



# Acknowledgements



# Study Overview

Global exploratory study to examine role, function, and effectiveness of ranger associations

Study conducted from April 2021 – June 2022

Includes findings from:

40 Associations

554 Ranger surveys

68 Interviews

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# Methods & Data Collection

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- Sample
  - Three target populations: ranger associations, rangers (members, non-member, former members), and subject matter experts
- Data Collection
  - Ranger Association Survey (Organizational level)
  - Ranger Survey
    - Member
    - Non-member/Formal Member
  - Interviews
    - Current association member rangers
    - Non-member/former member rangers
    - Subject matter experts

# Organizational Sample

- Total of 40 Responses
- Region Breakdown:
  - North America (10%)
  - Latin/South America (19%)
  - Africa (10%)
  - Europe (18%)
  - Asia (5%)
  - Oceania (10%)
- Approximately half of associations only permitted rangers as members, whereas the remaining half permitted non-ranger membership
- 57% of associations had fewer than 100 members

# Ranger Survey Sample

- 554 rangers participated
- 76% rangers were current association members
- 75% identified as male; 25% as female
- 42% were in a supervisory role
  
- Region
  - North America (12%)
  - Latin/South America (30%)
  - Africa (8%)
  - Europe (30%)
  - Asia (10%)
  - Oceania (10%)

# Interview Sample

- 68 Participants
- 70% identified as male and held a Bachelor's degree or higher
- 75% were current rangers
- 76.5% were association members and 50% held a position of leadership
  
- Regional Breakdown
  - North America: 10%
  - Latin/South America: 41%
  - Africa: 19%
  - Europe: 10%
  - Asia: 9%
  - Oceania: 10%

# Organizational Level Findings



# Results



**52% associations were founded since 2010**



**On average associations report having 8-10 administrative positions**



**Most associations (72%) have no paid employees or staff**



**Average annual cost of membership was \$33 (USD)**



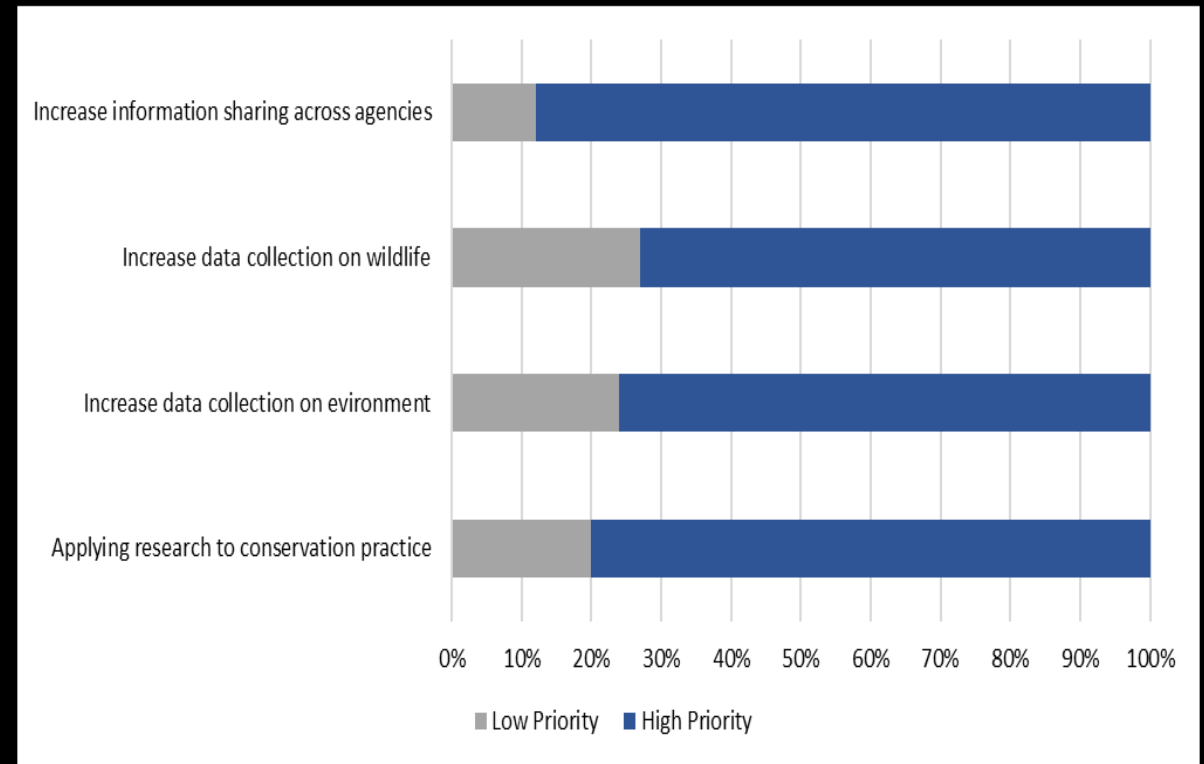
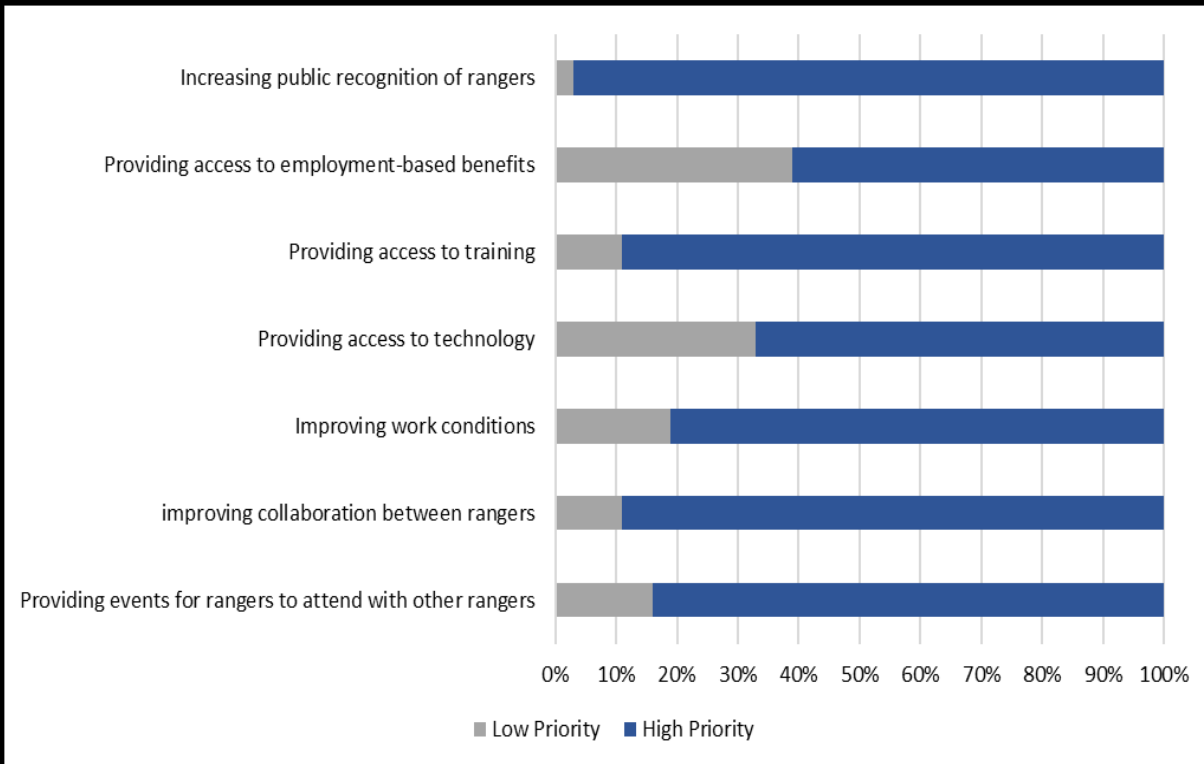
**Approximately 60% of associations have a bank account and code of ethics statement**



**Just over half of associations have received funding from an NGO, and less than 25% have received funding from a governmental organization**



