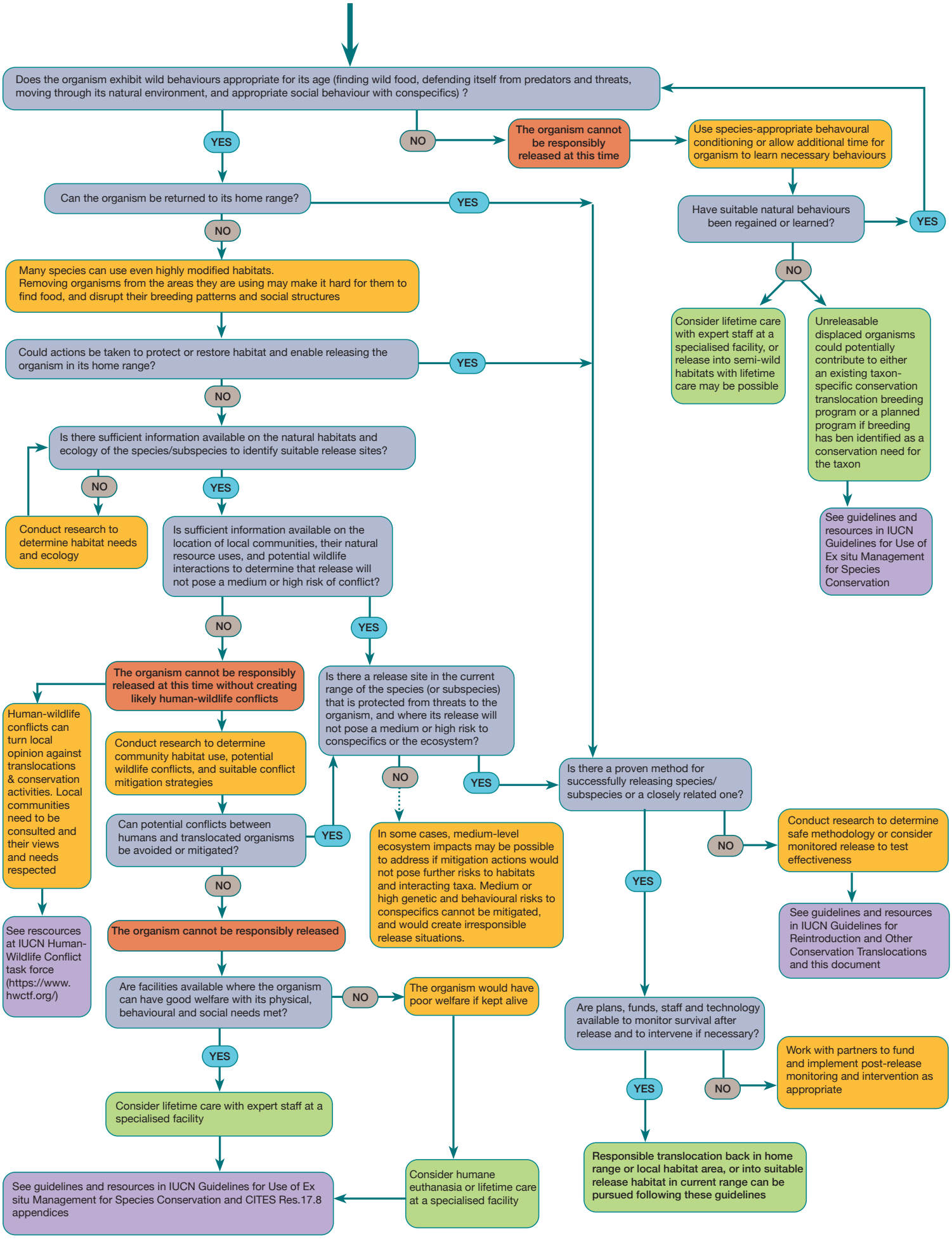
YES → Create a clear goal for potential translocation: what does it aim to achieve and how?

