URSA
UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE

Universal Ranger Support Alliance

Action plan for supporting implementation of the International Ranger Federation's Chitwan Declaration and furthering the professionalisation of rangers (2021-2025)

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FORCE FOR NATURE
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IRF INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION
PANTHERA
WCPA WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS
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Rangers of the World
Finally, we wish to thank all the rangers themselves who work tirelessly to protect our natural and cultural heritage, often under extremely difficult environmental and working conditions. We, the members of URSA, have the utmost respect for the work they do, and will endeavour to support them through our Alliance and by implementing this action plan.

Facilitation, drafting, review and revision of the action plan were led by Chris Gordon of Conservation Alpha

CONSERVATION ALPHA
Maximizing Conservation Impact

TCP-DENR Patrolling Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park © James Slade / Re:wild

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Community Conserved Area
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora
FFI	Fauna & Flora International
FFN	Force for Nature
FPIC	Free and Prior Informed Consent
GR	Game Reserve
ICCA	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area
ILK	Indigenous and Local Knowledge
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPLCs	Indigenous People and Local Communities
IRF	International Ranger Federation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Park
PCAs	Protected and Conserved Areas
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
URSA	Universal Ranger Support Alliance
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZSL	Zoological Society of London

Observing a frog, Guatemala © Robin Moore / Re:wild

Summary

This plan sets out a programme of actions intended to build recognition, support and capacity for rangers in protected and conserved areas across the world. The work of rangers is essential for effective management of these areas and the successful achievement of global and national goals for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Rangers' contributions to human rights, and to health and wellbeing are particularly relevant in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, the ranger sector is relatively unrecognized and often neglected; recent reports have highlighted widespread inadequate working conditions and the disturbing annual death toll endured by rangers. At the same time, major concerns have arisen about the paramilitary roles that some rangers are expected to play and about accusations of abuses committed by rangers against local people.

To ensure more effective and equitable management and governance of protected and conserved areas, rangers need to be professional, responsible, accountable, valued and supported. Recognising this, 550 delegates at the 9th World Ranger Congress adopted by consensus the comprehensive Chitwan Declaration (see Annexe I), a clear statement of what rangers need under seven headings: ranger welfare, rangers and communities, Indigenous rangers, ranger capacity, gender equality, ranger associations, and technology.

In response to the International Ranger Federation's (IRF) call for international backing to implement the Chitwan Declaration, seven organisations with an international focus on supporting rangers (see box), joined with the IRF to form the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA). URSA aims to support implementation of the Declaration by mobilising the combined resources, influence and expertise of its members at the global scale and by facilitating partnerships and initiatives for implementation at the regional and national levels.

URSA members

Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Force for Nature (FFN), Re:wild, International Ranger Federation (IRF), IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN-WCPA), Panthera, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

In early 2020, URSA commissioned international subject specialists to work with a wide range of consultees to compile a series of White Papers exploring in detail the main elements of Chitwan Declaration. Based on the findings of these papers, URSA members worked together to develop the action plan presented here, with the vision of 'A network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated, responsible and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which we all depend.'

The plan has five main components: A. Advocacy, representation and recognition; B. Capacity; C. Employment and Welfare; D. Equality and Equity; E. Community Relations, Conduct and Accountability. Each of these has a set of objectives and actions (summarised on the following page).

Over the next five years and based on this action plan, URSA members will work to support the establishment of an international framework of policies, codes and standards that promote professionalisation, accountability and competence of the ranger workforce; IRF will build its capacity, membership and networks, acting as the global representatives of the ranger sector and encouraging widespread adoption of fair working conditions and representation for rangers; while national and regional ranger associations will work to adapt global tools and resources to local needs and contexts, to adopt and make use of them, and to report on progress to the IRF.

The Action Plan Framework

VISION	A network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated, responsible and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which we all depend.				
GOAL	By 2025, there is a global enabling environment providing a unified voice for rangers and standards for capacity, employment, equality and conduct to build a demonstrably professional, accountable and competent ranger workforce, whose contributions are formally recognized and respected.				
COMPONENTS	**A. Advocacy and Representation**	**B. Capacity**	**C. Employment and Welfare**	**D. Equality and Equity in the Ranger Sector**	**E. Community Relations, Ranger Conduct and Accountability**
OBJECTIVE	By 2025, the ranger profession is increasingly and formally recognized internationally and by governments, with rangers effectively represented and connected.	By 2025, a common framework for improving and sustaining ranger capacity is in place and increasingly adopted and implemented.	By 2025, global minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare are developed, and increasingly adopted nationally to enhance ranger working conditions and well-being.	By 2025, systems and structures have been adopted by IRF, its ranger associations and by URSA members that enable equal opportunities, fair treatment, and equitable working environments for rangers.	By 2025, rangers in all IRF regions are operating within a framework of working practices, ethics and conduct that value and build trust with communities and the public, and promote responsibility and accountability.
OUTPUTS	A1. IRF is strengthened as the global representative body for rangers and custodian of standards, promoting rangers' interests. A2 A growing network of ranger associations is established and strengthened. A3 Awareness of and respect for the ranger profession is improved at all levels. A4. The ranger occupation is officially recognised internationally and in multiple countries.	B1. Systems are in place to identify and track ranger capacity needs and development opportunities. B2. Ranger employers and supporting organisations have the capacity to enable effective ranger performance. B3. A global guiding framework of competences, standards and training and learning provision is established and adopted. B4. A global connected network of rangers is established. B5. Rangers and employers have access to essential and appropriate technology.	C1. Global minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare are defined, promoted, and adopted by governments and ranger employers. C2. Ranger welfare and well-being are improving in all IRF regions. C3. The commitment and motivation of rangers is widely recognized as an important factor in effective conservation.	D1. IRF adopts and promotes clear policies and positions on equality, equity and rights in the ranger sector. D2. Resources, materials and guidance are available to support and promote national implementation of the policy on equality, equity and rights.	E1. A global code of conduct for rangers is defined and widely adopted. E2. Safeguarding policies and processes, designed to prevent and respond to violations by rangers of human, community and Indigenous rights have been established and adopted by IRF and URSA members. E3. URSA, IRF and ranger associations are actively engaged in building trust between rangers and communities.

Rangers from DRC's Virunga National Park © Virunga National Park

Introduction

Rangers, protected and conserved areas and the wider landscape

Protected areas (see box) are core elements of global efforts to conserve biodiversity, ecosystem services and associated cultural values. They are a cornerstone of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (Target 11) and have a vital role in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). In 2020, Protected Areas cover 15 percent of the planet's terrestrial surface and 7 percent of its seas[1]. It is likely that the Convention on Biological Diversity's post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will recognise that to keep the planet and its population flourishing, 30% of Earth needs to be under effective conservation management by 2030[2]. Rangers have significant contributions to play in achieving these global goals, protecting species, ecosystems and the services they provide, maintaining a healthy, sustainable environment[3], defending the culture, rights and livelihoods of communities committed to protecting their lands and waters. The links between healthy people and a healthy planet are particularly relevant in the context of the COVD-19 pandemic.

Beyond the network of officially recognised protected areas, there is growing recognition of the importance of the substantial network of areas subject to 'other effective conservation measures' (OECMs), also widely known as 'Conserved Areas', under the stewardship of Indigenous and local communities, private and civil society owners and a range of land resource management agencies (e.g. forestry, water). Rangers, or people doing ranger equivalent work, also operate in many of these areas.

Protected Area

A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (IUCN Definition 2008)

Area under 'Other Effective Conservation Measures' (OECMs) or 'Conserved Area'

A geographically defined space, not recognised as a protected area, which is governed and managed over the long-term in ways that deliver the effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem services and cultural and spiritual values. (IUCN)

The effectiveness of the protected area network is, however not matching its expansion; currently only around 30% of terrestrial and 14% of Marine Protected Areas have even had their effectiveness evaluated[4]. Limited capacity is widely recognized as a major constraint on protected area management and performance[5][6].