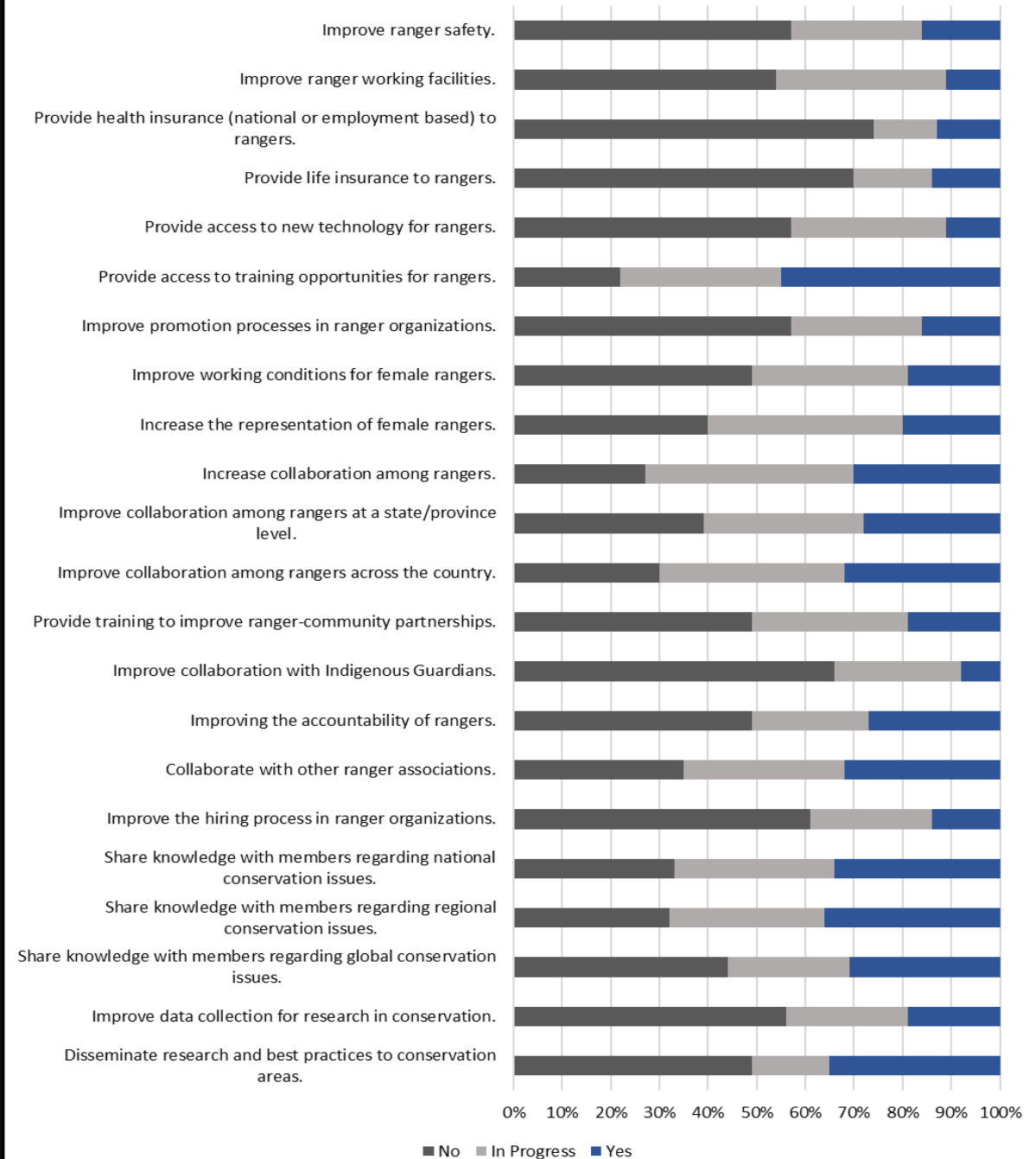
# Association Priorities



**Figure 1a,b. Responses to: “In your opinion, which issues do you think ranger associations should be prioritizing the most? In other words, what issues should ranger associations be focusing on the most to improve the ranger profession”**

# Key Findings

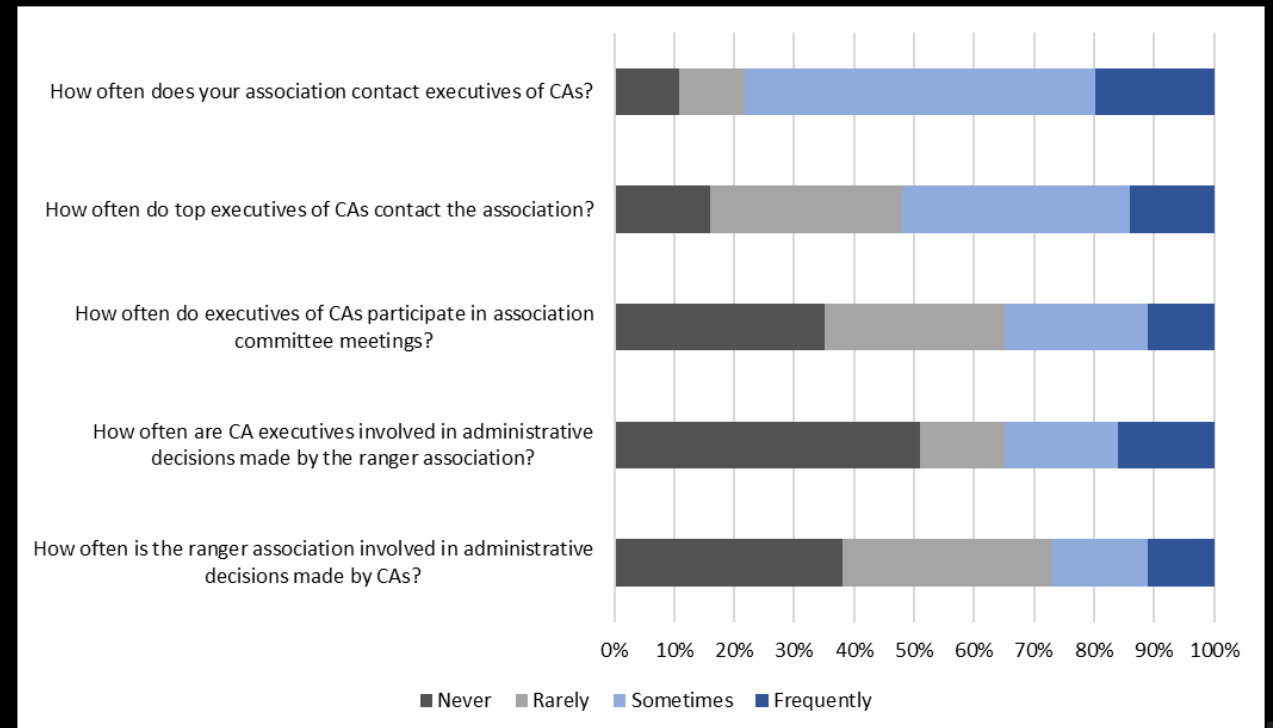
- Associations do prioritize goals set forth by the Chitwan Declaration, but most have **not formalized** these goals into written plans or policies



# Key Findings

- Nearly 70% of associations have working partnerships with other associations and NGOs
  - Relationships between associations and conservation agencies are more tenuous

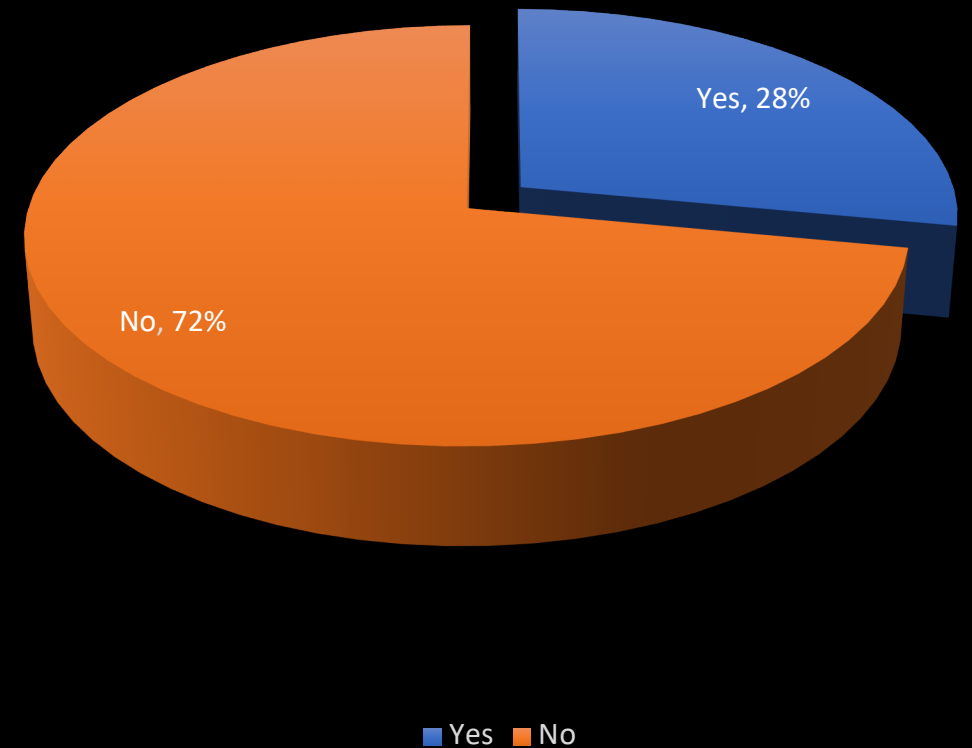
“We [are] actually there to supplement and to support rather than throw stones. That’s not the job of the association. But there’s, I think, sometimes a perception of, ‘What are you guys here to do? Are you here to tell us that we’re not supporting our guys well enough?’” (Respondent 1)



# Key Findings

- Lack of paid staffing is an obstacle to continuity and effectiveness of associations
- “I think for a ranger association to actually be effective, you need at least one or two full time staff that could kind of keep **institutional memory**, grow things, be responsive, and also work to increase the drive to include more members in some countries.” (Respondent 59)