NO → Translocations that support cultural values and other non-conservation purposes may also be responsibly conducted by following these guidelines to prevent harm to native species, ecosystems and human communities

Conservation translocation can re-establish extirpated populations, supplement non-viable populations, and help restore ecosystems or secure habitat protections. Translocation may also pose genetic, behavioural and disease risks to native species, and potential risks to ecosystems and human communities. Potential translocations must be carefully assessed to determine whether possible conservation benefits will likely outweigh risks

NO → Create a clear goal for potential translocation: what does it aim to achieve and how?


Is the species or subspecies (if applicable) native to the local area or country?
Releasing different subspecies or individuals from genetically distinct populations into local conspecific populations can cause hybridisation and pose genetic risks to wild conspecifics
NO
YES
The organism cannot be responsibly released
In exceptional cases, organisms could be part of carefully managed existing or planned projects for assisted colonisation (see Guidelines for reintroduction and other conservation translocations)
Provide evaluation and emergency care or short-term care by suitably qualified veterinarian
Has the organism been captured and kept by humans?
YES
NO
Organisms that have been handled and kept by humans may transmit infectious diseases that pose risk to conspecifics, other wildlife and humans
The organism cannot be responsibly released at this time. Release may be possible following disease risk assessment and health evaluation by a suitably qualified veterinarian
Can the organism be repatriated to country of origin where local translocation may be possible?
NO
YES
IUCN taxonomic specialist groups, zoological associations and rescue centres may be helpful in finding appropriate care and rehabilitation Also see CITES Res.17.8 appendices
Responsible translocation in country of origin may be possible after repatriation, following the steps in these guidelines
Does evaluation by a suitably qualified veterinarian show organism is free of injuries and clinical symptoms of illness?
YES
NO
Are there local or national facilities where the organism can have good welfare with its physical, behavioural and social needs met?
YES
NO
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
Consider humane euthanasia or lifetime care in a specialised facility outside the country
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Use of Ex situ Management for Species Conservation and CITES Res.17.8 appendices
Is the organism old enough to be independent?
NO
YES
NO
Can the organism be treated and recuperate with appropriate available health care?
YES
NO
Arrange a health/disease risk assessment process with relevant experts to identify pathogens and diseases of concern for the species
Transfer to rehabilitative care with expert staff at a specialised facility
The organism cannot be responsibly released
The organism would have poor welfare if kept alive
See IUCN and OIE Manual of Procedures for Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis and these guidelines
Provide disease evaluation by a suitably qualified veterinarian for species-specific diseases of concern
Does the organism have any diseases that pose medium or high risks to wild conspecifics, other wildlife or humans?
YES
NO
The organism cannot be responsibly released at this time
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
For low- or medium-risk scenarios, conduct research to analyse potential impacts of disease transmission to wild conspecifics, other native wildlife and humans
Release into semi-wild habitats with lifetime care may be possible if disease risk can be managed