Adequate numbers of competent, well-resourced and well-led personnel form the foundation for effective protected and conserved area management, and rangers are essential field operatives of area-based management. Generally, their main role is preventing biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, but rangers may also be engaged in biological monitoring, habitat management, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, tourism management, community engagement, conservation education and more (see 'Who is a ranger' box). They work for national and regional government agencies, NGOs, private conservation bodies and community organisations.

1 www.protectedplanet.net/
2 Waldron et al. (2020). Protecting 30% of the planet for nature: costs, benefits and economic implications. Working paper.
3 Human Rights Council Resolution, A/75/161, Human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, 15 July 2020, p.5, paragraph 10
4 https://www.protectedplanet.net/target-11-dashboard
5 Coad L. et al (2019) Widespread shortfalls in protected area resourcing undermine efforts to conserve biodiversity. Front. Ecol. Environ. 2019; 17: 259-264
6 Gill, D., Mascia, M., Ahmadia, G. et al. Capacity shortfalls hinder the performance of marine protected areas globally. Nature 543, 665–669 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1038/nature21708

Who is a ranger?

The International Ranger Federation defines a ranger as 'the person involved in the practical protection and preservation of all aspects of wild areas, historical and cultural sites. Rangers provide recreational opportunities and interpretation of sites while providing links between local communities, protected areas and area administration'

[7] We do not know how many rangers there are around the world (a global survey is being conducted during 2020), but it is widely accepted that there are not nearly enough to respond to the growing need. We know even less about the representatives of Indigenous people and of local communities who fulfil 'ranger equivalent' roles in Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) and other traditionally managed territories.

The work of all types of ranger requires exceptional skill and professionalism, and demands the highest standards of personal conduct, but is frequently under-recognized, under-appreciated and under-resourced. Many rangers endure tough and dangerous working conditions; threat, injury, disease and death are not uncommon. Growing concern about the working conditions of rangers led, in 2019, to the pivotal 'Life on the Frontline' survey[8]. Based on more than 7,000 ranger interviews in 28 countries, this provides widespread and disturbing evidence of low wages, inadequate training and equipment, limited access to healthcare or medical support, and basic living conditions. Specific issues included:

- Only 43% of rangers 'often' or 'always' had access to clean drinking water.
- 43% believe their most basic equipment is insufficient for the job, and 31% stated that they never have access to communication devices during patrol.
- 33% of surveyed rangers have received their pay late at least once during the previous year.
- 52% believe that medical treatment will not be adequate when required.
- During the previous year, rangers in the survey had faced on-the-job verbal abuse (31%) and physical violence (8%) from community members.
- This situation compromises the effective management of protected areas, increases the risk of conflict and falls short of target 8.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals: 'Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment'.

Reports of abuses and use of excessive force by rangers in some countries, as well as concerns about 'militarisation'[9], threaten to undermine the dedicated and responsible work of the vast majority of rangers. For them to work effectively, responsibly and accountably they need to be properly valued, led and supported. A more professional ranger sector will improve the standing of rangers among decision makers, communities and the public, leading to improved resourcing, policies and support and ultimately more effective management of protected and conserved areas.

The International Ranger Federation and the Chitwan Declaration

Founded in 1992, the International Ranger Federation [10] (IRF) is the global representative organisation for rangers. Its membership (regular, associate or provisional) comprises 103[11] ranger associations from 62 countries, representing at least 17,000 rangers. Successive World Ranger Congresses have called for better working conditions and professionalisation of rangers, and recommendations from IUCN World Conservation Congresses of 2008 and 2016 have supported this[12]. However, the 'Life on the Frontline' report provided evidence that the situation in many places is not improving, while over 100 rangers continue to die in service every year.

7 https://www.internationalrangers.org/
8 Belecky et al. 2019. Life on the Frontline 2019: A Global Survey of the Working Conditions of Rangers. WWF.
9 Duffy et al (2019) Why we must question the militarisation of conservation. Biological Conservation Volume 232.
10 https://www.internationalrangers.org/
11 International Ranger Federation Membership Database, February 2020
12 WCC 2008 Rec 109 WCC-2016-Rec-103 Establishment, recognition and regulation of the career of park ranger

In response to the need for action, the IRF consulted widely with its membership to draft a declaration for endorsement at the 2019 World Ranger Congress, in Chitwan, Nepal. At the Congress, the 550 delegates adopted by consensus the comprehensive Chitwan Declaration (see Annexe I), which calls for ranger employers and associations, conservation NGOs and partners to collaborate in working towards the following seven goals.

1. **Ranger Welfare:** Empowered and supported rangers, who are legally recognised, and whose human rights, health and wellbeing are respected, will deliver their role to their utmost capability.
2. **Rangers and Communities:** Protected Areas will be socially relevant once mutually supportive and trusting relationships between Indigenous peoples and local communities and rangers are built, safeguarding all parties, and increasing collaboration, dialogue and transparency.
3. **Indigenous Rangers:** Indigenous People and Local Communities should be empowered, including through employment as rangers, to manage their own natural resources, build local goodwill for protected and conserved areas and ensure traditional/cultural knowledge is maintained and applied to the management of these areas.
4. **Ranger Capacity:** Adequate capacity (personnel and resources) and competences (skills and knowledge) will ensure ranger capabilities exist to effectively manage protected and conserved areas.
5. **Gender Equality:** Gender equality and the meaningful inclusion of women in the ranger workforce is an important equality goal and one that brings different skill sets and strengths.
6. **Ranger Associations and their Role:** Strengthened ranger associations can provide a united voice for rangers, connect the global ranger community, and advocate for the benefit of all rangers.
7. **Technology:** Appropriate technologies will support rangers to perform their duties effectively and safely.

The Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) and development of the action plan

The Chitwan Declaration calls for support to achieve its objectives; in response, seven organisations[13] with an international focus on supporting rangers joined forces with the IRF in 2020 to establish the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA)[14]. URSA aims to support implementation of the Declaration by mobilising the combined resources, influence and expertise of its members at the global scale and by facilitating partnerships and initiatives for action at the regional and national levels. By ensuring that the urgently needed investment, tools, reforms and policy changes are put in place, the Alliance's purpose is to improve the effectiveness, accountability and well-being of rangers, and specifically to enable and advocate for better training, support, safety, and equality for rangers, as well as a greater recognition of their work. URSA will also seek to strengthen the ongoing efforts by individual organisations, URSA partners, members and supporters in their countries of influence.

As a first step, URSA prioritised developing an action plan to support implementation of the Chitwan Declaration (see Figure 1). The starting point was to commission international subject specialists to work with a wide range of consultees to compile a series of detailed White Papers, based on the seven main themes of the Chitwan Declaration (ranger associations, capacity, communities, Indigenous and community rangers, gender, working conditions, technology). An eighth White Paper on ranger professionalisation identifies ten aspects that need to be addressed to achieve the Chitwan Declaration's goal of a 'full professionalisation': 1) a legally recognized sector; 2) sector competences and standards; 3) accessible, certified training and learning; 4) professional pay and contracts; 5) standard workers' rights and conditions; 6) common ethical standards; 7) personal commitment and motivation; 8) professional organisations/employers; 9) measuring professionalism; and 10) professional representative bodies. These White Papers will be published in the Journal 'Park Stewardship Forum' in late 2020 or early 2021.

13 Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Force for Nature (FFN), Re:wild, International Ranger Federation (IRF), IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN-WCPA), Panthera, Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

14 www.ursa4rangers.org

Based on the Chitwan Declaration, the findings of the White Papers and the experience and programmes of its member organisations, URSA members worked together during 2020 to develop the action plan presented here, with the support of an independent facilitator and plan compiler (see Figure 1). Due to the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this process was conducted entirely online, through virtual meetings, workshops and reviews of several drafts.