## Associations with Paid Staff

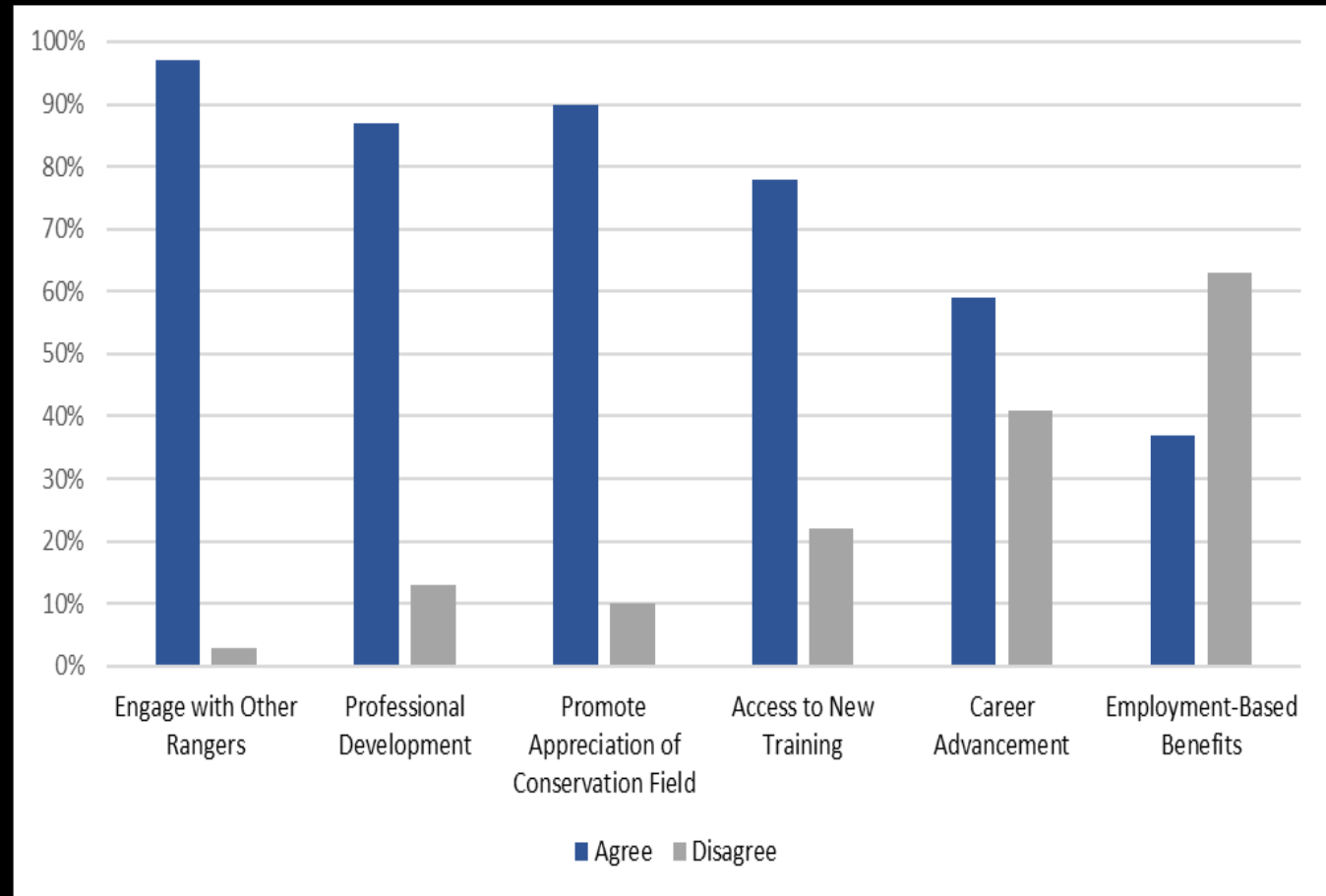


# Ranger Surveys (Member-level Assessment)

# Key Findings

- Rangers joined associations primarily for networking opportunities, promoting appreciation of the field, and opportunities for professional development

“I recognized the profession could get **lonely**. I thought it was important to **create a community**” (Respondent 3)

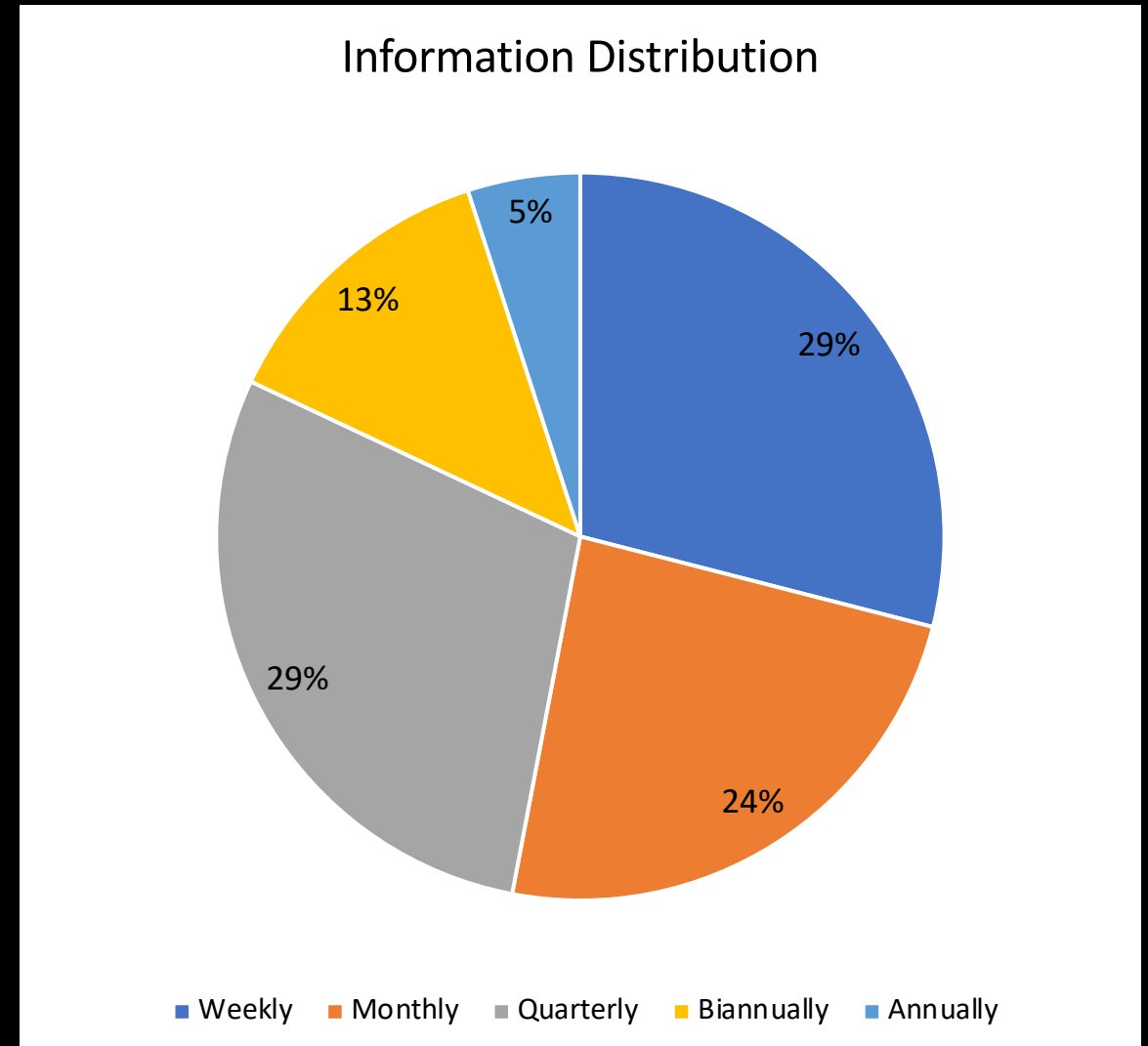




# Key Findings

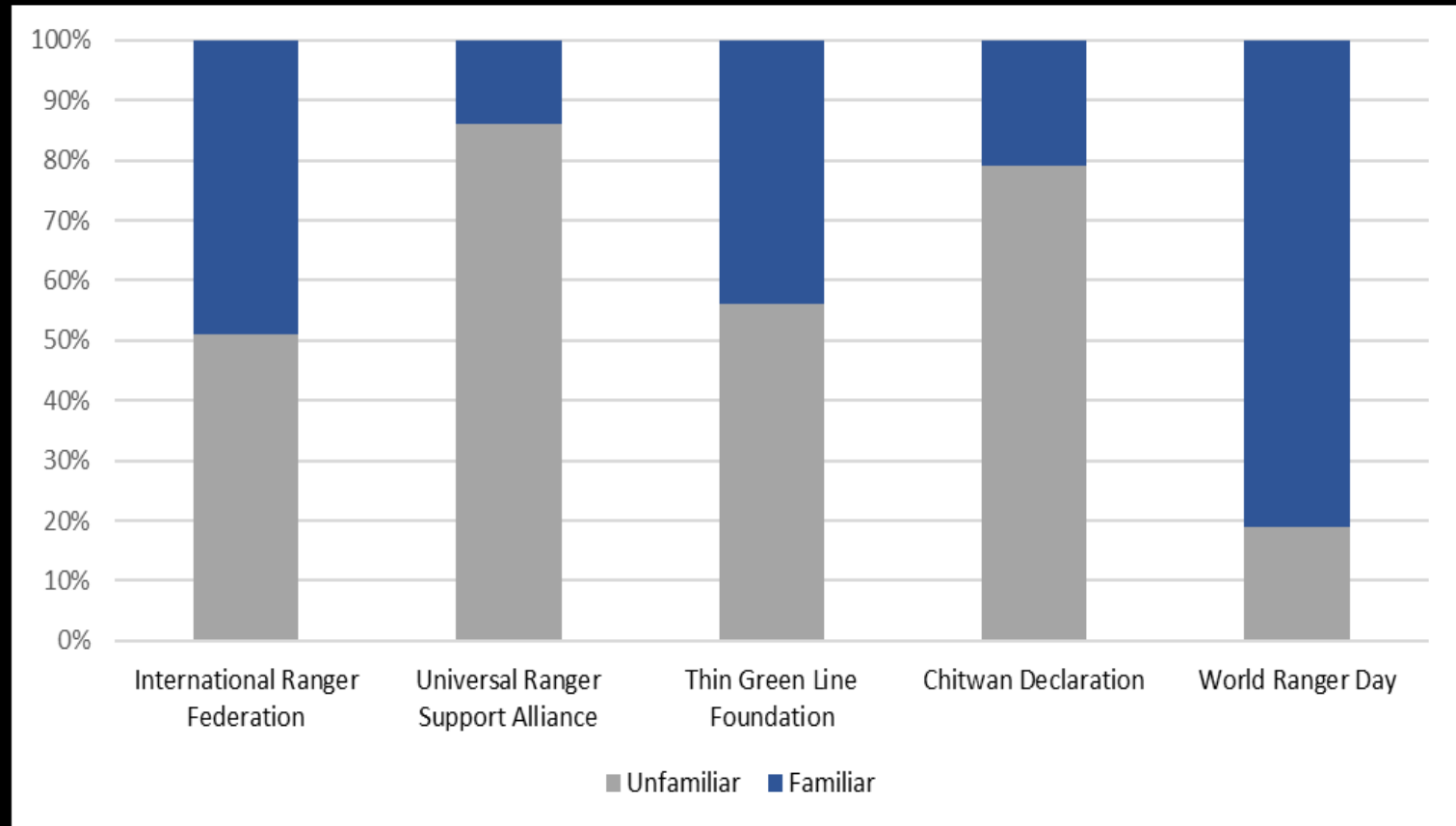
- Over half of associations distribute information weekly or monthly. Rangers also communicate regularly among themselves using social media platforms (especially Facebook and WhatsApp)