Does the organism exhibit wild behaviours appropriate for its age (finding wild food, defending itself from predators and threats, moving through its natural environment, and appropriate social behaviour with conspecifics) ?
YES
NO
The organism cannot be responsibly released at this time
Use species-appropriate behavioural conditioning or allow additional time for organism to learn necessary behaviours
Have suitable natural behaviours been regained or learned?
YES
NO
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility, or release into semi-wild habitats with lifetime care may be possible
Unreleasable displaced organisms could potentially contribute to either an existing taxon-specific conservation translocation breeding program or a planned program if breeding has ben identified as a conservation need for the taxon
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Use of Ex situ Management for Species Conservation
Can the organism be returned to its home range?
YES
NO
Many species can use even highly modified habitats.
Removing organisms from the areas they are using may make it hard for them to find food, and disrupt their breeding patterns and social structures
Could actions be taken to protect or restore habitat and enable releasing the organism in its home range?
YES
NO
Is there sufficient information available on the natural habitats and ecology of the species/subspecies to identify suitable release sites?
NO
YES
Conduct research to determine habitat needs and ecology
Is sufficient information available on the location of local communities, their natural resource uses, and potential wildlife interactions to determine that release will not pose a medium or high risk of conflict?
NO
YES
The organism cannot be responsibly released at this time without creating likely human-wildlife conflicts
Human-wildlife conflicts can turn local opinion against translocations & conservation activities. Local communities need to be consulted and their views and needs respected
See rescources at IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict task force (https://www.hwctf.org/)
Conduct research to determine community habitat use, potential wildlife conflicts, and suitable conflict mitigation strategies
Can potential conflicts between humans and translocated organisms be avoided or mitigated?
YES
NO
The organism cannot be responsibly released
Are facilities available where the organism can have good welfare with its physical, behavioural and social needs met?
NO
YES
The organism would have poor welfare if kept alive
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
Consider humane euthanasia or lifetime care at a specialised facility
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Use of Ex situ Management for Species Conservation and CITES Res.17.8 appendices
Is there a release site in the current range of the species (or subspecies) that is protected from threats to the organism, and where its release will not pose a medium or high risk to conspecifics or the ecosystem?
NO
YES
In some cases, medium-level ecosystem impacts may be possible to address if mitigation actions would not pose further risks to habitats and interacting taxa. Medium or high genetic and behavioural risks to conspecifics cannot be mitigated, and would create irresponsible release situations.
Is there a proven method for successfully releasing species/ subspecies or a closely related one?
NO
YES
Conduct research to determine safe methodology or consider monitored release to test effectiveness
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction and Other Conservation Translocations and this document
Are plans, funds, staff and technology available to monitor survival after release and to intervene if necessary?
YES
NO
Work with partners to fund and implement post-release monitoring and intervention as appropriate
Responsible translocation back in home range or local habitat area, or into suitable release habitat in current range can be pursued following these guidelines

Decision Tree ◆ Plants

Legend: Organism source | Questions | Critical actions and considerations | Irresponsible release scenarios | Translocation and care decisions | Resources

Catastrophic events, human development, habitat degradation and climate change

- Displaced or harmed by climate change or disaster
- Displaced by infrastructure, housing, or other human developments

Organisms in distress

- Isolated in human-modified landscapes
- Found removed from soil or growth substrate

Legal trade

- Purchased or recovered from collector or trader
- Kept by humans (legally obtained)

Poaching and illegal trade

- Offered for sale or kept illegally
- Harmed by poaching or other human activities
- Seized from poacher
- In illegal shipment

Report the incident and give any available evidence to appropriate enforcement officer

Is the organism's species (and subspecies, if applicable) identified?

YES

Does a conservation translocation programme already exist for this species?

YES

Whenever possible, pursue opportunity for organisms to contribute to a conservation translocation programme via release or propagation, following decisions below

NO

Is the species or subspecies vulnerable, threatened, endangered or otherwise at risk of extinction?

NO

YES

NO

The organism cannot be released responsibly at this time. Release may be possible after identification

Unknown species could be non-native, may hybridise or compete with native species, decrease genetic fitness, propogation and survival of the native species, and alter ecosystems. Non-native species can have high economic costs if they become invasive

Identify the species, and the subspecies/variety, and strain if applicable

Seek help from IUCN taxonomic specialist groups and local botanical experts if needed

Would establishing a conservation translocation programme provide species or ecosystem benefits?

Translocation can re-establish extirpated populations, supplement non-viable populations,and help restore ecosystems or secure habitat protections. Translocation also pose genetic, competition, disease and invasion risks to local species, and potential risks to ecosystems and other plant taxa and their management. Potential translocations must be carefully assessed to determine whether possible conservation benefits will likely outweigh risks

YES

Create a clear goal for potential translocation: what does it aim to achieve and how?

NO

Translocations that support cultural values and other non-conservation purposes may also be responsibly conducted by following these guidelines to prevent harm to local species, ecosystems and human communities

Is the species or subspecies (if applicable) native to the local area or the country?

Releasing a different subspecies,variety, or individuals from genetically distinct populations into local conspecific populations can cause hybridisation and pose genetic risks to wild conspecifics and other local plant taxa

YES

NO

The organism cannot be responsibly released locally

In exceptional cases where organisms could be part of carefully managed existing or planned projects for assisting colonisation, contact IUCN Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (guidelines for assisted colonisation are in development)

Provide evaluation and short-term care by a suitably qualified horticulturalist

Can the organism be repatriated to country of origin where local translocation may be possible?

