

VANTARA ANNOUNCES MEMBERS OF NEW INDEPENDENT GOVERNING COUNCIL

Jamnagar, India, 4 September 2026 – Vantara today announced the full membership of its newly established Governing Council. The Council will oversee Vantara’s conservation, rescue and compliance work, take the final decision on any future applications to import wild animals, and help set Vantara’s vision for the next five years and beyond.

The five-member Council, together with one *ex officio* member, brings together leading Indian and international experts in wildlife policy, international and national law, institutional oversight, wildlife crime, human-wildlife conflict, zoo and aquarium standards, veterinary care, stakeholder engagement and community-based conservation.

John E. Scanlon AO, renowned environmentalist and former Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), whose appointment as independent Chair was announced in August 2026, will be joined by:

- **Hon. Justice Krishna Murari**, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, with extensive experience in law, governance and institutional oversight.
- **Mr Craig Hoover**, Executive Vice President of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and a wildlife conservation leader with three decades of experience, including senior roles with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, overseeing international conservation and wildlife trade, will commence his term in January 2027 after completing his tenure with AZA.
- **Mr Subhash K. Malkhede**, senior officer at the Indian Forest Service and former Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka, with extensive experience in wildlife conservation, protected-area and endangered species management, human-wildlife conflict, wildlife law enforcement and regulatory oversight.
- **Ms Greta F. Iori**, an Ethiopian-Italian conservation expert with significant experience in wildlife crime, human-wildlife coexistence, women’s leadership and community-based conservation across Africa.
- **Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma** (*ex officio* non-voting member), Indian wildlife veterinarian and elephant specialist, formerly Professor and Head of the Department of Surgery and Radiology at the College of Veterinary Science, Guwahati.

The members of the Council serve in an independent personal capacity. Vantara employees cannot be voting members of the Council.

John Scanlon, chair of the Governing Council, said “The Governing Council has a central role to play in setting the future vision for Vantara and in ensuring it embeds recently announced changes into its daily operations. With these appointments, we are bringing in people with outstanding professional credentials, extensive experience, and exemplary personal credibility. It’s an exceptional team that blends deep expertise from within India and globally. We will work diligently together to make a lasting, transformative positive impact for wildlife conservation, and look forward to engaging with Vantara staff and the conservation community in our work.”

Vivaan Karani, CEO of Vantara, said: “I welcome the members of the Governing Council, who will play an instrumental role in setting our future vision and in ensuring that Vantara is held to the highest standards as we advance science-led conservation. The independent authority of the Council is central to our efforts to fully implement the commitments made in our letter to the Indian CITES Management Authority last month, and to ensuring Vantara’s decisions are subject to rigorous and independent oversight.”

The Governing Council is Vantara’s peak governing body, and it has overall responsibility for supervising Vantara’s conservation, rescue and rehabilitation work, its compliance with Indian law, CITES and other international agreements, and in helping set its vision for the next five years and beyond. Further, as set out in Vantara’s recently announced governance reforms, no application to import an animal will be made before 5 June 2027. Thereafter, the commitments not to apply to import an animal in certain circumstances will apply, and no application may be advanced without the Council’s prior written approval, which will follow an internal due diligence process.

The establishment of the Governing Council is part of Vantara’s wider voluntary commitments to strengthen transparency, due diligence and operating practices, emphasising adherence to CITES, shifting focus towards supporting wildlife in their range states, and prioritising rescue, rehabilitation and conservation within India.

The Council will continually review progress against Vantara’s letter to the Indian CITES Management Authority of 19 August 2026 to ensure full implementation of the commitments therein. The full text of the letter is available [here](#).

The Council is supported by the new CITES Due Diligence Committee and the Advisory Board, as well as the Special Director and the Office of Compliance and Due Diligence, each of which is described in Vantara’s letter to the Indian CITES Management Authority.

Vantara has committed to deeper engagement with the conservation community, and the Council will consider a possible mechanism to enable an ongoing dialogue with members of the conservation community working in the field to share ideas, knowledge and perspectives. The Council will gather feedback from stakeholders on the best way forward.

Notes to Editors – Vantara Governing Council Member Biographies

John E. Scanlon AO

John E. Scanlon AO is a globally recognised leader in environmental governance, law and policy, nature conservation, and sustainable development. He served as Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and has held senior roles with the UN Environment Programme, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and national environmental authorities in Australia. He served a Trustee at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and Chair of the UK Government’s Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund Advisory Group. His current leadership positions include Chair of the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime, and Executive President of the International Council of Environmental Law. In 2019, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to wildlife conservation and protection. His other honours

include the Chinese Government Friendship Award, the University of Adelaide Distinguished Alumni Award, the Financial Crime Fighter of the Year Award and UNEP's Baobab Award for Innovation.