“People used to get totally fed up with contacting the [association] because it was three weeks before they got a response. Now it's pretty much immediate within an hour. So, she [administrator] is absolutely critical. **And I would say admin assistance is critical to any association, making it run so much more smoothly.**” (Respondent 30)



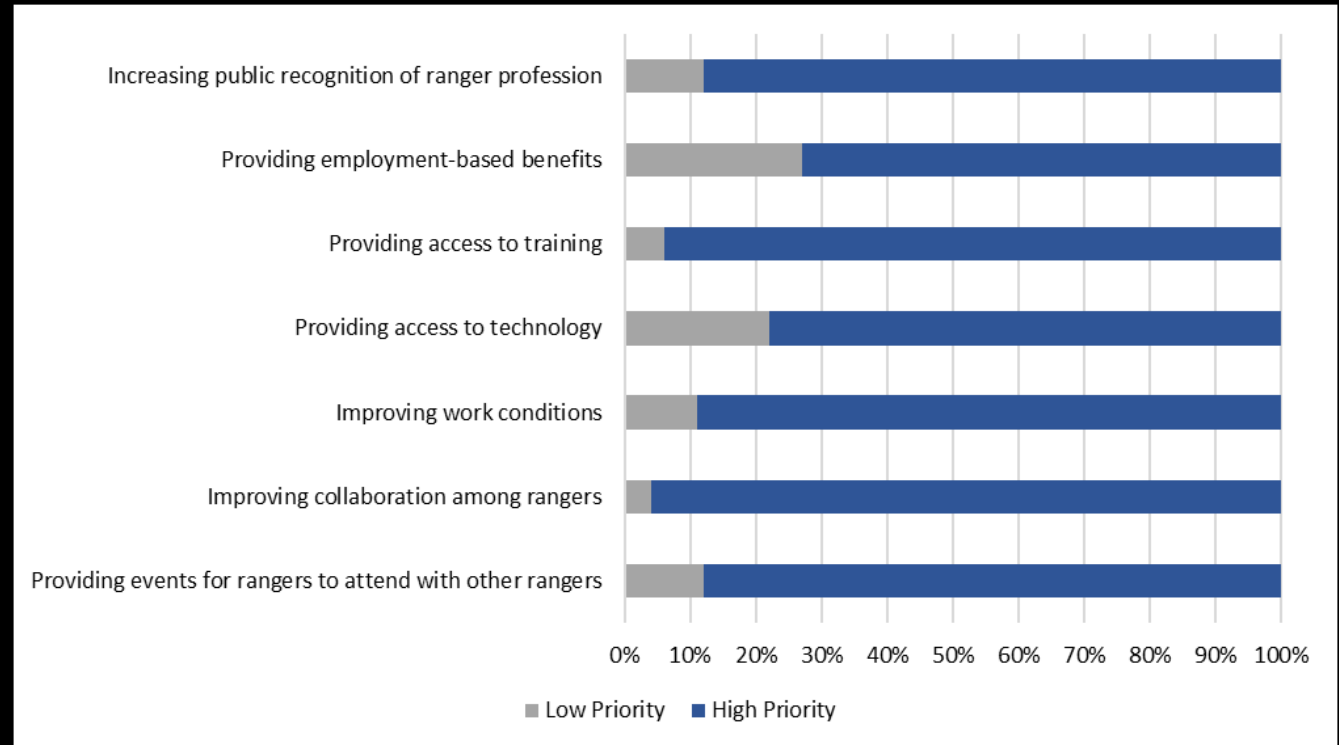
# Key Findings

- Except for World Ranger Day, most rangers were unfamiliar with “ranger centric” global organizations or events



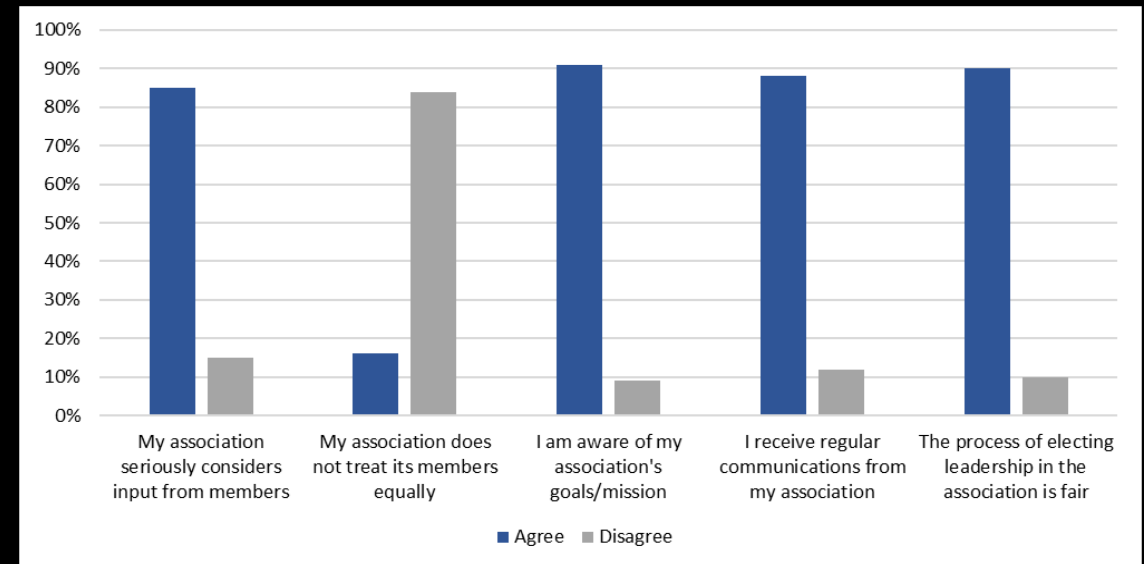
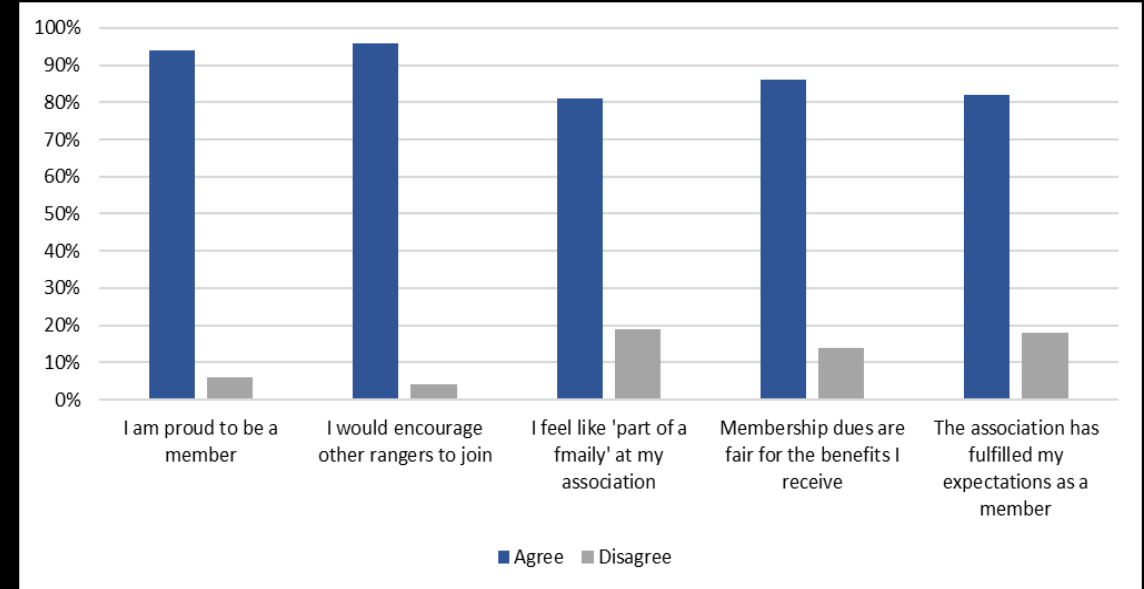
# Key Findings

- High level of agreement across members and associations regarding the goals of associations
  - Professional recognition
  - Improving/providing training
  - Facilitating communication between rangers