FIGURE 1. Overview of the process for developing the URSA action plan

The action plan presents a clear set of activities for URSA to advocate for and implement over a 5-year period. Its overall vision is of 'A network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated, responsible and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which we all depend.' The plan encompasses the elements of the Chitwan Declaration and the requirements for professionalisation in five main components (see Figure 2).

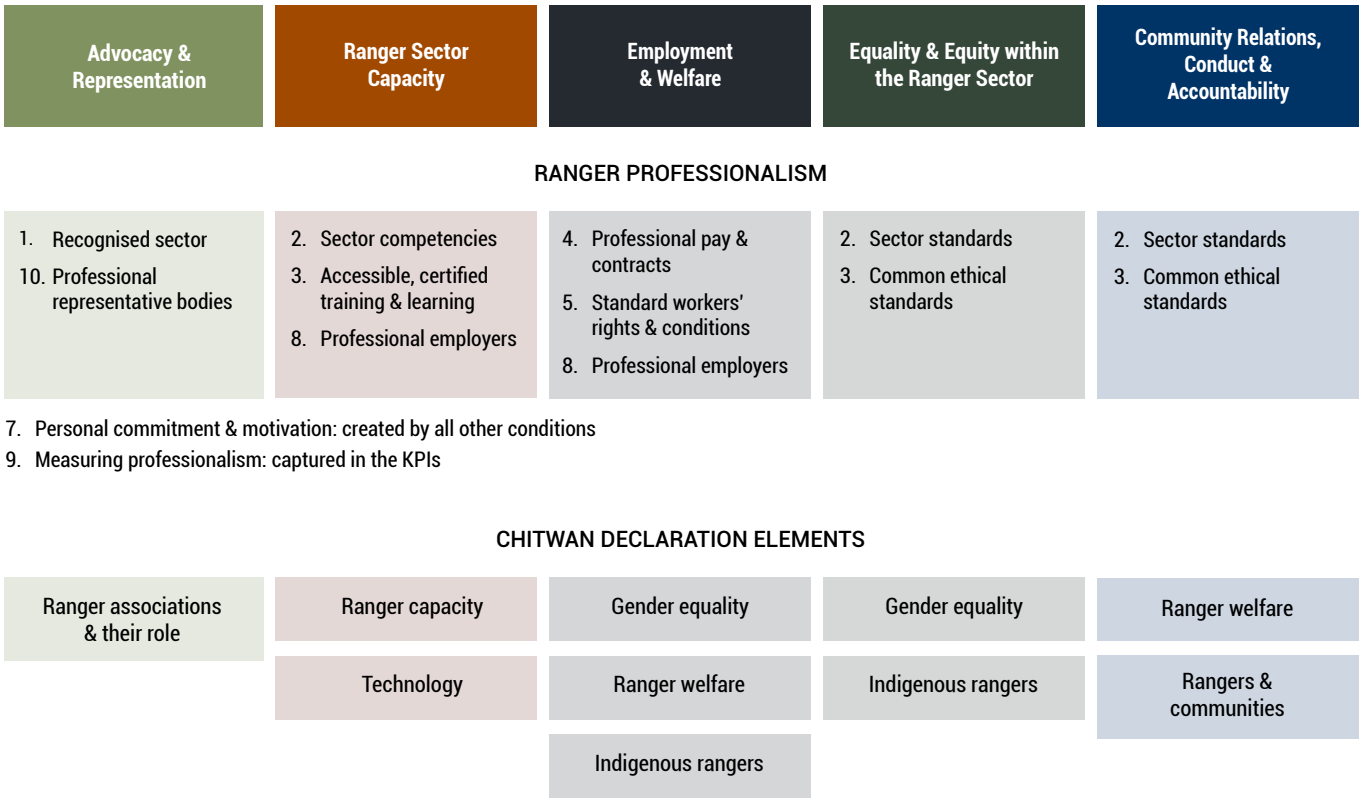


FIGURE 2. The five components of the action paln, illustrating linkages to the Chitwan Declaration elements and the ten requirements of the Ranger Professionalisation White Paper

Implementing the plan

The plan needs to be implemented at three main levels.

URSA members will focus mainly on strategic, sector-wide activities, programmes and resources that provide an essential common foundation for regional and local action. These include developing and promoting standards, technical tools, and guidelines and building a global policy environment that supports professionalisation, accountability, and competence of the ranger workforce. Members will mobilise their combined resources, contacts and programmes and the expertise within their teams, and will facilitate partnerships and initiatives for implementation at regional and national levels. This will only be feasible with more detailed communication and fundraising strategies aligned to and supporting the action plan. URSA also intends to build a global network of conservation organisations willing to mobilise their own resources and know-how to support implementation of the plan. It is important to stress that URSA should not be seen as an alternative to the IRF; its purpose is to support and empower the Federation.

Alongside its contributions to URSA, **the IRF** will also focus on building its own networks and its capacity to represent and speak for a growing global network of ranger associations, and will work with that network to encourage widespread adoption of common tools and standards. The IRF will also continue to raise awareness of the ranger sector, highlighting the issues faced by rangers and collecting and reporting on the work and experiences of its network.

National and regional ranger associations and other partners will work to adapt and apply new standards and approaches to reflect local needs and contexts, and where possible to advocate for the necessary changes in ranger status, working conditions and resource allocations. The ability of associations to fulfil this role will differ from country to country, depending on the capacity of the association and on political and institutional factors that may limit options for action and advocacy. Where advocacy is not a feasible option, regional ranger associations will seek to support and speak for national associations.

The intention is to be able to report significant progress towards implementing the plan and achieving the changes needed at the 2022 World Ranger Congress.

Photos (from top to bottom): Community rangers recording wildlife tracks, Mexico © James Slade / Re:wild; Emberá community rangers, Panama © Chris Jordan / Re:wild; St. Lucia Forestry Department & St. Lucia National Trust staff during a SMART training exercise © James Slade / Re:wild

BHAPU ranger at attention, Zimbabwe © James Slade / Re:wild

The Action Plan

Based around a common vision and goal, the plan has five main components. Each component has an overall objective, a set of specific anticipated results and specific actions for achieving each result. Measures of success are also identified, in order to monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan.

Vision

A network of well-supported, professionally competent, mandated, motivated, responsible and representative rangers working effectively as custodians of biodiversity and the life systems upon which we all depend.

The vision been worded to describe an ideal future vision of a professionalized ranger sector:

Network. The ranger sector will benefit from a coordinated global movement and strong network with common goals and standards, sharing experiences and providing peer support, and ensuring a unified voice that represents the ranger workforce.

Well-supported. Employers need to provide rangers with the systems, resources and capacity they require to do their work. Ranger associations, URSA, NGOs and other groups need to provide coordinated support and advocacy to ensure that this happens.

Competent. Rangers need the appropriate skills, knowledge and approaches to their work to fulfil their diverse roles, based on common standards and learning systems.

Mandated. Rangers require the necessary institutional, legal and community support and authority to conduct all their roles effectively.

Motivated. Rangers with secure employment, effective training, institutional support, and good working conditions will be better motivated to perform their roles to their utmost ability.

Responsible. Well-supported, professionally competent, accountable and motivated rangers will conduct their work more responsibly.

Representative. Ranger work should be open to all persons, regardless of ethnic or social origin, race, sex, gender identity, age (not including minors), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Custodians. Through their various roles, rangers have a major responsibility (in collaboration with traditional owners, rights holders and other stakeholders) as custodians of the protected and conserved areas where they work.

Goal

By 2025, there is a global enabling environment providing a unified voice for rangers, and standards for capacity, employment, equality and conduct that build a demonstrably professional, accountable and competent ranger workforce, whose contributions are formally recognized and respected.

The goal should be achievable within the 5-year timeframe of the action plan. It focuses on advancing the ranger sector and ensuring rangers are formally recognized, valued, responsible, competent and respected. URSA can play an enabling role through the development of the tools, structures and frameworks in addition to other interventions.

