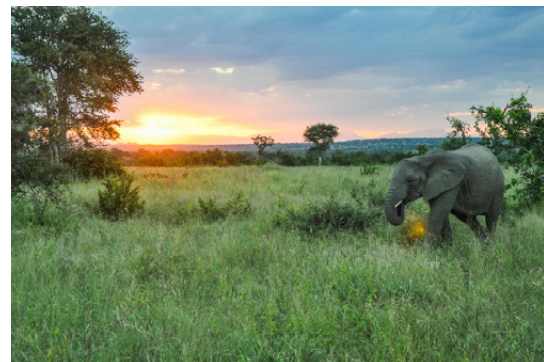


Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers

PART 2 | Guidance and tools



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The International Ranger Federation (IRF) was founded on 31 July 1992 in Peak National Park in the UK. The IRF provides a global forum for rangers from around the world to share their successes and failures in protecting the world's natural heritage and to promote the exchange of information and technology from countries in which protected area management enjoys broad public and government support, to countries in which it is less supported. 165 ranger associations from national, state and territorial entities have affiliated with the IRF. For more information please visit www.internationalrangers.org.



URSA is a global coalition of conservation organisations building a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers, who can act effectively as custodians of the natural world. We advocate for the creation of inclusive and effective teams at the forefront of protecting nature, people, and the planet. Our priorities include representation, recognition, and resources for rangers around the world. For more information please visit ursa4rangers.org.



Asesoramiento Ambiental Estratégico (AAE) is an Uruguayan environmental consultancy firm established in 2012, providing advice to organisations, communities, governments and the private sector interested in improving their environmental performance while fulfilling their aspirations. AAE has a dedicated department working on social and environmental safeguards in conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, tailoring teams as needed, e.g. to include legal, gender, IP and engagement experts. For more information please visit www.aae.com.uy.

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The present document serves as an accompanying guidebook for the implementation of **Safeguarding the rights and well-being of Rangers. Part 1: Principles** (Iraola *et al.* 2022). It is the result of a revision of measures to help address the identified needs for rangers and a revision of existing tools for the safeguarding of their interests and those of the people they come into contact with. In addition, the document has been informed by two scoping workshops and two socialisation workshops with representatives of organisations working with or supporting rangers as well as representatives from the ranger workforce itself.



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Polisin'ala, community patrollers, monitoring mangroves, near Antenina in Ambaro Bay, Ambilobe, Madagascar. © Nick Riley / WWF-Madagascar

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Acronyms

AAE	Asesoramiento Ambiental Estratégico
CI	Conservation International
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
CoC	Code of Conduct
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
ERF	European Ranger Federation
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IRF	International Ranger Federation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PCA	Protected and Conserved Area
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
URSA	Universal Ranger Support Alliance
ZSL	Zoological Society of London



1. Introduction

The purpose of the present document is to guide users (ranger employers, ranger associations and conservation organisations that support rangers) in the implementation of 'Safeguarding the rights and well-being of rangers, Part 1: Principles' (Iraola *et al.* 2022). It provides suggestions for **activities** to help implement the Principles in a way that helps employers and organisations apply a human rights-based approach in the ranger workforce. The checklist/planning tool in Annex 1 can help users prioritise activities for implementation for the short-, medium- or long-term, according to their relevance in different contexts. Resulting procedures and decisions can then be integrated into a **Safeguarding Policy for Rangers**.

A Safeguarding Policy for Rangers is a document that describes what an organisation that employs or supports rangers does to keep rangers and the communities within which they operate safe, while ensuring respect for their rights and well-being. It should address emerging challenges, reflect best practices of other safeguarding policies and international procedures, and get reviewed and updated according to the changing context and lessons learnt from its application. Developing a Safeguarding Policy for Rangers helps to institutionalise the measures taken to implement the Safeguarding Principles for Rangers. Annex 2 provides an adjustable template to create such a policy.



2. Implementing the Principles for Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers

The Principles were developed based on available information and expert input¹ about the reality of work for rangers, the challenges they face, wrongs they have been facing, their needs, and the efforts that are underway to address some of these needs. They were also developed considering that rangers are essential² and frontline workers with high-risk occupations³ who deserve recognition alongside the police and military, firefighters, and health and emergency-response workers.

The following sections present suggested activities for implementation of each principle. For a more detailed description of the Principles themselves, please refer back to the separate document *Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers*. Part 1: Principles (Iraola *et al.* 2022).

