

## **DEVELOPMENT OF GEMP (GLOBAL ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM)**

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The establishment of a Global Elephant Management Program (GEMP) has been discussed for a long time, and the necessity for such a program stressed by various bodies, but not much has happened in practical terms. Therefore, Vienna Zoo invited colleagues from various regions to discuss how to proceed further. The group decided to apply for two GSMPs for the African and Asian elephant respectively, to be operated under a joint Management Committee chaired by Harald M. Schwammer. The GEMP has been founded on July 25, 2007 in Vienna (Austria) and has been approved by WAZA and noted by Plenary at the Budapest Conference.

The GEMP Board consists of the regional TAG chairs and studbook keepers of EAZA, AZA, SEAZA and ARAZPA.

The Global Elephant Management Program is comprised of inter-regional elephant experts working cooperatively to initiate conservation, education and research programs to ensure that elephants continue to exist in our care and in the wild.

Main program is to find ways to work together to improve management and welfare, to manage and protect existing populations in human care.

Conservation role of the ex situ population:

The Global Elephant Management Program (GEMP) aims to assist range country governments and non-governmental organisations through direct support for field conservation initiatives combined with capacity building partnerships that capitalise on zoo-related strengths, including environmental education, wildlife health, facility design and population management. In support of these in-country-focussed partnerships and projects, the GEMP's ex situ elephant program will be expanded to increase its capacity to heighten public interest and generate community support. In addition, the program will aim to increase its efficiency as a conservation resource by maintaining genetic variability.

Important aim is to develop more cooperation between people working with elephants in human care to join forces for wild elephant conservation and habitat protection.

Having elephants in human care allows us to provide:

- Funding to specific projects
- Funding to coalition/ umbrella groups that fund conservation groups
- Fundraising through zoo audience
- Research on zoo elephants
- Highlighting field conservation in zoo exhibits

- Education programs – the public can be inspired to care and take action for instance to not buy ivory
- Capacity building
- Focusing on elephant conservation supports conservation of other species

GEMP is developing in small steps but continuously, and succeeded in building up an information platform. Important issue is the worldwide cooperation within training workshops and symposiums.