Objective A. Advocacy, Representation and Recognition

By 2025, the ranger profession is increasingly and formally recognized by governments globally, with rangers effectively represented and connected.

A key role of URSA is to help the IRF strengthen its role as the leading representative body for rangers and to increase the capacity of its member ranger associations. The IRF network has grown substantially (from 63 members from 46 countries in 2014 to 103 members in 62 countries in 2019), but many rangers and countries are still unrepresented. The ranger sector has limited formal recognition internationally; few countries recognize rangers' work as an official and distinct occupation, and many rangers struggle to get their voices heard and to secure the support they need; in recent surveys only 30% of rangers stated that they were part of an association, or had similar representation to advocate on their behalf. Many are not aware of their rights and entitlements or of their own value and contributions to society.

A global network of effective and representative ranger associations has the potential to establish common standards and best practices to improve visibility, credibility and public trust, to garner support and to act as an authoritative voice for the sector. Advocacy and representation activities should aim to:

- promote and support rangers throughout the world and create a wider, stronger global network of rangers;
- assist with the establishment and strengthening of ranger associations or equivalent bodies;
- advance the aims of rangers through collaborative partnerships with appropriate organisations;
- enable global communications and cross learning among ranger organisations and conservation organisations;
- promote global awareness and understanding of the role, values and benefits of rangers in the conservation of natural and cultural resources; and
- secure official recognition of the ranger occupation as a distinct profession, both internationally through the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and nationally.

Given the scale of the task, there needs to be strong coordination by URSA and its members, and significant organisational development and financial resourcing of both the IRF and its member associations.

Measures of success for Objective A

- The number of IRF members associations and the numbers of rangers they represent.
- Capabilities of IRF and of ranger associations, based on 3-yearly assessments.
- Number of ranger-focused policy improvements and of countries introducing improvements.
- Formal ILO recognition of the ranger occupation and the number of countries providing national recognition of the ranger profession in labour policies and legislation.

Forest patrol, Indonesia © Robin Moore / Re:wild

Advocacy, Representation and Recognition: Results and Actions

A1. IRF is strengthened as the global representative body for rangers and custodian of standards, promoting rangers' interests.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
A1.1 Promote IRF as the global representative of rangers and ranger associations, and the custodian of their standards. A1.2 Support development of IRF's capability to represent rangers (communications training in media and promotional work). A1.3 Establish and maintain a network of thematic experts to advise and support IRF. A1.4 Identify mechanisms for improving funding of IRF.	A1.5 Develop a strategic plan for strengthening IRF and its member associations (including governance, management, capability, financing and sustainability). A1.6 Facilitate and host the World Ranger Congress and other global events to promote the ranger agenda and connect rangers. A1.7 Establish and maintain a repository of core IRF documentation. A1.8 Improve communication and information sharing with ranger associations and their members. A1.9 Agree on messaging and procedures for IRF and its members to respond to crises and controversial issues.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
A1.10 Recognize and join IRF as the global representative of the ranger sector.	

A2. A growing network of ranger associations is established and strengthened.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
A2.1 Develop a metrics and information gathering system to enable regular status assessments of ranger associations or equivalents. A2.2 Conduct a baseline assessment of the status of ranger associations or equivalents.	A2.3 Recruit more ranger associations as IRF members, particularly in under-represented geographies. A2.4 Develop a handbook for ranger associations covering the benefits of membership, definitions, standards and guidance on governance and management. A2.5 Conduct 3-yearly assessments (based on A2.1 and 2.2) of the status of the Federation (membership, geographical reach, governance and management capacity, capability needs) and report to World Ranger Congresses on these.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
A3.8 Work with employers, as appropriate and feasible, to advocate for improved recognition of and support for rangers and the adoption of common standards and practices developed by IRF and URSA.	

A3. Awareness of and respect for the ranger profession is improved at all levels.

URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	IRF will (with support from URSA as required)
A3.1 Disseminate the URSA action plan (or summary) to relevant governments, agencies and partners. A3.2 Develop a new, inclusive global definition of a ranger (and specific ranger roles and responsibilities). A3.3 Advocate with governments, agencies, employers and donors on all aspects of improving recognition and support for rangers. A3.4 Develop a communications package that includes: • Messages for use in advocacy campaigns for governments, decision makers and donors. • Language and guidance for reframing the narrative around rangers in a positive and balanced way • Materials for rangers on benefits of professionalisation and engagement in ranger associations. • Material that helps communities to understand rangers and their work • Materials and media appropriate for different audiences • A documentary raising global awareness of the work of rangers and the challenges they face. A3.5 Establish a calendar of opportunities for promoting rangers' interests and agendas (conferences etc.).	A3.6 Ensure materials are adapted and translated for regional / national contexts where required. A3.7 Disseminate communication materials and messages through its networks and members.

Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:

A3.8 Work with employers, as appropriate and feasible, to advocate for improved recognition of and support for rangers and the adoption of common standards and practices developed by IRF and URSA.

A4. The ranger occupation is officially recognised internationally and in multiple countries.

URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	IRF will (with support from URSA as required)
A4.1 Work with the ILO to secure specific recognition of the ranger occupation and of basic rights of rangers. A4.2 Provide guidance and case studies for ranger associations, employers, HR departments and labour ministries on recognition of ranger work as a distinct occupation at the national level.	A4.3 Work with ranger associations to promote national recognition of the ranger occupation.

Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:

A4.4 Promote, as appropriate and feasible, national recognition of the ranger occupation.

Marine rangers in Ponta do Ouro Partial Marine Reserve, Mozambique © Peace Parks Foundation

Objective B. Capacity

By 2025, a common framework for improving and sustaining ranger capacity is in place and increasingly adopted and implemented.

To fulfil their roles, rangers need employers, managers and supporters to support and facilitate capacity development at three main levels.

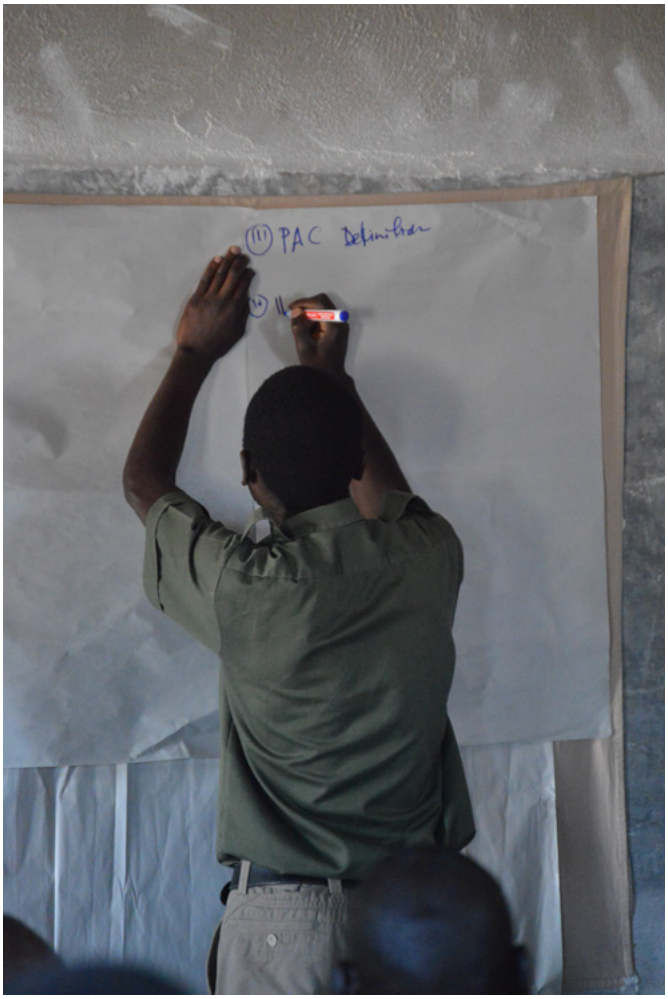
Organisational capacity: Rangers need commitment from their employers to provide adequate personnel numbers, physical resources (equipment, infrastructure and operating budgets), systems and processes, leadership, sound management and good governance. Technology can further support rangers by streamlining data collection, improving the effectiveness of field operations, enhancing decision-making, and improving safety and security. It is important, however, to distinguish between basic (essential) and advanced technologies and to recognize that technologies do not replace rangers or traditional skills. Communications and navigation technology should be a priority; according to ranger perception surveys.