Overarching Principle: Applying a human rights-based approach

All of the Principles included in the *Safeguarding Principles for Rangers* contribute towards applying a human rights-based approach in the ranger workforce. There is only one suggestion for an activity that can help establish the overarching principle per se:

Monitor the application of a human rights-based approach
Information and statistics can be powerful tools for creating a culture of accountability and transparency. The United Nations Guide (2012) “Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation” provides elements of a framework for building the capacity of human rights monitoring systems. The guide aims to reach all those who share a commitment to the promotion of human rights and those

who are mandated, directly or indirectly, to address human rights issues in the course of their day-to-day work. It is directed at national human rights institutions, as well as those responsible for policymaking across different ministries, public agencies at different levels of governance, development practitioners, civil society organisations and international agencies with a mandate to further the realisation of human rights. The guide may therefore also be helpful to identify feasible indicators to monitor the degree to which human rights are being respected in the ranger workforce.

PRINCIPLE 1

Ensuring rangers have a clear mandate and role

It is essential to ensure rangers have a clear mandate, derived from the applicable legal framework, and that they are fully aware of their role and fully understand their responsibilities. The principle can be implemented by organisations employing or supporting rangers through a combination of the following activities:

- a. Conduct a **legal analysis** to define the mandate of rangers, covering all necessary law enforcement activities.
- b. **Analyse conflict sensitivity** in different geographical contexts to ensure there is awareness of the types of conflict rangers might encounter and identify suitable responses. Insights should feed into training plans, e.g., they could include conflict management and soft negotiation skills, which can be more important skills to have for some rangers than training on how to use firearms. For guidance on analysing conflict sensitivity in conservation and producing a plan in response, see Hammill *et al.* (2009).
- c. Determine the necessary **competencies**⁴ for the job (see *Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers: Part 1: Principles* for more information on ranger competencies). URSA will publish a set of general universal competences for rangers in 2022. Necessary ranger competencies can be identified in a more detailed and structured way using Appleton (2016), which also includes an excel workbook: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PATRS-002-En%20Wrkbk.xlsx>. Where rangers need to use firearms, ensure that these competencies reflect the needs and circumstances of

1 This includes rangers themselves, ranger organisations, as well as people working in organisations hiring rangers such as NGOs or international organisations which have their own safeguarding standards.

2 There is no established definition of essential workers, yet the meaning generally applies to work in law enforcement and public safety, food production, health care providers and emergency personnel. With the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple definitions were used by different countries, such as the one issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) on March 28, 2020, which states that essential workers are those who “protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security.” The risk essential workers face is influenced by whether they are frontline workers who must provide their labour in person or whether they can work from home (Blau, Koebe, Meyerhofer *et al.* 2021).

3 For examples of high-risk occupations, refer to <https://www.apa.org/wsh/past/2011/high-risk-jobs>

4 Competence is the proven ability to perform a task or do a job, widely defined in terms of the combination of required skills, knowledge and attitude

law enforcement officials. See, for example, the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/firearms.pdf>

- d. Produce a **written description** of the mandate and role for each ranger position, based on existing legislation and competencies, especially where rangers take on law enforcement activities, clarifying what they may and may not do as part of their job.
- e. Develop **training and education plans** jointly between administrators and rangers according to the realities of each Protected and Conserved Area (PCA) and provide training accordingly, e.g., by including example situations in which the understanding of the mandate needs to be used to identify what kinds of reactions are appropriate and/or possible for rangers. See further information on training by the European Ranger Federation (ERF) here: <https://www.europeanrangers.org/projects/training/>, and best practice guidelines for anti-poaching work from Lotter *et al.* (2016).
- f. **Reviewing and revising** job descriptions and training to reflect the changing nature of the profession. When a career field is changing and varies widely depending on the region and its particular needs, mandate, role and therefore training must be adjusted to meet those demands.
- g. **Ensure that stakeholders are aware of the mandate and roles of rangers.** Wherever possible, stakeholders should be enabled to provide inputs to the mandates and roles of rangers, especially where rangers operate in community managed areas or zones.

Where rangers are expected to carry firearms, some additional steps may be useful:

Box 1. Psychological and technical tests for job suitability

Mentally and physically-demanding jobs require that the individual is in sound psychological and physical conditions. This is relevant for rangers, as they may be exposed to situations that can cause high levels of stress and become a significant source of psychological strain, such as involvement in rescue missions, encounters with poachers, assisting injured tourists and visitors, etc.

Psychological and technical assessment checks for job suitability can be very useful in the ranger workforce. If the job requires the use of firearms, a psychological assessment can also include questions to check for other factors that can hint at signs that a person is not mentally fit, in that particular moment, to carry firearms. As such, this evaluation should be conducted by technical specialists who understand and know the occupational reality of these professionals (For more information, please see Molas *et al.* 2014).

Those rangers that are required to carry firearms, and have passed the psychological assessment, should receive adequate training followed by a technical test to check if they know how to safely use firearms (basic rules).