YES

IUCN taxonomic specialist groups and botanical gardens may be helpful in finding appropriate care

NO

Are there local or national facilities where the organism can receive suitable care?

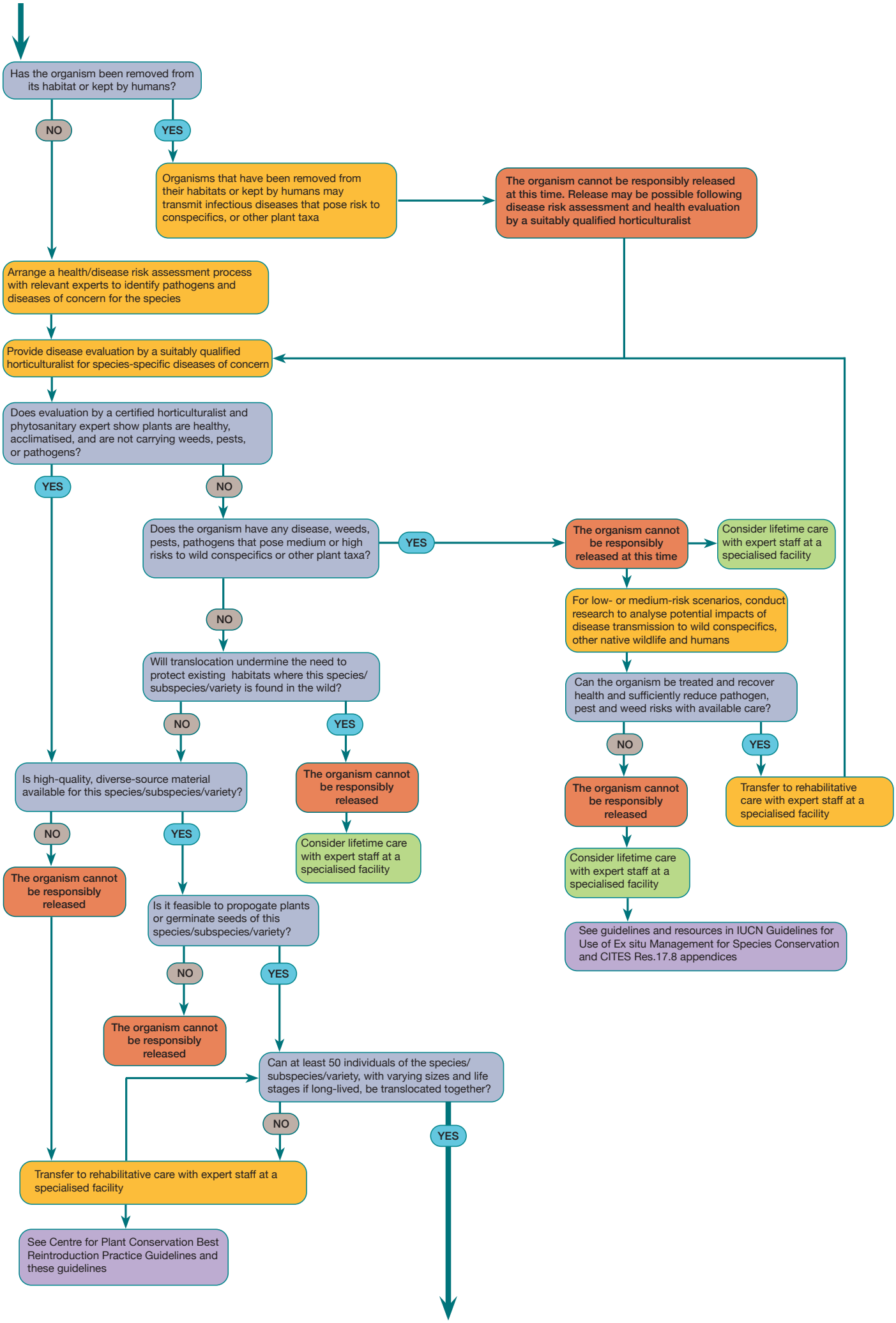
NO

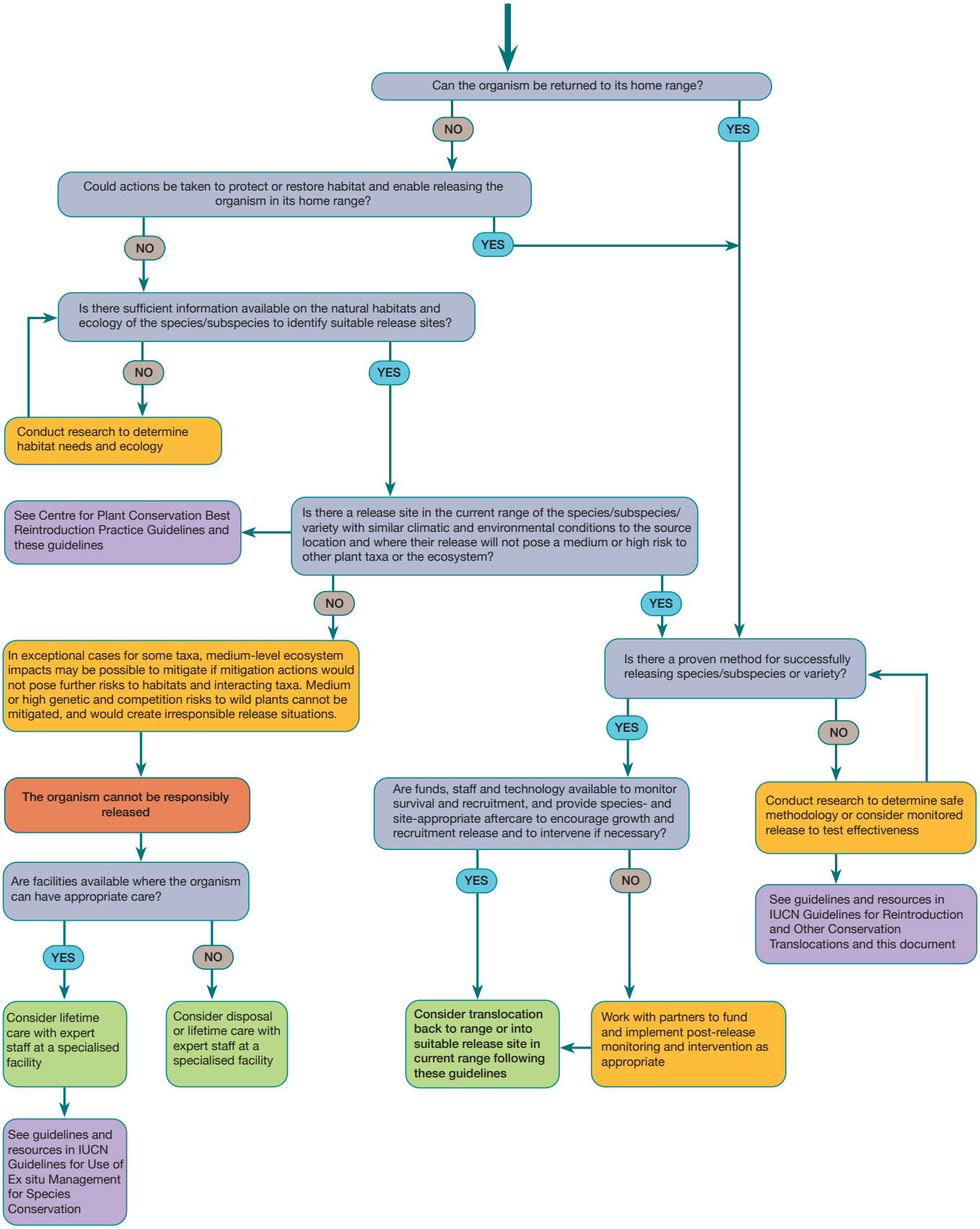
Consider disposal or lifetime care in a specialised facility outside the country