Individual capacity: Surveys show that most rangers are inadequately trained. Effective training and learning require identification of required competences, setting of performance standards, and use of appropriate learning methods, as well as, ideally, systems for certification. Existing resources can provide a foundation for this, for example the *IUCN-WCPA Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners*[15] and the *IRF Training guidelines for anti-poaching field rangers*[16]. Founded on common standards, a diverse range of materials and methods need to be developed for training and learning, using languages and terminology familiar to rangers and in formats that rangers can easily access and understand. For this to be successful, training providers need to align their curricula with common standards and to set and adopt standards for their own performance.

Systemic Capacity: To be effective, rangers and their employers need an adequate 'enabling environment' of legislation, systems, and political, institutional and public support (these issues are addressed under Objective A).

Measures of success for Objective B

- Number of agencies and ranger employers that have completed capacity audits and the results of those audits.
- Number of agencies and ranger employers improving organisational capacity (based on a standard assessment system).
- Number of training institutions and providers making use of common competences, standards and certification.
- Numbers of rangers deployed (in relation to area covered).
- Proportion of rangers with access to defined basic minimum equipment.
- Trends in number of rangers connected through the Force for Nature online platform.



Ranger-led community workshop, Zimbabwe © James Slade / Re:wild

15 Appleton, 2016. A Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN

16 Lotter et al. 2016. Anti-poaching in and around protected areas: Training guidelines for field rangers. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 01.

Capacity: Results and Actions

B1. Systems are in place to identify and track ranger capacity needs and development opportunities.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
B1.1 Develop and disseminate tools to enable agencies to self-audit for competency, capacity and support needs and to measure progress towards ranger professionalisation. B1.2 Develop and maintain an online register of training and learning programs and resources for developing capacity of rangers and employing organisations.	B1.3 Develop and maintain a database to record capacity audit results (see B1.1).
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
B1.4 Adapt and apply ranger capacity audit systems.	

B2. Ranger employers and supporting organisations have the capacity to enable effective ranger performance.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
B2.1 Develop minimum organisational standards to enable effective ranger performance (personnel, resources, management and support systems). B2.2 Promote and disseminate tools that support organisational development for ranger agencies and employers. B2.3 Embed organisational standards into sectoral initiatives for improving PA performance (e.g. IUCN Green List, CA|TS).	B2.4 Work with member associations and partners to encourage adoption of minimum standards.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
B2.5 Promote as appropriate and feasible adoption of minimum organisational standards.	

B3. A global guiding framework of competences, standards and training and learning provision is established and adopted.

URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	IRF will (with support from URSA as required)
B3.1 Collate a set of universal general core and specialist competences for rangers and for main ranger roles and responsibilities (as defined in A3.2) that can be adapted to local use. B3.2 Encourage training and learning providers to adopt URSA/IRF standards, competences and tools and develop common quality standards for training provision and assessment. B3.3 Research and disseminate guidance on certification for ranger competence.	B3.4 Encourage and support training providers to align programmes with common competences and standards. B3.5 Encourage training providers to collaborate to maintain high standards of training design, delivery, assessment and certification.

Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:

B3.6 Test, adapt and adopt the framework of competences and standards.

B4. A global connected network of rangers is established.

URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	IRF will (with support from URSA as required)
B4.1 Create an online/connected community of rangers to exchange knowledge and support training and learning.	B4.2 Coordinate, associations, members and partners to ensure wide-scale uptake of online ranger communities. B4.3 Develop mentorship/twinning programmes to exchange knowledge, build networks and communities of practice, and enable peer-to-peer learning.

Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:

B4.4 Encourage and enable rangers to participate in connected communities and communities of practice.

B5. Rangers and employers have access to essential and appropriate technology.

URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	IRF will (with support from URSA as required)
B5.1 Work with conservation technology initiatives to ensure ranger needs and interests are addressed. B5.2 Enhance the understanding of organisations and rangers about how technology can support rangers.	B5.3 Disseminate information about technologies that can support the work of rangers. B5.4 Engage in initiatives and partnerships for developing and disseminating appropriate technology (e.g. SMART, Wildlabs).

Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:

B5.5 Test and provide feedback on practical application of technologies in the workplace.

Ranger deploys a drone © Robin Moore / Re:wild

Objective C. Employment and Welfare

By 2025, a set of global minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare is developed, and increasingly adopted nationally to enhance ranger working conditions and well-being.

Objective B addresses most aspects of organisational capacity, but the issues of working conditions and welfare in the ranger workforce merit a separate objective. Rangers are entitled to have their safety, health, well-being, and labour and human rights safeguarded. Professionalizing the sector requires organisations to look after their staff: through fair and equitable pay and benefits, fair systems for recruitment, advancement and professional development, and close attention to their well-being, including adequate insurance.

Currently, most rangers are under-funded and under-supported, limiting their ability to operate effectively and safely. Surveys[17,18] have highlighted widespread deficiencies in basic necessities for ranger welfare, including access to clean drinking water, shelter, basic equipment and adequate medical treatment. Approximately 80% of rangers consider their job to be dangerous, while over 1,000 rangers have died[19] in the line of duty in the past decade.

Personal finances and work-life balance are also major concerns. Rangers work 72 hours per week on average, while more than 60% only see their family only 10 days or less per month. In the year prior to the survey, 33% of rangers had been paid late once; and 16% were paid late three or more times. In countries that have adopted it, this would be a breach of the ILO Protection of Wages Convention (C095).

Inadequate employment conditions and welfare standards have implications beyond their immediate impacts on individual rangers. They can undermine job performance and motivation, affect mental health and, when combined with inadequate training and supervision, can lead to participation in environmental and human-rights crimes and corrupt behaviour.

Each of these findings is problematic in isolation, but when considered together, it is apparent that a large proportion of rangers around the world are facing a crisis that threatens their physical and mental health and safety, and limits their ability and motivation to do what is asked of them. Despite this, most rangers continue to show exceptional courage, dedication and perseverance in their work, but this should not be taken for granted.

Defining and implementing minimum employment and welfare standards will help address this critical situation and will also support achieving SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, particularly the 'promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers.'

Measures of success for Objective C

- Number of agencies and ranger employers adopting at least minimum employment and welfare standards.
- Changes in employment and welfare indicators as assessed by regular surveys of rangers.

Rangers in the Seychelles on Cousin Island monitoring Hawksbill turtles © Peter Chadwick

17 Belecky et al. 2019. Life on the Frontline 2019: A Global Survey of the Working Conditions of Rangers. WWF.

18 Singh, R., Gan, M., Barlow, C., Long, B. McVey, D., de Kock, R., Gajardo, O.B., Avino, F.S., and Belecky, M., "What do Rangers Feel? Perceptions from Asia, Africa and Latin America" Parks 26(1) at 45-58, 2020.

19 International Ranger Federation (IRF) and Thin Green Line Foundation (TGLF). International Ranger Federation, 2019. The Roll of Honour Available at: https://www.internationalrangers.org/

Employment and Welfare: Results and Actions

C1. Global minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare are defined, promoted, and adopted by governments and ranger employers.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
C1.1 Develop minimum generic employment and welfare standards for rangers, in consultation with international labour bodies, health and safety experts. C1.2 Table and promote ranger employment and welfare issues with the ILO and in relevant international fora. C1.3 Advocate for widespread adoption of the employment and welfare standards among NGOs, donors, regional bodies and employers.	C1.5 Disseminate and promote minimum standards among member associations.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
C1.6 Adapt at least minimum standards for ranger employment and welfare to regional / local contexts. C1.7 Advocate for national implementation of IRF and ILO standards.	