Assess need

Jointly analysing, with rangers, authorities, and administrators, the **actual need for the use of firearms** according to context, including an analysis of the national legal framework and the scope of the ranger responsibilities to define and propose a legal framework for the use of firearms



Test

Conducting psychological and **technical tests** to investigate suitability for the job and the responsibility that comes along with it (see Box 1)



Train

Providing comprehensive training on the use of weapons (fire and air)



Certify

Certifying the completion of psycho-technical tests and the necessary skills learned in the training received. These tests should be periodically repeated and refreshed

PRINCIPLE 2

Acting within and respecting the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct (CoC), developed in 2020 by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), sets strong principles to guide the behaviour of rangers, maintain high standards of practice and ethics, and professionalise the ranger workforce. It includes guidance for both rangers and their employers to ensure the adherence to the CoC, which is summarised below in seven steps:

- a. Employers and associations should **analyse the need for a CoC**: This requires willingness from employers and associations, as well as from rangers, to recognise the need for a standard to guide operations and agree to its adoption.
- b. If a CoC exists or is produced, analyse and benchmark it against the URSA CoC to ensure that the highest standards are met.
- c. Adoption requires **buy-in of the CoC**, and this requires willingness at all levels. It is important, therefore, to be able to communicate the purpose of the CoC and the need to professionalise the ranger sector.
- d. **Define champions**, along with a working group, to drive the process of adaptation and adoption of the CoC. To ensure that the CoC aligns to ranger requirements this group should be representative and gender-sensitive.
- e. The CoC will require at least some minimum level of **adjustments** to meet specific practical and institutional needs and requirements. The context of the CoC will vary between regions yet key principles and values should remain.
- f. **Raise awareness** of the final CoC among rangers, ranger associations and partner agencies. This should be done in a way that considers possible literacy and language barriers to ensure that rangers are always presented with CoCs that are written in a language they fully understand.
- g. Once the CoC has been signed it, requires **adoption**. Adoption can take place at a range of levels, such as full adoption, enforced adoption, voluntary compliance, implementation, training or dissemination. The level of adoption will vary depending on the needs of each site.
- h. **Review the CoC** every 3 or 4 years, and update it if necessary. Also, organisations can have rangers and other employers complete an **annual assessment of the CoC**.

For more information, please refer to the IRF's [Guidelines for Adoption of the CoC](#).

PRINCIPLE 3

Securing equality and non-discrimination

Addressing discrimination and securing equality within the workforce should be a top priority for any employer. This could be done by:

- a. Carrying out scheduled and systematic **training** for rangers on all aspects of discrimination based on race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other

opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status. This includes targeted training on particular issues, such as gender-based discrimination, Indigenous Peoples (IP) issues, and other concerns regarding vulnerable groups more generally;

- b. Developing and/or improving **protocols** against all forms of discrimination, abuse and violence (including sexual harassment gender-based violence) whether it occurs on or off duty, and ensuring implementation of such protocols. For assistance, see, e.g., [Australian Human Rights Commission \(2022\)](#).
- c. Review **policies and practices** regarding recruitment of Indigenous and community members into the workforce, their treatment and the opportunities available to them;
- d. Having **policies** in place that ensure that equality is guaranteed for hiring, promotion and remuneration. For assistance, see, e.g., [Equality and Human Rights Commission's Good equality practice for employers: equality policies, equality training and monitoring \(2014\)](#), or USAID's [Delivering Gender Equality: A Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries \(2021\)](#).
- e. Ensuring that, as part of routine practices, there is equality-related **monitoring and reporting** on a whole range of aspects of activities, including income and expenditure, health and safety, sickness absence, or training.
- f. Conducting **gender audits** that include assessments of workplace conditions for men and women, policy structures in place that support gender equality, salary scales, and the roles women and men play in the organisation.
- g. Ensuring that **gender-disaggregated databases** are established, including how many male/female rangers there are (and LGBTQ+ if this information can be collected in a sensitive manner) and that there is gender disaggregation of all ranger/conservation surveys and data collection efforts; and
- h. Having adequate **infrastructure** (e.g., Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and sleeping facilities) that considers the needs and preferences that can reasonably be expected from having a diverse workforce (i.e, preferences of both men and women, people with disabilities, etc.) equally.

For more guidance, please refer to [URSA's Action Plan](#) (especially Component D on "Equity and Equality") and gender report: [Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce: Challenges & Opportunities](#).

PRINCIPLE 4

Ensuring due process and access to effective remedy

Rangers, just like the communities they come into contact with, have a right to fair treatment. Access to due process in case rangers are accused of misbehaviour and to effective remedy in case they are wronged or are involved in accidents during work operations, should be ensured. The same applies to communities or individuals who are wronged.