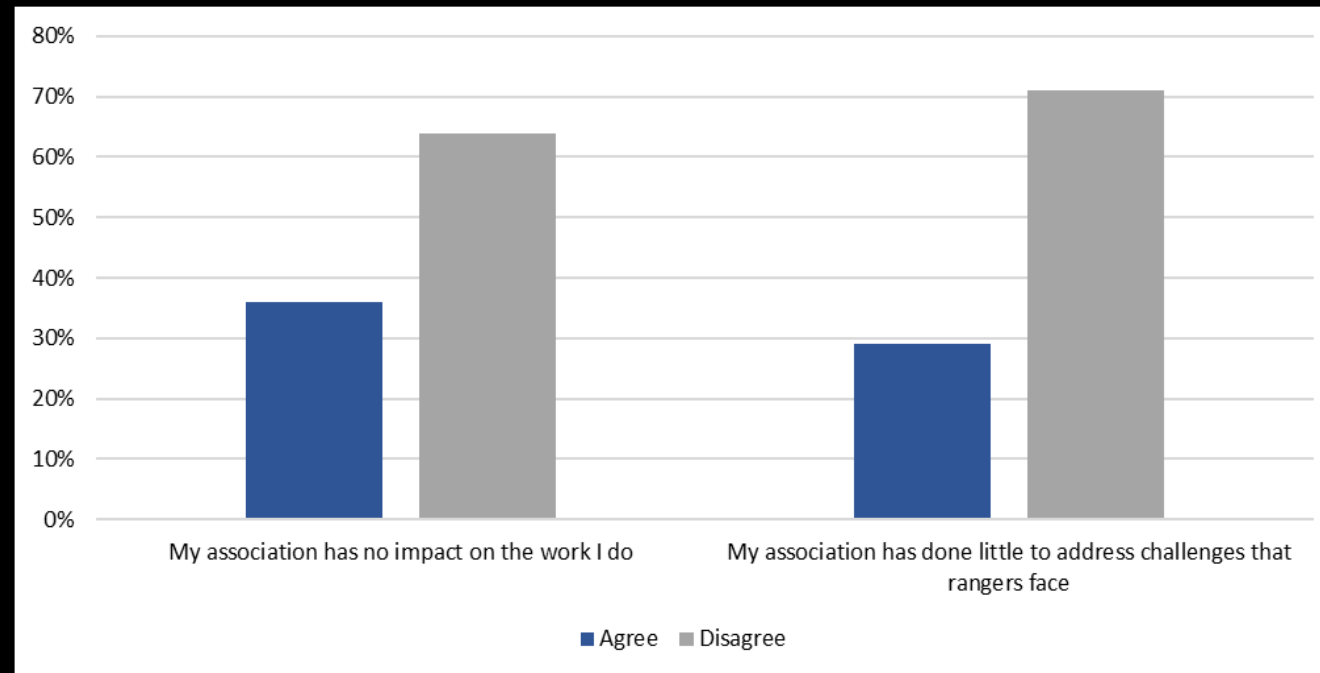
# Key Findings

- Most rangers are satisfied and committed to their association, feel the association treats them fairly, and that their pride and job satisfaction have increased since becoming a member



# Key Findings

- Approximately 35% of respondents reported that the association has no influence on their work



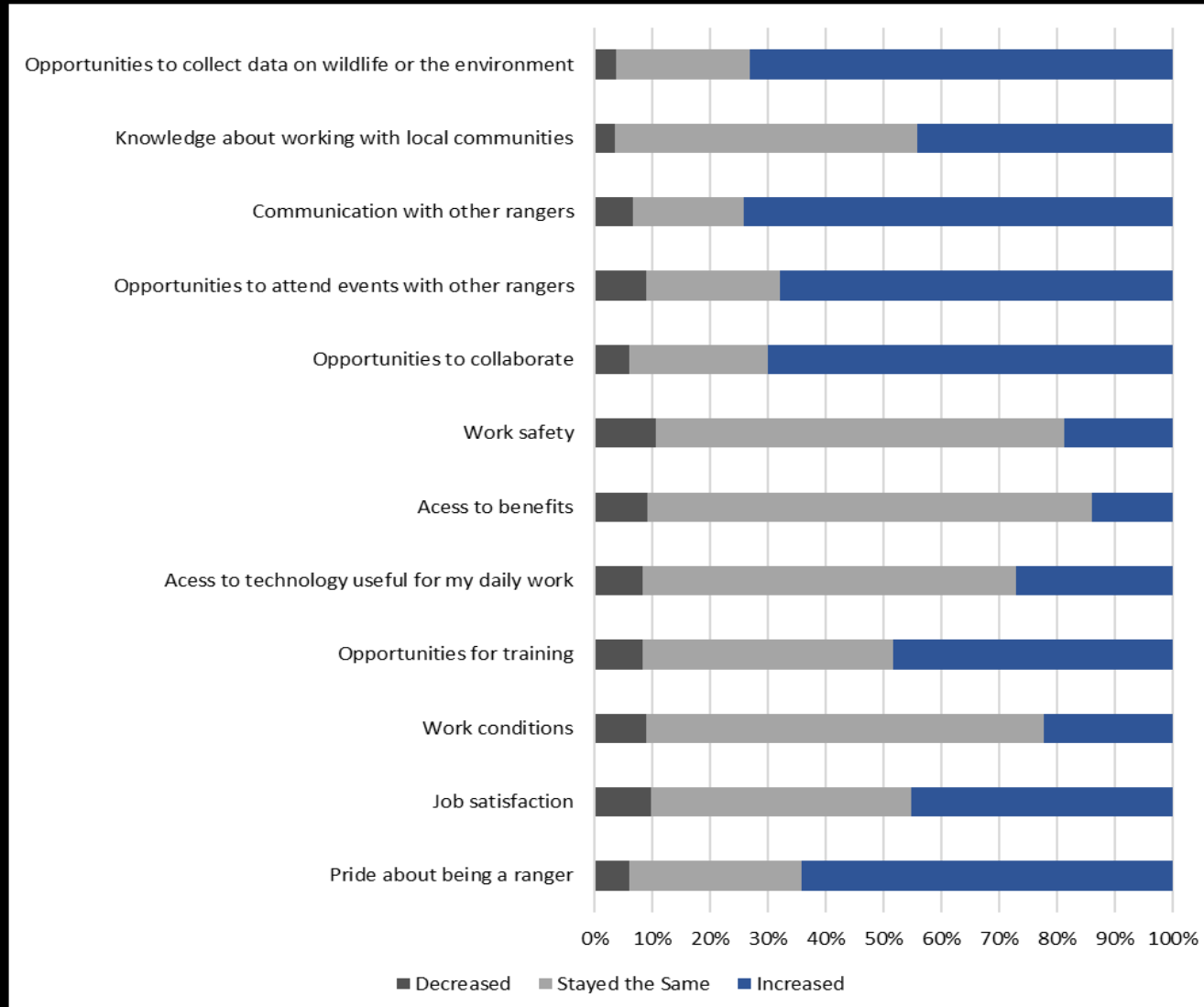
# Key Findings

- Most respondents agreed the primary benefit of associations is for networking and attending events with other rangers

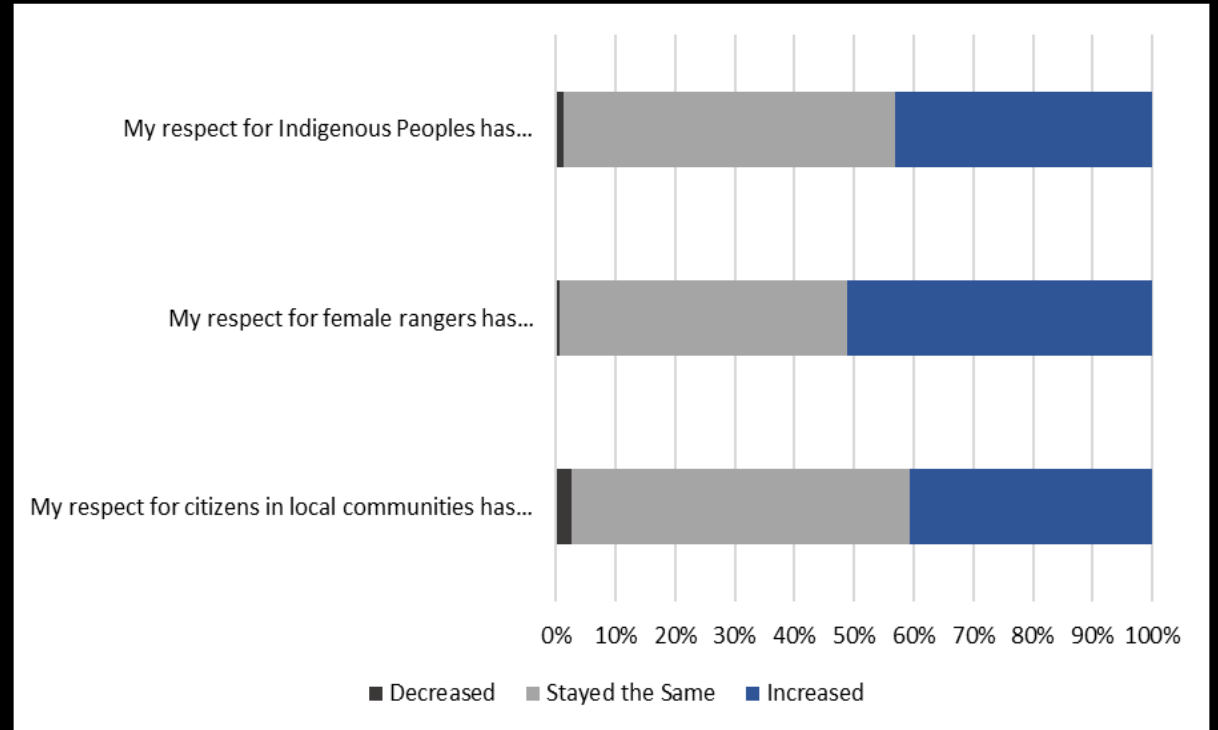
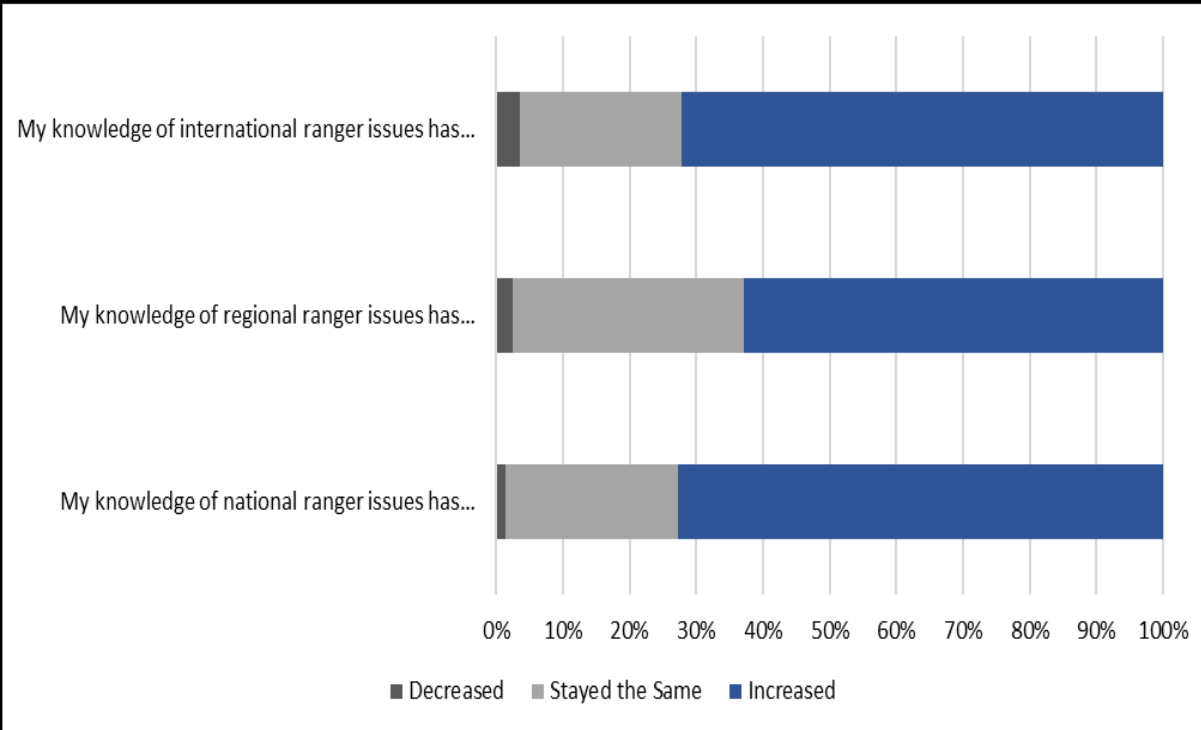
“You’re often out in the bush all day, with maybe one or two others. You forget. You get downtrodden about what you are doing. You forget what you are trying to achieve. **Suddenly, you have this platform where you see hundreds of people doing the same thing.** You face impossible odds, and then you hear other stories, and you feel a good bit of solace.” (Respondent 7)