C2. Ranger welfare and wellbeing are improving in all IRF regions.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
C2.1 Identify priority countries where URSA members, partners and supporters will facilitate formal adoption of measures to improve welfare and working conditions. C2.2 Develop a tracking tool for assessing and reporting on ranger employment and working conditions using standard indicators.	C2.3 Within priority countries, facilitate dialogue between governments, statutory health and safety bodies, experts, healthcare workers and safety consultants to address welfare shortcomings currently faced by rangers. C2.4 Consult with the insurance sector to develop approaches that increase insurance coverage (e.g. partnerships on ranger insurance) and ensure these are communicated to rangers and ranger organisations.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
C2.5 Use the tracking tool (see C2.2) to assess and report on employment and working conditions.	

C3. The commitment and motivation of rangers is widely recognized as an important factor in effective conservation.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
C3.1 Develop and disseminate guidance and case studies on methods for improving and maintaining ranger motivation.	C3.2 Review, update and extend where appropriate existing ranger award schemes where appropriate.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
No specific actions.	

Objective D. Equality and Equity in the Ranger Sector

By 2025, systems and structures have been adopted by IRF, its ranger associations and by URSA members that enable equal opportunities, fair treatment, and equitable working environments for rangers.

As is the case in many other sectors, inequality and discrimination in the workplace are widely experienced in the ranger sector, which should reflect the diversity of the societies it serves. Instead, certain groups, including women, Indigenous peoples and local community members, are both under-represented and marginalized. Reliable estimates are scarce, but the most recent survey estimated that only 3-11% of the ranger workforce is female[20]. The barriers and challenges faced by under-represented groups typically produce ranger workforces that are rank-segregated, with a limited number of members of under-represented groups occupying junior roles and having little opportunity for promotion or career growth. Building representative ranger workforces requires fundamental change to resolve inequitable treatment and discrimination.

Female rangers are often disadvantaged because of both inadequate employment practices (e.g. maternity or transfer policies) and working conditions (e.g. accommodation, bathroom facilities and even uniforms). Culturally entrenched attitudes can hold women back from participating in activities that are defined as being physically arduous, possibly dangerous, and/or technically oriented. This is intensified in a sector where law enforcement is often a major part of ranger work. The ranger workplace can be particularly hostile for women and sexual minorities. Women rangers often face high levels of gender-based violence (GBV), harassment and discrimination from fellow rangers and supervisors in certain social and cultural environments[21].

All rangers, regardless of ethnic or social origin, race, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation or beliefs, deserve equal opportunities and fair working conditions in an environment where their human and labour rights are safeguarded. Workplace practices, structures and norms need to be assessed and transformed, at the same time as attitudes are being changed and challenged. Leadership that prioritizes equality and equity is essential to create the necessary workplace culture. Only when these fundamental issues are resolved will there be a representative and diverse workforce, that brings different skillsets and strengths to the management of protected and conserved areas. For example, female rangers can more easily access women's groups, developing trust relationships and increasing the vital flow of information between rangers and communities. Alongside internal policies and organisational cultures, other factors limit representativeness, for example where Indigenous or community rangers encounter hostility from their own communities, especially when enforcing unpopular regulations and acting against violators locally.

Many Indigenous and traditional peoples have, over generations, refined their own biodiversity knowledge, governance structures and endemic approaches to the conserving and sustainably using natural resources, and have developed their own systems for surveillance, protection and problem-solving, independent from official bodies. Local Indigenous rangers can bring a deep understanding of a protected area, its wildlife and ecosystems, and are often uniquely invested in their protection. Meaningful incorporation and use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) in all ranger work is an opportunity to better understand values and threats and to enhance and sustain management and conservation impact.

Measures of success for Objective D

- Trends in number of agencies and ranger employers adopting the new policy on equality, equity and rights.
- Trends in equality, equity and rights indicators as assessed by a global survey of rangers.
- Trends in number of ranger bodies, working groups and conservation platforms with fair representation and acceptance.

20 Belecky et al. 2019. Life on the Frontline 2019: A Global Survey of the Working Conditions of Rangers. WWF.
21 Belecky et al. 2019. Life on the Frontline 2019: A Global Survey of the Working Conditions of Rangers. WWF.

Equality and Equity in the Ranger Sector: Results and Actions

D1. IRF adopts and promotes clear policies and positions on equality, equity and rights in the ranger sector.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
D1.1 Establish a diverse and representative working group to review issues of equality, equity and rights in the ranger sector and propose a policy for adoption by URSA and by IRF and its members. D1.2 Integrate information gathering on equality, equity and rights into planned audits and surveys (see B1.1) and present disaggregated data in reports. D1.3 Review public documentation from URSA, Alliance members and ranger associations to ensure that messaging on equality, equity and rights aligns with the IRF policy (see D 1.4).	D1.4 Introduce a new policy on equality, equity and rights in the ranger workforce at the 2022 World Ranger Congress. D1.5 Ensure fair representation of rangers, including women, Indigenous peoples and local community members in all ranger bodies, working groups, conferences and other events. D1.6 Disseminate the new policy globally and across the ranger associations, governments and ranger employers along with key messages, case studies, publications etc. (see D2).
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
D1.7 Adapt the new global policy to regional/local contexts where required.	

D2. Resources, materials and guidance are available to support and promote national implementation of the policy on equality, equity and rights.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
D2.1 Research and develop guidance and model policies for adoption by employers to address: • Equity, equality and fairness in recruitment, employment conditions and advancement. • Discrimination, harassment and violence in the workplace. • Challenges in employment of rangers, including Indigenous and community rangers. D2.2 Provide specific guidance and expertise for employers and agencies to address workplace inequality and discrimination (through the working group established under D1.1 and the network of thematic experts established under A1.3). D2.3 Develop global campaigns highlighting women rangers and rangers from Indigenous Peoples and from local communities. • What they bring to the profession. • The challenges they face. • What they are entitled to. • How ranger work can be made more possible for and attractive to them.	D1.4 Introduce a new policy on equality, equity and rights in the ranger workforce at the 2022 World Ranger Congress. D1.5 Ensure fair representation of rangers, including women, Indigenous peoples and local community members in all ranger bodies, working groups, conferences and other events. D1.6 Disseminate the new policy globally and across the ranger associations, governments and ranger employers along with key messages, case studies, publications etc. (see D2).
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
D1.8 Ensure survey data is fed back for national implementation of ranger strategies and to national partners. D1.9 Ensure fair representation of rangers on relevant regional/national conservation platforms. D1.10 Adapt guidelines, training resources and mechanisms to regional/local contexts where required.	

Objective E. Community Relations, Ranger Conduct and Accountability

By 2025, rangers in all IRF regions are operating within a framework of working practices, ethics and conduct that value and build trust with communities and the public, and promote responsibility and accountability.

The last decade has seen major changes in the way that the protected area sector recognises and interacts with Indigenous Peoples and with local communities through adoption of more inclusive approaches to governance and rights-based approaches, and the expansion of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs). Accordingly, the Chitwan Declaration states that 'a critical role of a Ranger is to build trust with, and to protect the well-being and legal rights of those who depend on natural and cultural resources within protected and conserved areas.' However much still needs to be done; the rights of communities are still often not recognised, and community members are still often excluded from protected area governance.