Box 2. What does 'effective remedy' mean?

The right to effective remedy is an essential component of human rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other human rights instruments. It is an obligation of the State to provide judicial relief when there has been a violation of a right. This right has two dimensions: 1) the person that has been accused has a right to effectively access a fair hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal, and 2) they have a right to adequate redress. Effective remedy also means that those who lack sufficient resources to ensure effective access to justice should be provided with legal aid.

"Effective" here means that the remedy must be sufficient and accessible, fulfilling the obligation of promptness, as excessively restrictive requirements and delays may render the remedy ineffective. The "remedy" must also be capable of directly remedying the impugned situation, and its effectiveness should be assessed in relation to each complaint.

For more information on effective remedy, please see:

- [Right to an Effective Remedy: Handbook on the Techniques of Judicial Interactions in the Application of the EU Charter](#)
- [Right to an Effective Remedy: Guide on Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights](#)
- [Right to an effective remedy. Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

Ways that can help guarantee due process and access to remedy for rangers and people they come into contact with are:

- a. Establishing a robust **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)**. This mechanism ought to be a complaint procedure open and transparent for all parties while dealing with confidential information in an appropriate and satisfactory manner. Box 4 details some important considerations for a GRM. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2017) also provides helpful and concise guidance.

Box 3. Considerations for a Grievance Redress Mechanism

A GRM should at minimum:

- Allow different channels for registration of grievances in appropriate languages, e.g., including registration in writing (through grievance forms, email, letter, etc.) as well as expressed orally (by phone, in person). In the case of concerns expressed verbally, organisations and employers should ensure that the process is led by a trusted person. Where the complainant so prefers, the process should be made anonymous.
- Be established at the local level, where possible based on existing mechanisms, and easily accessible for everyone. Ideally, local GRMs would be complemented with a back-up mechanism at a higher level to increase the robustness of the system and provide an alternative where the local mechanism fails.
- Be explained and available to rangers and local community members in a culturally appropriate manner, as this will make it more likely to be used as well as helping build trust. It should also be accessible to the wide range of workers that operate within the PA, company or organisation.
- Be able to respond quickly and in an independent, timely and effective manner. This includes but is not limited to: investigation, communications, discipline, report to donors and/or authorities, and addressing underlying causes.
- Be able to deal with the concerns of vulnerable groups (e.g., female rangers, IPs) in a satisfactory manner.
- Ensure reporting can be escalated if needed. There may be occasions where information needs to be escalated to local or national authorities, or headquarters of hiring organisations. Appropriate procedures should be in place which respect issues of privacy, need to know, and legal considerations.
- Provide clear and timely information to rangers and communities on what the mechanism can and cannot deal with and the timeframe for resolutions.
- Guarantee adequate record keeping and assignment of roles and responsibilities.
- Be monitored effectively to ensure that it is always readily available and can deal with grievances in an appropriate manner. To help maintain accountability and trust in the process, the GRM could be monitored externally by local governments or trusted third parties.

For more information on the GRM process and how to evaluate and monitor its effectiveness, see the [UNDP Social and Environmental Standards \(SES\) Stakeholder Engagement supplemental Guidance: Grievance Redress Mechanisms](#).

- b. Establishing a **legal regulatory body** that provides legal support to rangers in case of accusations of misconduct or accidents during operations⁵. This can be done by the State, ministry or the administrator of the PA. Economic and human resources necessary for the proper functioning of this legal support on a permanent basis would be needed so that rangers can always have access to due process and remedy. Where resources are lacking, cooperation agreements between the State, Ministry or administrator and other organisations (NGOs), universities and their faculties of jurisprudence, bar associations and even some private law firms could be called in to provide legal advice (at no cost) to rangers before, during and after incidences. This is crucial, as rangers need to be confident that they will have support and access to remedy if they are accused of any wrongdoings, because lack of such support can have serious implications for them.
- c. Define a process to identify **actions against misconduct** that are just and proportionate to the wrongdoing (Box 5). Rangers need to understand the consequences of misconduct and such consequences need to be clearly communicated and implemented. Existing guidance on misconduct in other high-risk occupations can help define the process, e.g. as provided [here](#).

Box 4. Actions against misconduct

In order to ensure that actions against misconduct are just and proportionate to the wrongdoing, it will be important to differentiate between:

Offences while on-duty vs. off-duty. For example, police and other state officers usually have some restrictions on their private life, and in considering whether an officer has acted in a way which falls below these standards while off-duty, due regard is given to that balance and any action should be proportionate taking into account all of the circumstances. They should adhere to all laws and regulations and avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards to which any citizen is to abide by. See, for example, [here](#) and [here](#).