Hon. Justice Krishna Murari

Hon. Justice Krishna Murari is a distinguished Indian jurist and former Judge of the Supreme Court of India. He was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2019, serving until his retirement in 2023, following a judicial career spanning more than two decades. Prior to his elevation to the Supreme Court, he served as Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and as a Judge of the Allahabad High Court, one of India's oldest and largest High Courts. Before joining the judiciary, Justice Murari practised law in Allahabad, specialising in civil, constitutional, corporate and revenue matters. During his career on the bench, he adjudicated a wide range of significant constitutional, commercial and public-law matters, bringing extensive experience in judicial oversight, governance, institutional accountability and the application of regulatory frameworks. He holds a law degree from Allahabad University and was enrolled as an advocate in 1981.

Craig Hoover

Craig Hoover is Executive Vice President of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), where he oversees an organisation representing more than 8,000 members and accrediting more than 250 zoological institutions in the United States and globally. He brings more than 25 years of experience in international wildlife conservation, wildlife trade and regulatory policy. Before joining AZA in 2019, he served in senior roles with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, including Chief of the Division of International Conservation and Chief of the Division of Management Authority, the US CITES Management Authority. He also worked with the Service's Office of Law Enforcement and served as Deputy Director of TRAFFIC North America. During his federal career, he helped oversee more than \$300 million in international conservation grants and played an active role in U.S. efforts to combat wildlife trafficking, including measures addressing illegal trade in elephant ivory, rhino horn and other protected species. He holds a B.S. from the University of Michigan and a J.D. from Loyola Law School.

Subhash K. Malkhede

Subhash K. Malkhede, Indian Forest Service (IFS), is a senior Indian forest officer and wildlife conservation leader who has served as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka. In this role, he has overseen the conservation and management of some of India's most important wildlife landscapes, with responsibilities spanning protected areas, endangered species, human-wildlife conflict and wildlife crime. He has been closely involved in conservation efforts for species including elephants, tigers, leopards and critically endangered birds. He has also championed the modernisation of wildlife law enforcement, including the use of technology to strengthen the monitoring and investigation of forest and wildlife crime. His career combines extensive field experience with senior responsibility for wildlife policy, conservation management and regulatory oversight.

Greta F. Iori

Greta Francesca Iori is a conservation leader and strategic advisor with more than 15 years of experience spanning biodiversity conservation, wildlife policy, sustainable development and international cooperation. She currently serves as Director of Global Partnerships at Daughters for Earth and Strategic Lead for WE Move at Women for the Environment Africa, and previously held senior roles with Conservation International and the Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation, leading programmes and government engagement across 25 African countries. Her career has focused on human-elephant

coexistence, illegal wildlife trade, community-led conservation and environmental governance, including work with the Wildlife Conservation Society, Born Free Foundation, GIZ and UNODC. She is a member of the IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence Specialist Group, serves on China's Expert Committee on Asian Elephant Conservation and is a Special Advisor to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority.

Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma

Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma is a distinguished Indian wildlife veterinarian and internationally recognised elephant specialist, with decades of experience in the treatment, management and conservation of Asian elephants. He was formerly Professor and Head of the Department of Surgery and Radiology at the College of Veterinary Science in Guwahati, Assam, and has worked extensively with both wild and captive elephants across India. Dr Sarma has contributed to elephant rescue, rehabilitation, translocation and conflict-management programmes, combining veterinary practice with conservation science and field experience. He has advised government authorities and conservation organisations on elephant health and welfare and has trained generations of veterinarians and wildlife professionals. His career has been dedicated to advancing veterinary care and practical conservation for elephants and other wildlife.

About Vantara

Vantara is a world-leading, not-for-profit, animal welfare and conservation organisation located in Gujarat, India. Its *ex situ* programmes (care provided outside the natural habitat) include rescue, rehabilitation, treatment and long-term animal care (where required), supported by advanced veterinary medicine, species-specific nutrition, specialised infrastructure and multidisciplinary teams. Conservation breeding programmes are also undertaken to support the future restoration of viable populations in suitable natural habitats through rewilding. Its *in situ* conservation work (conservation in animals' natural habitats) supports native species restoration, habitat restoration and human-wildlife conflict mitigation efforts led by government authorities, conservation institutions and other partners in India and internationally.