Rangers are frequently the first point of contact between protected area authorities and local communities, encouraging compliance with and enforcing laws and regulations, providing information, helping to deliver programmes of support, and dealing with conflicts and differing views of needs and priorities. In complex social landscapes, where authorities may not be regarded as supportive or benevolent, rangers are often subject to resentment and hostility, especially where communities have been displaced and disenfranchised. Rangers by themselves cannot resolve long-standing disputes or grievances, or change national or organisational policies, laws and regulations. Employers and authorities need to understand the historical context, cultural factors and policies that can either build good relations or create local mistrust. Increased attention to good governance and the growth of ICCAs are starting to succeed in addressing issues of equity and ownership in protected and conserved areas[22], but much remains to be done. Recognising and safeguarding Indigenous and community rights, valuing local and Indigenous knowledge and acting in good faith in an inclusive, fair, transparent and consistent manner all help build the necessary trust. The potential mutual benefits with respect to the work of rangers include active participation in co-management and problem solving, voluntary compliance with agreed rules and regulations, mutual learning and knowledge exchange and sharing of key information.

Establishing, rebuilding and maintaining trust is a long-term process, requiring clear dialogue, accountable and transparent actions, and for all personnel to behave appropriately and responsibly. There have been serious allegations that rangers have, in some cases, been involved in abuses that violate the human rights of individuals and communities[23]. Such behavior is

22 Kothari et al (eds). 2012. Recognizing and Supporting Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Global Overview and National Case Studies. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Technical Series no. 64, 160 pp.

23 e.g. Warren, T. and K. Baker. 2019. WWF funds guards who have tortured and killed people. Buzzfeed, 4 March. www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tomwarren/wwf-world-wide-fund-nature-parks-torture-death.

Conservancy ranger meets with villagers who have lost livestock to wildlife in Kenya © Ami Vitale / WWF-UK

unacceptable under any circumstances and should not be tolerated; it is illegal and unethical; it destroys trust and undermines the entire process of professionalizing rangers and of demonstrating their value to society.

Abuses need to be prevented, and if they do occur, quickly and transparently reported, investigated and responded to. This not only requires improved training, standards, working conditions, systems and processes, but also better leadership and supervision and changes in organisational cultures. Beyond this, building and maintaining trust requires authorities to address the underlying issues of rights, resources and equity, the consequences of which rangers have to deal with.

Codes of ethics and conduct provide a clear foundation for improving and maintaining professional conduct, but there is currently no such general code for the ranger sector (although various ranger organisations have developed their own). Establishing such a code should be a priority, to help reduce the risk of human rights violations, prevent illegal and unethical behaviour, ensure responsible behaviour towards the environment, and establish and maintain the professional image of rangers. Alongside codes, safeguarding policies provide a working framework within which the codes can be explained and applied, and which determines how violations can be reported and responded to.

Measures of success for Objective E

- Trends in number of associations, agencies and ranger employers adopting the global code of conduct.
- Trends in number of IRF and URSA members, associations, agencies and ranger employers developing safeguarding policies.
- Trends in number of reported human rights violations made against rangers and ranger employers.
- Trends in number of cases where grievances have been settled through established grievance mechanisms.
- Trends of aggression and violence against rangers as assessed by global surveys of rangers.

Photos (from top to bottom): Medical training course © Panthera; Ranger with family, Bhutan © Rohit Singh / WWF; Panthera leads a marine boat board & search training, Thailand © Panthera

Community Relations, Conduct and Accountability: Results and Actions

E1. A global code of conduct for rangers is defined and widely adopted.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
E1.1 Develop a global ethical framework and code of conduct for rangers, the IRF and its members. E1.2 Develop awareness and guidance materials to promote understanding and observance of the code of conduct. E1.3 Advocate for wide-scale adoption of the global code of conduct by agencies, employers, NGOs and donors. E1.4 Seek to embed the code of conduct into performance assessments systems and standards (IUCN Green List Standard for Protected and Conserved areas, the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool). E1.5 Include the code of conduct in all relevant standards, learning programmes and publications from URSA.	E1.6 Formally adopt the code of conduct and make its endorsement a condition of IRF membership. E1.7 Distribute awareness and learning materials for rangers and employers. E1.8 Include the code of conduct in all relevant IRF standards, learning programmes and publications.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
E1.9 Promote and adopt the code of conduct and adapt guidance to regional/local contexts as required.	

E2. Safeguarding policies and processes, designed to prevent and respond to violation of human, community and Indigenous rights have been established and adopted by IRF and URSA members.	
URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	**IRF will (with support from URSA as required)**
E2.1 Develop a global safeguarding policy framework that: i) Establishes principles for the conduct of rangers, employers, associations and agencies with respect to vulnerable groups and individuals with whom rangers come into contact (building on the code of conduct). ii) Specifies mechanisms for reporting and investigating breaches of the policy. iii) Specifies how employers, associations and agencies should deal with policy breaches and the resulting remedial actions and sanctions. E2.2 Adapt URSA members' safeguarding policies and procedures to reflect the policy established in E2.1. E2.3 Develop guidance materials and training programmes for ranger employers and supporters to establish and implement safeguarding policies.	E2.4 Formally adopt the safeguarding policy. E2.5 Work with ranger associations to promote adoption understanding, observance of the safeguarding policy. E2.6 Encourage donors and governments to hold rangers and ranger organisations accountable against the global code of conduct and safeguarding standards.
Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:	
E2.7 Build understanding of how the safeguarding policy can be adopted at the regional and national levels.	

E3. URSA, IRF and ranger associations are actively engaged in building trust between rangers and communities, by establishing meaningful participation and respect for human rights.

URSA will (in collaboration with IRF)	IRF will (with support from URSA as required)
E3.1 Commission and disseminate research into relationships between rangers and communities in different protected and conserved area governance and management regimes. E3.2 Compile a repository of best practices, training resources and toolkits that facilitate collaboration, dialogue and trust-building between rangers and communities. E3.3 Facilitate sharing of best practices on widely used platforms (e.g. IUCN Panorama). E3.4 Incorporate key messages (e.g. value of community relationships in successful PCA management, recognition of rights and adoption of rights-based approaches) into members' work with PCAs and rangers, into global advocacy campaigns (See Result 1) and into capacity development (See Result 2).	E3.5 Ensure contributions from the ranger sector to global and regional processes and fora related to establishment and governance of protected and conserved areas. E3.6 Promote through the IRF network the importance of good governance, co-management and rights-based approaches within ranger work. E3.7 Advocate for commitments by governments and ranger employers to establish systems and structures for ranger-community programs that ensure meaningful participation and respect for human rights.

Regional and national ranger associations and collaborators will be encouraged and supported to:

E3.8 Promote ranger programmes and/or governance models for PCAs that build collaboration and trust between rangers and communities.

Rock Island State Park Rangers under COVID19 regulations © Holly Ingram

Annexe I: The Chitwan Declaration, 2019

RECALLING the Declarations and Resolutions adopted at the preceding eight World Ranger Congresses, and recalling also inter alia the Arusha Declaration on Wildlife Crime (2014), the African Ranger Congress Declaration of Intent - A Call to Action (2018) and the Park Ranger Declaration of the Latin America and the Caribbean Protected Areas Congress, Lima, Peru (2019).

NOTING that Rangers[24] play an indispensable role in protecting the cultural heritage, natural resources, and ecosystem services of the countries in which they work, thereby significantly contributing towards mitigation of the most harmful impacts of climate change and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

RECOGNISING the critical role of Rangers - in all their diverse forms – as significant contributors to numerous international and regional treaty commitments, including inter alia the UNESCO[25] Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

CONSIDERING that Rangers are tasked with protecting a significant portion of the planet's land and seascapes, meaning that their impact on global well-being is disproportionately large when considered against the total number employed in this sector.

NOTING that the proportion of protected and conserved areas is expected to increase further in the coming years if internationally agreed targets are realized.

CONCERNED that the expanding scale and incidence of wildlife and forest[26] crime[27], and the associated involvement of transnational organized criminal networks, has correlated with a significant increase in the incidence of serious bodily harm to, or death of, Rangers while on the job[28].