Different types of misconduct, including, for example:

- unauthorised engagement in law enforcement (against mandate and legal framework).
- professional misconduct, i.e., dishonesty in professional activities.
- breach of ethical standards.
- failure of duty.

In addition, certain elements should be part of the process of determining just and proportionate actions against misconduct, such as:

- File a report that clearly summarises the case.
- Identify whether investigative procedures are needed.
- Initiate disciplinary proceedings, which should include the identification of credible witnesses.
- Ensure the results of the process are clearly summarised and communicated.

Resulting actions against misconduct will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis but could include, depending on the severity of the incidence:

- private or public reprimand.
- record in personnel files.
- fine.
- change or reduction of role and/or mandate.
- loss of benefits (bonus, incentives).
- refusal of promotion.
- suspension/removal from service (potentially with loss of benefits, such as pension).

Where the process concludes with a justification of a rangers' action the result would be impunity (e.g., where rangers themselves are victims of violence a defence action may be justifiable) and there should be no negative consequences from the process to the rangers and their further career.

PRINCIPLE 5

Enabling access to information and participation

Access to understandable, adequate and timely information, e.g. on their rights, the GRM, legal or medical support, is of utmost importance in the ranger workforce. Creating spaces for rangers to participate in processes to define internal procedures, responses to challenges, changes in mandates and roles, etc. can be of great advantage to the workforce and help with the communication of important information. Activities to implement the principle include:

- a. Invite rangers to regular **team meetings** to update them on changes in existing policies and procedures and provide a space to hear their voices.
- b. Provide **updates in policies and procedures** in written format (always taking into consideration language and literacy differences within ranger forces) and make sure rangers receive and take note of this information.
- c. **Engage rangers in decision-making processes** (both short and long-term planning processes) affecting their working conditions, role and mandate or regarding work priorities, existing procedures, solutions to address new challenges, etc. Ministries, park authorities, or employees should invite rangers to participate in decision-making processes affecting their working conditions, role and mandate, as well as in PA decisions.
- d. **Organise workshops** every year and provide training to every new ranger on their rights, the GRM available, who they should reach in case they are wronged or are witnesses of misconduct, etc.

5. For employees in other high-risk occupations, such as police officers, it is considered important to have reliable private legal protection insurance with extended criminal legal protection for the defence against alleged offences. However, to date this is usually not the case for rangers.



PRINCIPLE 6

Supporting ranger welfare through good employment conditions

In order to have a professionalised and efficient workforce, employees need to feel that their interests and well-being are taken into consideration. A good working environment, including good employment conditions, are essential for this, and can also help reduce instances of misconduct that stem from a poor working environment.

Box 5. Aspects of “work environment”

The significant aspects of a work environment are the company/organisation’s culture, the physical environment and the employment conditions.

- **Company culture** refers to the way a company and its employees operate, including what effective communication looks like, the company’s goals and values. E.g.: Code of Conduct.
- **Physical environment** refers to the physical conditions a ranger works under, which will play a crucial role in enabling them to accomplish their work successfully. In the case of rangers, it can refer to the location of the place they work, which is almost always outdoors and thus it can also refer to the equipment they have to explore this outdoor place, as well as the physical facilities such as toilets, a place to sleep, office place, etc. and equipment.
- **Employment conditions** include the formal terms under which rangers are hired, such as the rate of pay, contract of employment and length of the workday (or workdays). It refers to work-life balance, workplace safety, but it can also cover recreational activities and other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace.

Steps that can be taken to secure a good working environment and the well-being of all involved include:

- a. Ensuring that rangers have a minimum acceptable **remuneration**, considering they are essential and high-risk workers, who spend long hours on patrol. Ensure they are **paid on time** and that they have the right to receive payment while on holiday or family leave.
- b. Providing **life and health insurance** for rangers, to ensure they receive payment if sick or in case they are injured while on duty.
- c. Ensuring that all rangers have basic **equipment** such as boots, uniforms, wet/cold weather gear and mosquito nets. Ensuring that other major equipment such as communication systems and vehicles are adequate, sufficient and functioning properly.
- d. Establish well-defined **procedures** to ensure rangers feel adequately equipped and supported while on duty, including ensuring teams on patrol have adequate food and water supplies as well as extra fuel, a vehicle repair kit, and a phone or some other means to get in touch if needed.
- e. Support the **mental health** of the workforce by:

- Ensuring rangers have a proper work/life balance. Many rangers see their families as little as once a year (Mongabay 2018), causing a great deal of stress and strain to personal relationships.
 - Providing rangers with proper communication channels while on long periods of work or patrol to ensure they do not feel too isolated, which is one of the major stress factors.
 - Providing psychological support. This could be mandatory after highly stressful or dangerous situations, such as an encounter with poachers, to deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It should also be available to those that have been victims of misconduct or abuse (e.g., bullying or sexual harassment).
 - Implementing well-being plans for rangers. These would be personalised, practical tools aimed at helping employees support their own mental health while on duty - to help rangers identify what keeps them well at work, what causes them to become unwell, and how to address a mental health problem at work. It also opens up a dialogue with managers or supervisors in order for them to better understand the rangers’ needs and experiences and ultimately better support their mental health (Mind 2022, note template included in document).
- f. Ensure proper, ongoing **training/refresher and support** for rangers, including volunteer rangers, to carry out the tasks within the authority given and ensure their willingness and disposition to contribute to the ranger workforce is not abused and is treated with respect. Volunteer rangers are sometimes posted to remote places, with no follow-up on their work or support to help them deal with possible incidents while on duty. They may be easy targets of blame if something goes wrong. Adequate training with a strong educational component as a way to tackle issues such as sexual assault, lack of situational and cultural awareness, etc. can be considered a preventive measure to avoid difficulties. A periodic assessment of the ranger workforce is also recommended (i.e., a gap analysis) to see what areas need attention and that way guarantee a timely response.

A recent review examines the various aspects of precarious employment and working conditions of rangers (Anagnostou *et al.* 2022). Within the URSA [Action Plan](#), Component C on “Employment and Welfare” focuses on working conditions.

PRINCIPLE 7

Promoting integrity in the ranger workforce

Integrity is an essential quality for any employer or employee. Solid integrity and excellent leadership are the foundations of any successful workforce, but these qualities are not always upheld in the ranger sector. It is imperative to work on building an honest and trustworthy ranger workforce, which can be achieved in a number of ways:

- a. Ranger superiors and organisations employing rangers should **lead by example**, demonstrate accountability and competence, and show understanding, support and appreciation for their workforce. This could be ensured by establishing good hiring practices for supervisors and other positions of leadership within the organisation that put emphasis on the professionalism, knowledge and expertise of the employee.
- b. Establishing a **robust recruitment and selection process** to ensure that rangers enter the profession with the right values and level of integrity. It is also a way to ensure the rangers are fully aware of their mandate and role right from the outset.
- c. Establishing an **oversight body** and/or procedures to ensure clear, internal and documented supervision. This is important, as the often weak governance systems in which rangers work can create corruption risks.
- d. Explore **technological anti-corruption tools**. This could include ranger tracking to identify any rangers who were near an incident (like poaching) and to investigate potential collusion in the act.
- e. Provide access to a fair, independent **whistleblowing mechanism** and ensure its existence and procedures for its use are clearly communicated to all rangers. This may require an analysis of existing independent systems at national or international level and how they can be used in order to avoid the need for creating a new mechanism.
- f. **Report to and engage the higher-level responsible authorities** to address corruption in the area in focus more stringently.
- g. Organise **training** focused on ranger ethics and duties to the public.
- h. Actively and openly include **ranger unions and associations** in any anti-corruption measures.
- i. **Document** (in reports and/or audio-visual material) the work being done by rangers, challenges and lessons learned. This could include good and bad, yet the overall objective is to change the public perception that rangers profit from corrupt activities as this can undermine the integrity of future generations of rangers.

Other activities that can play a role but were already covered under other sections are: to establish a complaint mechanism (GRM) for rangers so that they can report incidents of corruption anonymously, without fear of repercussion or retaliation (mentioned in Principle 4), to implement background checks and psychological assessments for all members of the workforce at the time of hiring (mentioned in Principle 1) and to implement well-being plans for rangers (mentioned in Principle 6).

PRINCIPLE 8

Fostering transparent and effective collaboration

If relationships among rangers, or between rangers and communities, become strained, this can substantially impact work efficiency. Therefore, encouraging transparency and good working relations and finding solutions to ranger-community problems with an understanding of the community's

needs and efforts and its capacity to partner in conservation is important. This can be actively promoted in multiple ways, including by:

- a. Ensuring rangers have an **in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural context** of the community they will be operating in by briefing rangers on who constitutes the community, their culture and practices, and their concerns⁶.
- b. Ensuring rangers are aware of and understand factors that may limit effective collaboration, in particular grievances over territory, rights, and previous abuse.
- c. Securing efficient and periodic communication with the local community by **establishing channels of communication** between them and rangers and designing information and outreach programmes (leaflets, conservation events, workshops, etc.) with the aim of increasing awareness and building trustworthy relationships. It is also key to consider the role gender might play in effective communication with local communities. For example, the presence of female rangers can be of great importance when dealing with women in those communities.
- d. **Monitor** implementation of policies and conservation activities, communicate the results and adapt policies and procedures as needed.
- e. Establish **response systems** (including associated training) in order to anticipate and mitigate any possible conflict and crisis, both between rangers and communities and within the ranger force itself. Such systems can include strategic responses to conflict (giving special consideration to different aspects, such as gender), crisis response templates, or the development of collaborative projects to build rapport and trust.
- f. Establish **regular meetings** to create spaces for exchange, ensure recognition of achievements, and encourage feedback as ways to secure good communication within the workforce (Woodside 2021).