“There is a sense of **community** [...] It’s an opportunity to reach out and lend a hand to other rangers. (Respondent 9)”

# “Since you joined an association...”



# “Since you joined an association...”





# Challenges and Difficulties

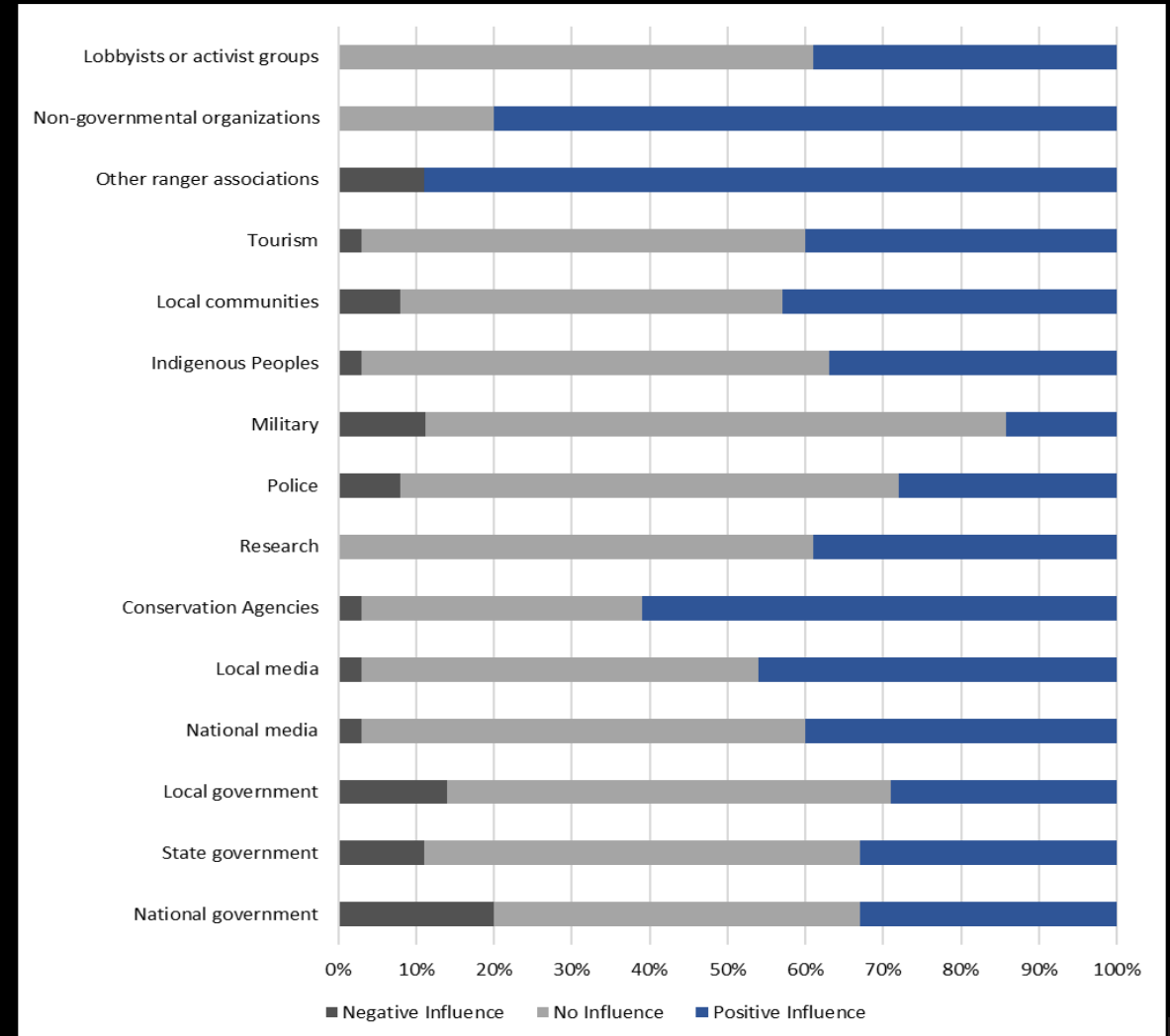
# Challenges and Difficulties

- Difficulties during establishment
- Lack of paid staff and administrator burnout
- Member recruitment and engagement
- Procurement of resources
- Relationship with conservation agencies
- Overcoming COVID-19

# Challenges and Difficulties

- Social and political climate

“Let’s say tomorrow a super-rich guy comes and gives you a million dollars. Now we are going to start sending regional reps some money, so they can invest more time in the ranger agenda [...] But in this case, I cannot receive money from anywhere. If I am president, and I receive money from foreign sources, it's seen as **corruption**, or a **conflict of interest**, from a political standpoint. It's going to be very hard to **overcome political hurdles**.” (Respondent 5)



# Challenges and Difficulties

- Lack of paid staff

“The danger with not having a secretary, you lose *institutional memory of your organization*. Because if a chairperson is in the east of the country, everything is going to go east. Therefore, in the following elections, the chairperson is in the west, but the books are left in the east and some of them are lost on the way. **But if you have someone who is permanently employed, irrespective of where the chairperson is, you still could have a secretary that is managing, filing, and reminding people that we have this action which is supposed to perform and supporting the executives in terms of logistics, drafting agendas, coming up with minutes and making things happen.**” (Respondent 31; emphasis added)

# Challenges and Difficulties

- Recruiting members, fostering engagement, and avoiding administrator burnout

“I guess just having more people sort of come on board. A bit more and, **sort of sharing the workload**, would definitely be more effective than it just being, you know, a handful of people doing the same things. So, I mean, and of course, that comes back to the executive trying to encourage that to happen. Yeah. Just need more passionate people. We just need to be more, I guess, just keep on doing what we're doing so that we don't **burn out**, but also **trying to spark that flame** in somebody else in different ways. (Respondent 3)”

“You know, I've just had, I've got a four-month-old child now, which means I'm having to significantly sort of step back in what I was doing. **But there's not always someone there to take up the mantle**, you know?” (Respondent 62)

# Challenges and Difficulties

- Procurement of resources

“I am continually looking from either government sources or we have something called [nonprofit fund] that gives out grants for different things. I am continually looking for grant programs that the [association] could bid into for money [...] to take the association forward to become a more recognized professional organization. That’s one of my key ambitions for the [association] before I bow out and put my feet up.” (Respondent 30)

“Well, the most part of the job we do is in our free time, you know, we don’t have any personnel who [...] have time to develop the association. [...]. But on the other hand, we don’t have enough money to contract somebody for an executive director or something like this.” (Respondent 23)

