

## **The Orchid Specialist Group at the start of the Quadrennium**

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In early 2017, the Orchid Specialist Group (OSG) of the Species Survival Commission (IUCN) was reconstituted for the new Quadrennium (2017-2020), with *c.* 150 members around the world. This process gave us the opportunity to rethink some of the aspects of how the group should be run and what the opportunities are for how we work to conserve orchids. Red list assessments will remain a main focus for the OSG as this is a great way of raising awareness of the threats to orchids worldwide, but we can also work towards orchid conservation in other ways. Major changes leading up to the reconstitution were the establishment of two related new thematic groups, one investigating orchid trade issues and one looking at the use of novel molecular techniques for identification of orchids, particularly in processed forms such as traditional medicines and food; through these groups, we have started a dialogue with the CITES Plants Committee. We have begun to investigate the opportunities for using social media to strengthen the network of people interested in orchid conservation, e.g. the OSG Facebook group was started at the 6th International Orchid Conservation Congress (IOCC) and now has *c.* 500 members. Plans for the 7th IOCC, to be held at Kew in 2019, are underway, with the working title of “Orchid Conservation – the Next Generation” indicating a focus on the importance of involving younger conservationists in this important work and recognizing the role of next-generation sequencing technology in taking the work forwards.