PRINCIPLE 9

Building and consolidating mutual respect

To have a fully functional workforce and secure good relationships, rangers must build trust and respect among themselves and with local communities. In addition to actions for fostering transparent and effective collaboration, actions that can be taken to promote mutual respect are:

- a. Ensure that rangers themselves but also supervisors and other people in positions of leadership **lead by example**, demonstrating acceptable behaviour and attitudes, and treating everyone fairly, i.e. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), rangers and any other stakeholders. This includes taking a

6. It is important to note that the breadth of the communities considered in ranger–community relationships could be expanded to include other users of PCAs, such as private conservation operators, law-enforcement officers, tourism businesses, or people living temporarily in the local community.

“zero tolerance” approach to rangers engaging in disrespectful behaviour, linking with point b.

- b. Ensure there is an **internal policy/workplace guideline** setting the terms for adequate behaviour at work that emphasises collaborative and respectful relationships in the workplace. Such guidelines can also be linked with response systems for dealing with problems that might arise (see under 8.e), including disrespectful treatment or harassment in the workplace.
- c. Establish **catch-up sessions** for rangers and other employees to increase knowledge and understanding for each other and that can serve as an opportunity for rangers to build rapport with colleagues.
- d. Secure **good employment conditions and adequate and ongoing training** for rangers, and ensure that there is frequent and effective communication between rangers and the local communities within which they operate. This can be done by interacting more with the local communities and ensuring there is an understanding of the work done by rangers in the area while demonstrating that their culture is being respected to the fullest extent possible.
- e. Encourage **adoption of practice and behaviours that build trust and respect** between rangers and communities (see Stolton *et al.* 2022)
- f. Provide **guidelines, operating procedures and training for rangers in tolerance, patience and conflict avoidance**, especially in areas that are contested, where there is conflict over rights, or where there have been cases or accusations of abuse.

PRINCIPLE 10

Conferring and exercising responsible authority

Those in charge must be able to exercise responsible authority and good judgement while conferring authority responsibly on others. Superiors ought to correctly assess the appropriate level of authority they can allocate to different staff, taking into account that some people are natural leaders while others may grow into it over time.

In some places local community-sourced rangers may suffer from a perceived “conflict of interest”, as their job might involve barring fellow community members from activities that are part of their traditions or lifestyle, or that even they themselves used to engage in, e.g., hunting wild game. Therefore, those in charge need to ensure that the level of authority given to employees is right and balanced depending on each individual case. Measures to secure responsible authority within the ranger workforce include:

- a. Perform **leadership tests and employee evaluations**, and set up **procedures to monitor** whether authority is exercised appropriately over time. An example for a leadership test to establish whether personality traits lend themselves to a successful leadership role can be found [here](#).
- b. Ensure superiors are being more **proactive in supporting rangers**: rangers are often seen as leaders within their communities but also as breadwinners, which can put a big pressure on them to perform. Having a support system that makes them feel backed up in case of dealing with pressure or having other issues can make a big difference.
- c. Establish **capacity building** programmes for superiors to improve and strengthen their leadership skills as well as the resources they have to perform well in their jobs.



Forest guards in the Quang Nam Nature Reserve, Central Annamites, Vietnam. © Denise Stillely / WWF-Vietnam

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Park ranger at Tres Gigantes Biological Station, a private nature reserve owned and managed by local conservation NGO Guyra Paraguay. © Jaime Rojo / WWF-US

Annex 1

Checklist for the implementation of the principles and as an input into the Safeguarding Policy for Rangers

The provided checklist (see separate excel sheet) is divided into two sections:

- **Institutional level:** actions that would have to be taken at institutional level by government entities or organisations employing/supporting rangers as a contribution to implementing the Safeguarding Principles for Rangers; and
- **Individual level:** information and training every individual ranger should be provided with, activities they should be involved in and tests they may have undertaken.

The institutional level checklist (first tab in excel sheet) can be used as a planning instrument to prioritise actions that are of greatest urgency in the specific context, but it also allows to indicate action for medium- or long-term implementation. While it allows to rate the “relevance” of each principal as “high”, “medium” or “low”, this is not to imply that any of the principles is irrelevant, but should be considered to reflect on the relevance in the respective geographic and socio-cultural context.