# Challenges and Difficulties

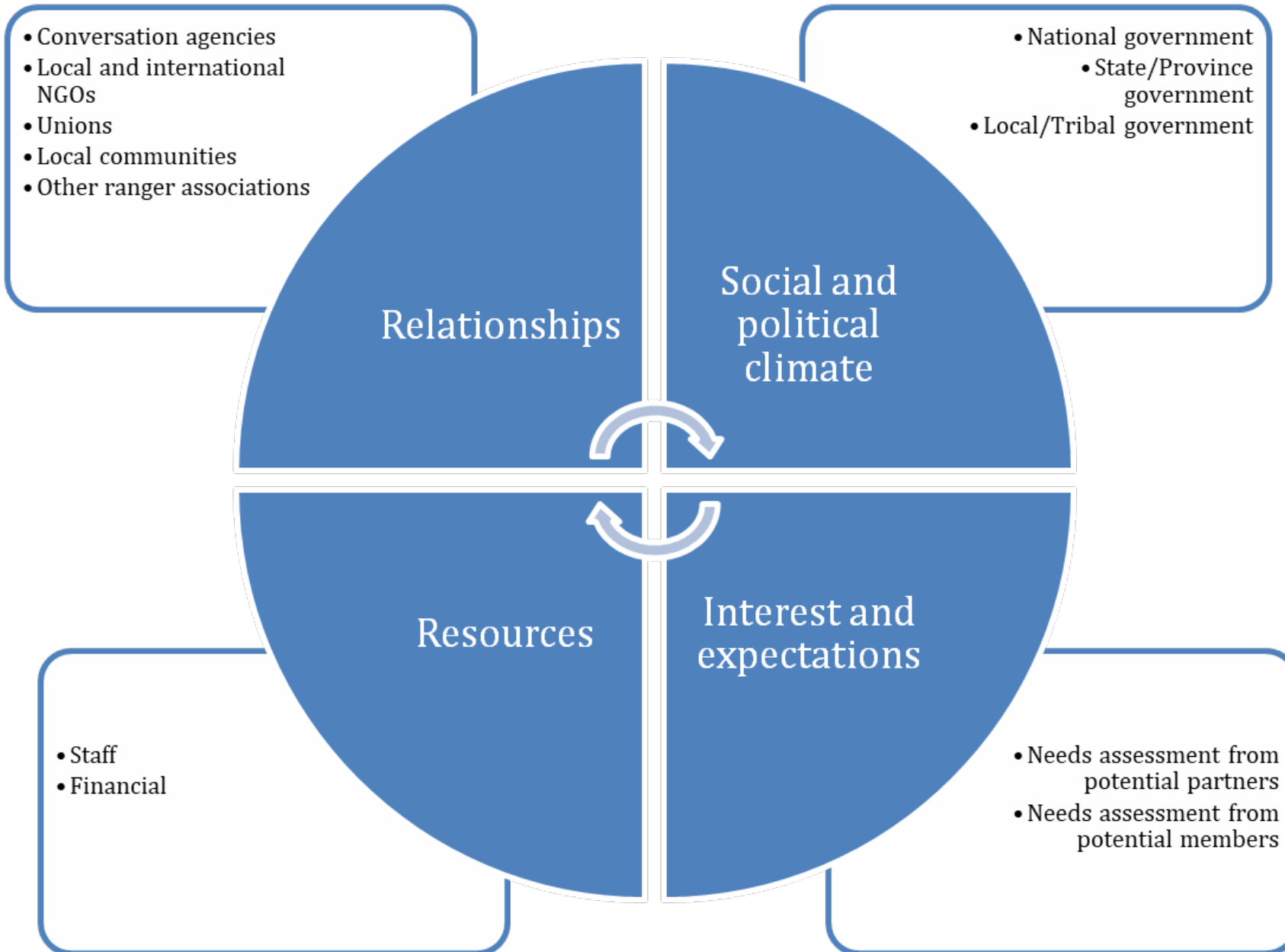
- Relationship with conservation agencies, avoiding a union stigma

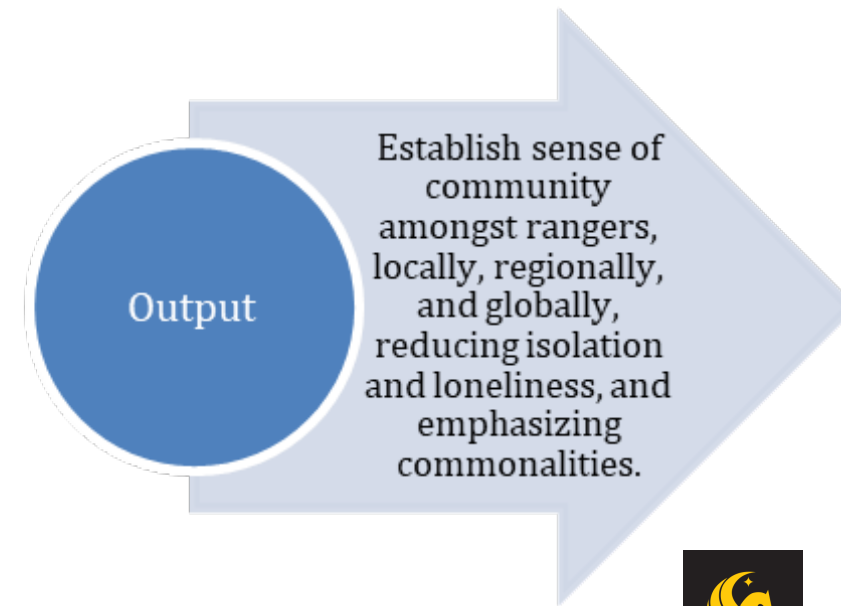
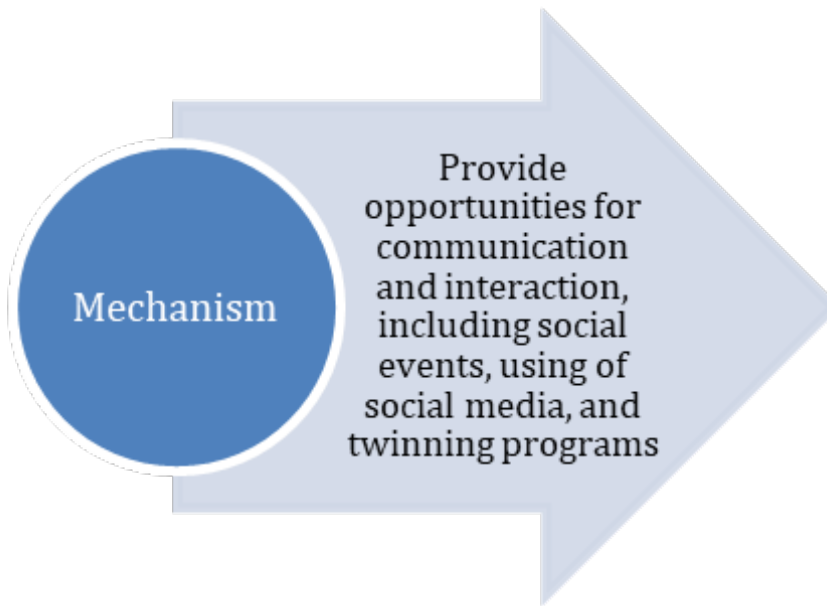
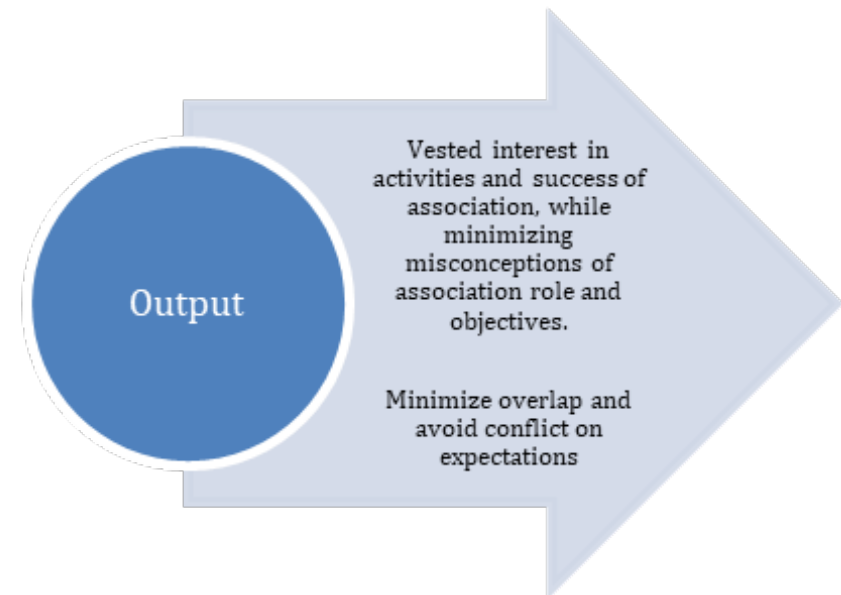
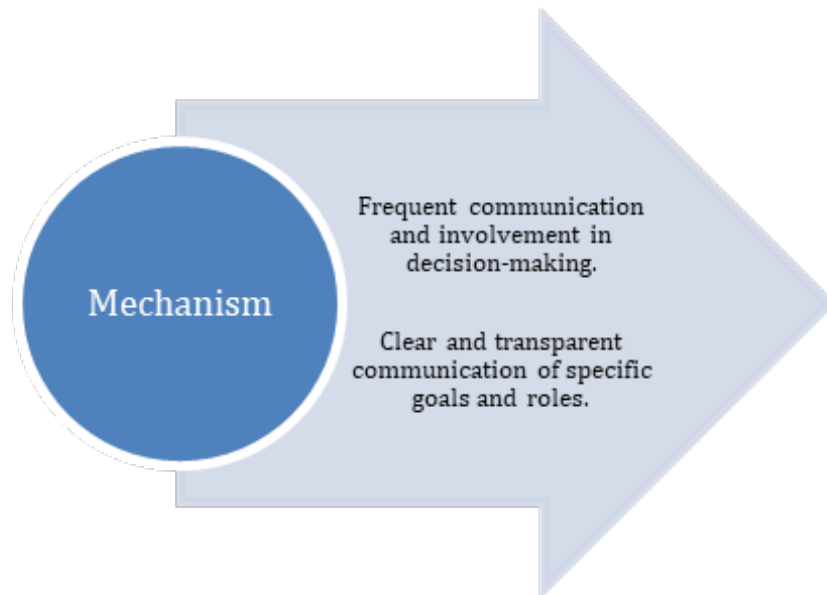
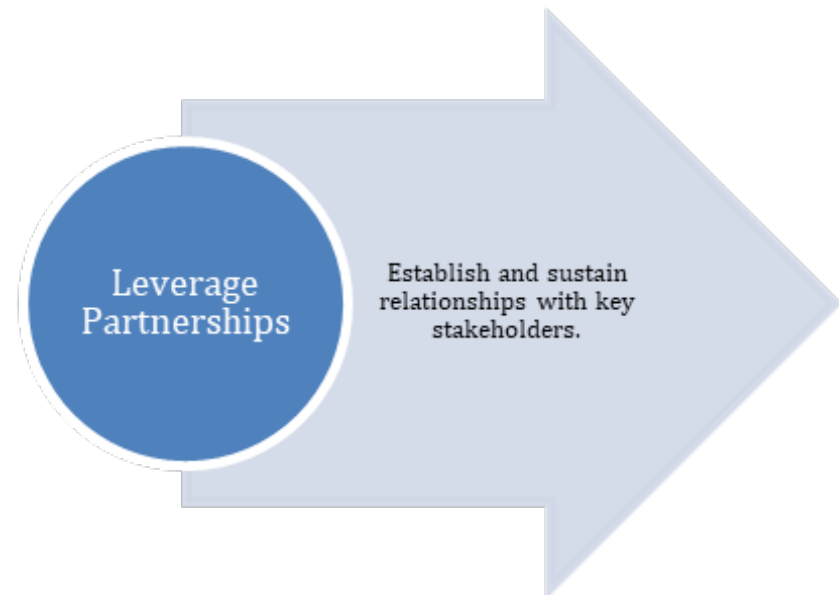
“Sometimes it's like they absorb the responsibilities that they know are what the unions should be doing. And he's saying that this happens at different levels, not only in the national regional association, but small like local ranger associations, they face the same situation where they end up doing work similar to what a union should do. **But it's because of the absence of this legal figure.** [...] But he's saying that he's well aware that the definition of association is very different for what unions should do.” (Respondent 18)