YES

Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility

See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Use of Ex situ Management for Species Conservation


Has the organism been removed from its habitat or kept by humans?
NO
YES
Organisms that have been removed from their habitats or kept by humans may transmit infectious diseases that pose risk to conspecifics, or other plant taxa
The organism cannot be responsibly released at this time. Release may be possible following disease risk assessment and health evaluation by a suitably qualified horticulturalist
Arrange a health/disease risk assessment process with relevant experts to identify pathogens and diseases of concern for the species
Provide disease evaluation by a suitably qualified horticulturalist for species-specific diseases of concern
Does evaluation by a certified horticulturalist and phytosanitary expert show plants are healthy, acclimatised, and are not carrying weeds, pests, or pathogens?
YES
NO
Does the organism have any disease, weeds, pests, pathogens that pose medium or high risks to wild conspecifics or other plant taxa?
YES
The organism cannot be responsibly released at this time
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
For low- or medium-risk scenarios, conduct research to analyse potential impacts of disease transmission to wild conspecifics, other native wildlife and humans
Can the organism be treated and recover health and sufficiently reduce pathogen, pest and weed risks with available care?
NO
YES
The organism cannot be responsibly released
Transfer to rehabilitative care with expert staff at a specialised facility
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Use of Ex situ Management for Species Conservation and CITES Res.17.8 appendices
NO
Will translocation undermine the need to protect existing habitats where this species/subspecies/variety is found in the wild?
NO
YES
Is high-quality, diverse-source material available for this species/subspecies/variety?
The organism cannot be responsibly released
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
NO
YES
The organism cannot be responsibly released
Is it feasible to propogate plants or germinate seeds of this species/subspecies/variety?
NO
YES
The organism cannot be responsibly released
Can at least 50 individuals of the species/subspecies/variety, with varying sizes and life stages if long-lived, be translocated together?
NO
YES
Transfer to rehabilitative care with expert staff at a specialised facility
See Centre for Plant Conservation Best Reintroduction Practice Guidelines and these guidelines


Can the organism be returned to its home range?
NO
YES
Could actions be taken to protect or restore habitat and enable releasing the organism in its home range?
NO
YES
Is there sufficient information available on the natural habitats and ecology of the species/subspecies to identify suitable release sites?
NO
YES
Conduct research to determine habitat needs and ecology
See Centre for Plant Conservation Best Reintroduction Practice Guidelines and these guidelines
Is there a release site in the current range of the species/subspecies/ variety with similar climatic and environmental conditions to the source location and where their release will not pose a medium or high risk to other plant taxa or the ecosystem?
NO
YES
In exceptional cases for some taxa, medium-level ecosystem impacts may be possible to mitigate if mitigation actions would not pose further risks to habitats and interacting taxa. Medium or high genetic and competition risks to wild plants cannot be mitigated, and would create irresponsible release situations.
The organism cannot be responsibly released
Are facilities available where the organism can have appropriate care?
YES
NO
Consider lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
Consider disposal or lifetime care with expert staff at a specialised facility
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Use of Ex situ Management for Species Conservation
Is there a proven method for successfully releasing species/subspecies or variety?
YES
NO
Are funds, staff and technology available to monitor survival and recruitment, and provide species- and site-appropriate aftercare to encourage growth and recruitment release and to intervene if necessary?
YES
NO
Consider translocation back to range or into suitable release site in current range following these guidelines
Work with partners to fund and implement post-release monitoring and intervention as appropriate
Conduct research to determine safe methodology or consider monitored release to test effectiveness
See guidelines and resources in IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction and Other Conservation Translocations and this document

References

IUCN SSC (2013). Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations. Version 1.0. IUCN. https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/10386

Maddison, N. (Ed.) (2019). Guidelines for the management of confiscated, live organisms. IUCN. https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2019.03.en

Sherman, J., Menon, V., Kock, R., King, T., Luz, S., Ashraf N.V.K., Soorae, P., Moehrenschlager, A. (2025). Guidelines on responsible translocation of displaced organisms. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.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