RECOGNISING that protected and conserved areas are a cornerstone of biodiversity conservation, and critical for carbon sequestration; an estimated 15% of the world's terrestrial carbon stock is stored in protected areas.

ACKNOWLEDGING that no protected and conserved area system should be established or managed without the participation and involvement of relevant Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

AGREEING that a critical role of a Ranger is to build trust with, and to protect the well-being and legal rights of those who depend on natural and cultural resources within protected and conserved areas;

AGREEING FURTHER that conservation programs and actions should at all times be characterized by respect for both the rights and dignity of IPLCs as well as the rights of Rangers themselves;

NOTING the Ranger sector provides a critical contribution towards realizing the right to a healthy environment, which underpins the fulfilment of many human rights;

NOTING ALSO that currently an estimated 24% of the global protected areas are under sound management, and that this number could be increased by the hiring and deployment of more rangers, which in turn would also likely expand the coverage of IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas.

24 The person involved in the practical protection and preservation of all aspects of wild areas, historical and cultural sites. Rangers provide recreational opportunities and interpretation of sites while providing links between local communities, protected areas and area administration.

25 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

26 Wildlife and forest products include "all fauna and flora, including animals, birds and fish, as well as timber and non-timber forest products."

27 Wildlife and forest crime refers to "the taking, trading (supplying, selling or trafficking), importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consumption of wild fauna and flora, including timber and other forest products, in contravention of national or international law."

28 IRF Roll of Honor shows an increase in the number of Rangers who have lost their lives in the line of duty

We, the 550+ participants from 70 countries, most of whom represent a Ranger association or conservation organisation, gathered at Sauraha, Nepal, at the 9th World Ranger Congress, 12-16 November 2019, hereby:

STRONGLY ENCOURAGE those who manage protected and conserved areas that employ Rangers to identify shortcomings, and thereafter introduce measures to improve outcomes, relating to each of the following areas:

1. **Ranger welfare:** given the high level of danger faced by Rangers, there is a pressing need to:
    a. improve access to services that can improve health and safety, both on and off duty. Among the most important elements are access to communication networks and devices, shelter, clean water, training in first aid and fire management, effective medical evacuation plans, and adequate health care, both in terms of access and coverage.
    b. Provide all Rangers with quality life insurance coverage to support the families of Rangers killed or seriously injured in the line of duty.
    c. Empower, motivate and enable Rangers to maintain a balance between work and home life through i) provision of adequate leave to reduce physical and mental stress; ii) the hiring of adequate and appropriate numbers of Rangers per site; and iii) clear frameworks and opportunities for career progression and enhancement.

2. **Relationship with communities:** recognizing IPLCs' custodianship of their traditional land areas, their rights to safeguarding their heritage and their contribution to conservation, it is imperative that:
    a. comprehensive training programs on the topic of community relations and observance of rights are developed;
    b. strong national institutions are supported by national policies and guidance that reflect the critical importance of mutually supportive partnerships between IPLCs and Rangers, and that facilitate the creation of platforms and opportunities to build trust, to increase collaboration, dialogue and transparency between Rangers and IPLCs.
    c. Such trust building processes should be ongoing and should seek to define mutual benefit and identify mutually acceptable solutions.

3. **Indigenous Rangers:** recognizing the traditional knowledge and essential role of IPLCs, national authorities are strongly encouraged to:
    a. give serious and urgent consideration to the creation of Ranger programs for IPLCs;
    b. professionalize IPLCs recruited as Rangers on their lands with the training and protections required to undertake their roles correctly and safely, whilst enabling and supporting traditional knowledge and beliefs;
    c. reward IPLC Rangers with appropriate pay and benefits; and,
    d. support the hiring of indigenous people and local communities into the Ranger profession, particularly in those countries or regions where such people are poorly represented in this employment sector.

4. **Capacity:** noting the importance of on-going and appropriate training, Rangers should be supported in the same manner as other critical public sectors tasked with safeguarding state resources, protecting the integrity of the state and ensuring the rule of law, and that important capacity prerequisites include:
    a. development of guidance and policy frameworks based on international standards and good practices;
    b. high quality training (including mentoring programs, exchanges and refresher courses) adapted to local context and requirements, covering inter alia international standards related to law enforcement, social safeguards, and use of equipment;
    c. internal and external accountability frameworks;
    d. a commitment by relevant national ministries and agencies that all avenues will be explored to ensure that Rangers will be staffed in adequate numbers to deliver their work in a safe and effective manner.

5. **Female Rangers:** recognizing the significant gender gap that currently exists in the Ranger profession, there is an urgent need to:
    a. put in place policies to ensure equal opportunities in hiring and promotion practices and that equal wages are received.
    b. ensure appropriate on-site measures are taken to ensure female Rangers feel safe and appropriately supported in their place of work (e.g. separate facilities).

6. **Ranger associations:** recognizing the importance of working towards a shared vision, Rangers are encouraged to establish functional Ranger associations and/or strengthen existing Ranger associations, or their equivalent, in order to:
    a. create avenues for a united voice for Rangers;
    b. connect the global Ranger community for knowledge sharing and promoting good practice;
    c. provide effective communication and advisory channels to advocate for policy amendments with relevant decision makers.

7. **Technology:** given that new technologies have the potential to greatly increase the safety and effectiveness of Ranger work, financial and human resources should be dedicated to:
    a. analysing the potential of various technologies in given countries or site-specific contexts;
    b. link Rangers to opportunities that may be available through NGOs, IGOs or private companies which might facilitate access to and use of relevant technologies.

CALLS UPON the International Executive Committee of the IRF, recognizing the importance of making impactful contributions to the above challenges, to:

A. Work with conservation NGOs and partners to develop an Action Plan for the implementation of the Chitwan Declaration, with that Action Plan to be released in 2020.

B. Engage with partners and stakeholders to leverage positive policy change, as well as technical and financial support for implementation of the above actions, with particular attention to ensuring that base requirements for Rangers are met.

C. Seek every opportunity to:
    i. raise awareness about the inadequate health and safety conditions, remuneration, and other professional and quality of life issues that continue to burden Rangers and their families in many countries;
    ii. facilitate development of standards, codes and principles to guide Rangers' work including interactions with stakeholders in compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[29].
    iii. have an IRF presence at all relevant forums to ensure that the Rangers agenda is included in the program and the policy outcomes - for example, at the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress, and the meetings of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee;
    iv. highlight the global benefit of the ranger profession and its critical link to society.

D. Actively create an enabling policy environment by:
    i. ensuring the role of rangers as environmental defenders and custodians of the planet in relation to biological diversity and climate change is understood and well-supported;
    ii. seeking specific policy outcomes in both traditional and non-traditional policy fora and mechanisms, in order to mainstream the Rangers agenda and foster high level partnerships including with government agencies, UN organisations, international NGOs and the IUCN, and to ensure long-term sustainability of the Ranger policy agenda and actions.

E. Actively foster high-level partnerships to facilitate the work of Rangers in helping fulfil the objectives of governments, IGOs, NGOs and private sector thereby further reinforcing the Ranger profession's critical link with society.

F. Track and report progress between the 9th World Ranger Congress and the 10th World Ranger Congress.

29 https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

World Ranger Congress 2019, Chitwan, Nepal © Ranjan Ramchandani

URSA

SUPPORTING RANGERS
TODAY.
CONSERVING THE WORLD FOR
TOMORROW.

Action plan developed by:

International Ranger Federation, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, Fauna & Flora International, Force for Nature, Re:wild, Panthera, World Wide Fund for Nature, Zoological Society of London

INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION
internationalrangers.org

re:wild
rewild.org

WWF
panda.org

FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL
fauna-flora.org

IUCN WCPA WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS
iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas

ZSL LET'S WORK FOR WILDLIFE
zsl.org

PANTHERA
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