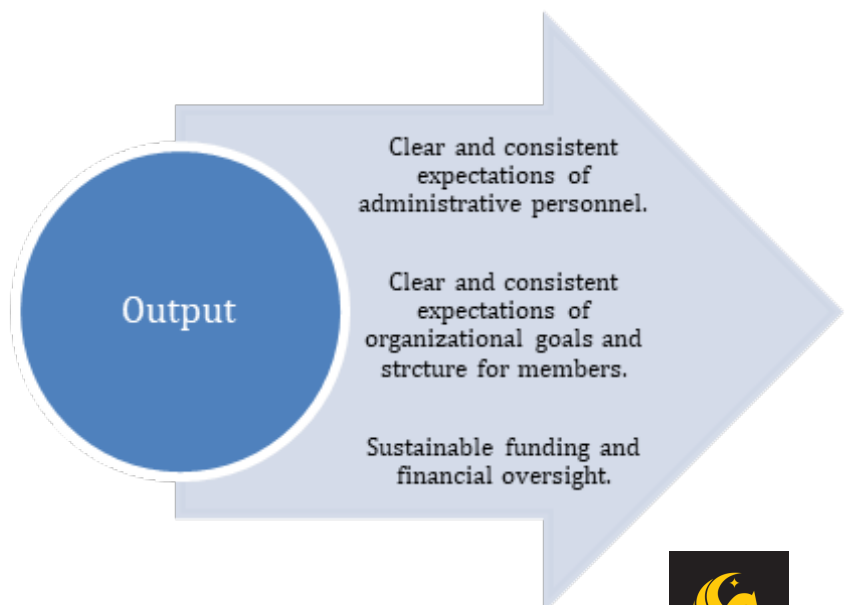
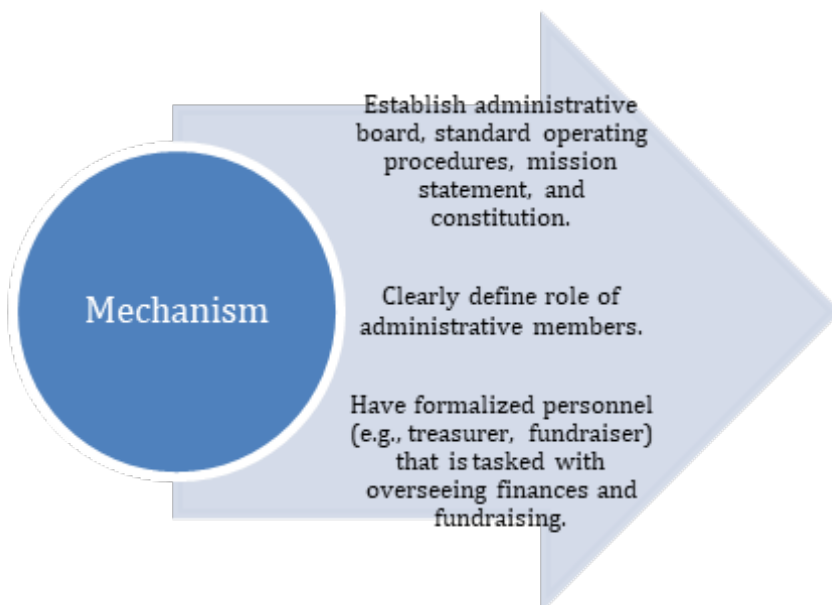
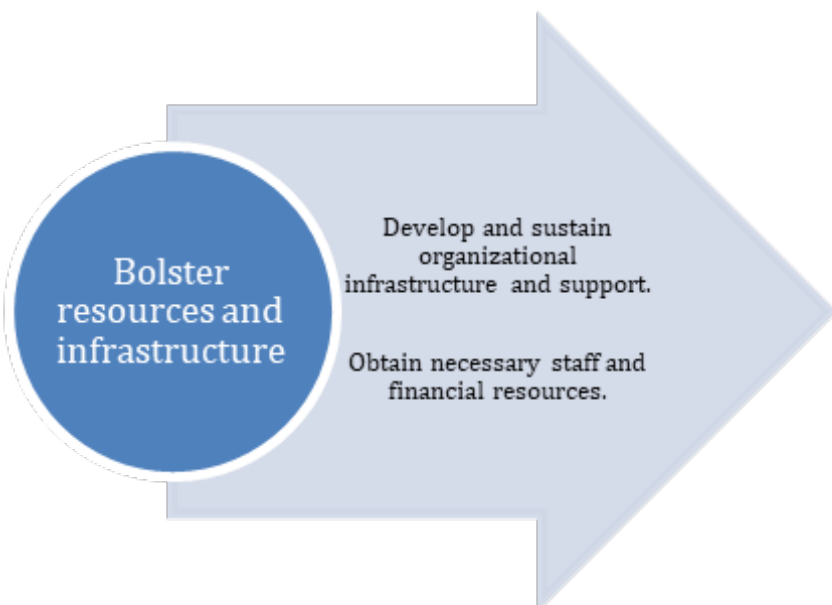
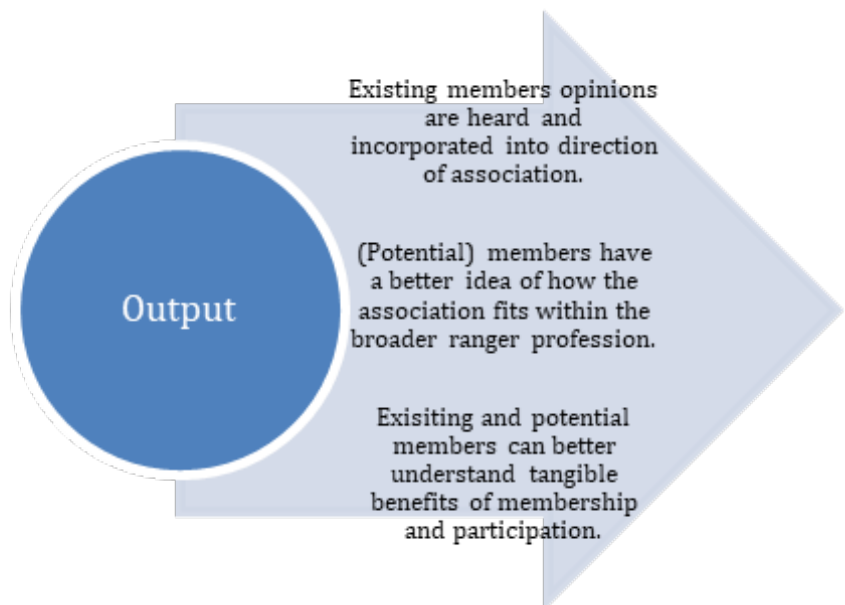
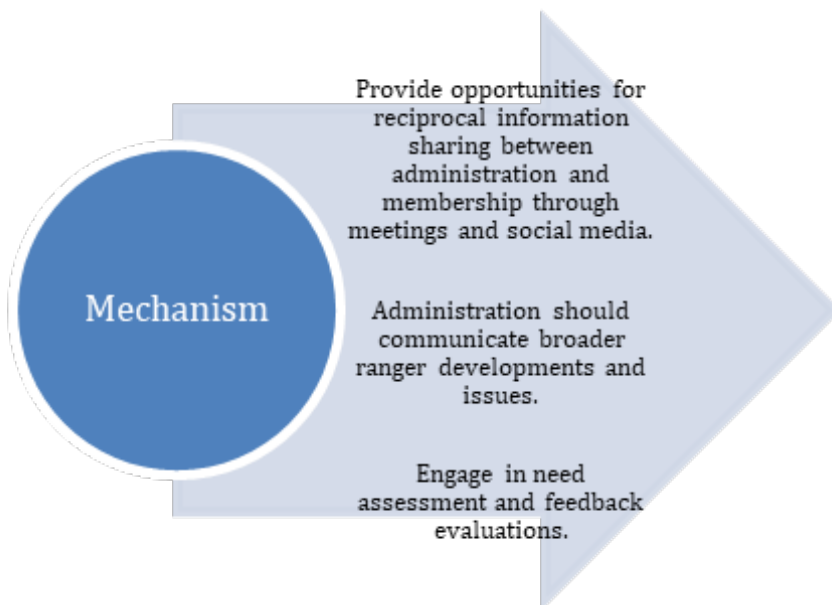
“Because we do not want anything to get in the way between our association helping the department, or our association helping the department employees. And, if that could get in the way, you know, we don't want to have anything to do with it. **So, we don't lobby. We don't comment.** Our association is **focused on the people** [...] In other associations, I know because I've talked to them, they were created to lobby or to do certain things. **We choose not to.**” (Respondent 8)

# A Way Forward









# Future Considerations

- Formalized link with conservation agencies and associations
- Defining "improving work conditions" and the role of associations
- Role in explicitly addressing ranger-related issues, or raising awareness/advocacy
- Measures of association effectiveness

# Thank You!

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