For example, where an organisation employing rangers already has very strict and well-functioning policies and procedures in place regarding equality and non-discrimination, this principle could be marked with “low” relevance with respective justification in column F.

For the institutional level checklist it should be noted that all activities suggested in the present guidance that refer to entry requirements and training have been included as Cross-Cutting Activities (CCAs, see lines 4 to 23 in the excel sheet), with one additional cross-cutting activity which covers the action point under the overarching principle of identifying indicators to monitor implementation success of safeguarding principles for a human rights-based approach in the ranger workforce.

The individual level checklist (second tab in excel sheet) could be adjusted to needs and be completed for each individual ranger as a basic registry of what documents were provided, tests conducted, what training has been received, etc. It should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, e.g., at biannual bilateral meetings.



Ranger on her horse on the family farm, municipality of Calamar, Guaviare Department, Colombia. © Luis Barreto / WWF-UK

Annex 2

Adaptable Template for a Safeguarding Policy for Rangers

The template below outlines the basic components of the Safeguarding Policy for Rangers. These are not exhaustive and can be expanded depending on the organisations' needs or preferences.

Safeguarding Policy for Rangers

The header block should include a number of things, including but not necessarily limited to:

- a. the title of the policy document.
- b. department responsible for drafting, reviewing and enforcement of the policy.
- c. effective date of the policy.
- d. policy number.
- e. date of approval.
- f. identity of approval authority.
- g. whether it replaces or modifies an existing policy; and
- h. number of pages inclusive in the document.

Policy statement

This would be a concise statement of the rationale for the policy, and should reflect the basic objectives of the organisation and a description of the **general guiding principles or rules**. This would include, if appropriate, reference to external regulations, further policy discussion, etc.

Example:

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect local communities who might come into contact with rangers, in case there is a case of ranger misconduct.
- To provide all rangers with the overarching principles that guide their approach to conservation and relationship with colleagues and local communities.

Applicability/Scope

This subsection would cover exactly who the policy applies to, e.g., by stating "This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of [name of group/organisation], including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, and agency staff."

The section would also detail consequences for non-compliance, if applicable. It may also include facilities, sites, etc.

Definitions/Glossary

A glossary of terms referenced in the policy document, e.g. ranger, safeguarding, biodiversity, critical habitat, local community, meaningful consultation, etc.

Ranger

....

Safeguarding

....

For resources with relevant definitions, please see URSA's [Code of Conduct](#), the Convention on Biological Diversity's [Use of Terms](#), and WWF's [Glossary of definitions and Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework \(ESSF\)](#).

Implementation procedures

Reference to detailed procedures, methods and guidance that are recommended in order to carry out the intent of the policy, on how covered persons are expected to act in accordance with the policy. These procedures can be derived from the use of the checklist and it may be useful to distinguish between institutional level procedures and individual level procedures. For example, at institutional level, the implementation of suggested activities from the checklist may lead to the development of procedures to ensure equality and non-discrimination at the time of hiring, promotion and remuneration and to ensure that adequate functioning equipment is available and there is clarity on when what equipment should be taken to the field. If the institution has adopted a CoC, this should be mentioned here as well and the CoC could be annexed. For the individual level, this section could reflect checks that need to be undertaken prior to hiring, documents that need to be countersigned together with the contract, standard training that needs to be provided, etc. Agreements regarding regular team meetings, bilateral meetings between employer and employee, etc should also be reflected.

Grievance resolution

Describe the GRM in place to deal with problems and complaints, explain the ways in which it can be accessed and how complaints are getting addressed. This should include a timeline for addressing complaints so that it is clear to the complainant how long it will take to receive a response, as well as confidentiality and safety rules.

Responsibilities for implementation

This should explain responsibilities and timelines for implementation of the different elements of the present Safeguarding Policy, including the Grievance Procedure. The content of the implementation procedures chapter can be used to identify separate tasks and allocate responsibilities.

Policy contact

The highest administrative or academic officer or group authorising the policy. If appropriate, one might also note the next required review date.

Related policies or guidance

References for more information about related policies or procedures, guidelines, forms, etc. to ensure that there are no issues or incidents due to this written guidance being in conflict with policies addressing similar or related issues. Including related documents also provides additional guidance that may be helpful to covered persons in complying with the policy.

Give complete references and ensure that documents cited are readily available (i.e., either as widely distributed manuals or guidelines, publicly available policies, etc.). If needed, provide additional background discussion here.



The Roar (Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, Georgia). Rangers mark red deer vocalization points to monitor the red deer population and estimate numbers
© Shota Golubiani



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