



# **RANGERS FOR 30 BY 30:** A PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE TO ENSURE EQUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

A framework for support from governments, agencies, donors and NGOs to implement Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework.



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**URSA**  
UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE

# THE VITAL ROLE OF RANGERS

Target 3 of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) agreed in Montreal in December 2022, includes a requirement that at least 30 per cent of the planet is equitably and effectively conserved and managed by 2030 ('30 by 30').

This target cannot be achieved without an adequate area-based workforce. At the forefront of this workforce are rangers, encompassing state employed personnel, Indigenous peoples, community and voluntary guardians, and personnel of privately managed areas. Their work includes protection, conservation, monitoring, visitor services, fire management, law enforcement, education, community support and regulation of sustainable use. Alongside target 3, rangers also have a vital role in achieving many other targets of the GBF (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The contributions of rangers to the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (Stolton et al 2023).



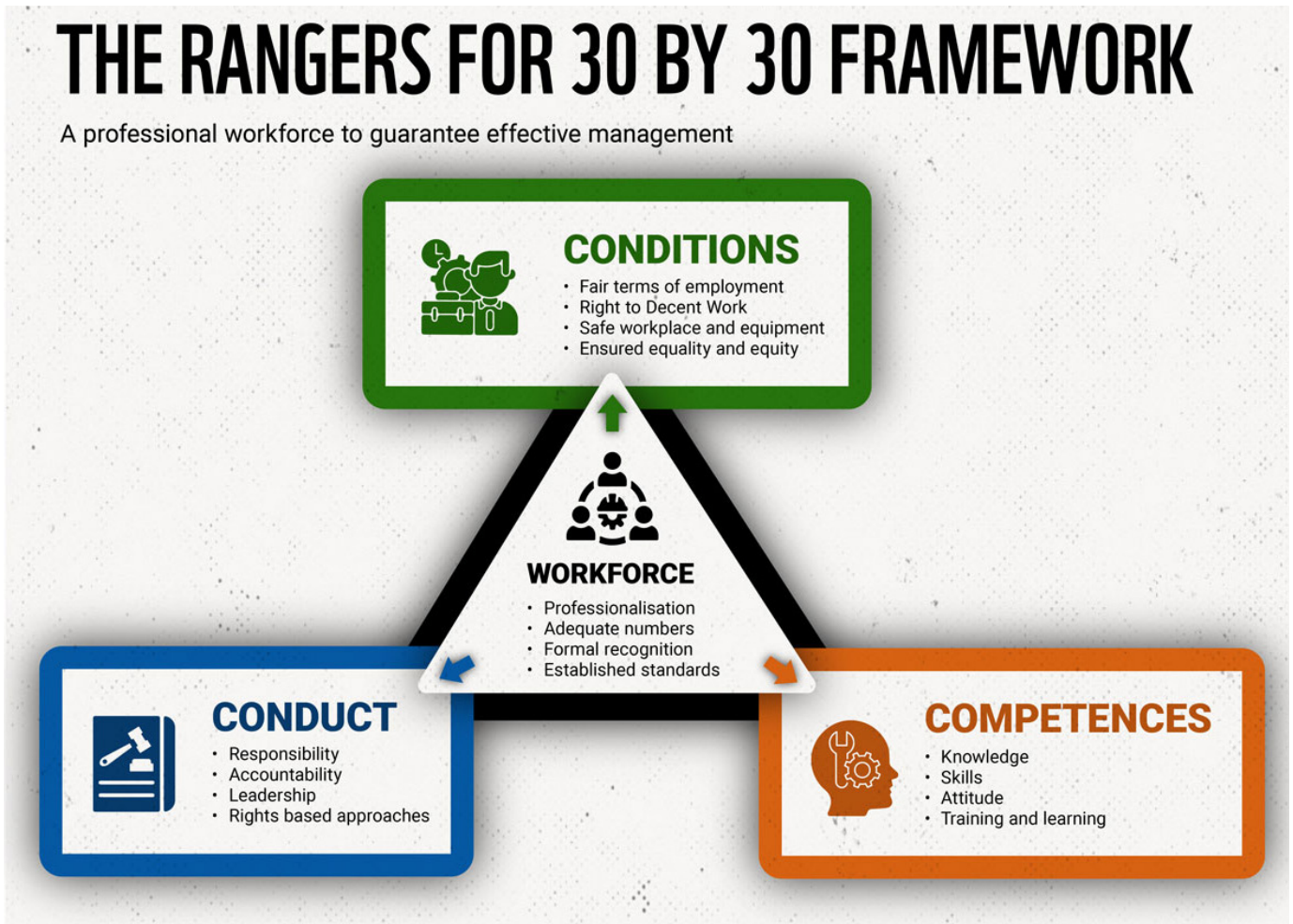
In 2022, the International Ranger Federation (IRF), the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) and other partners issued a policy note calling for the Global Biodiversity Framework to recognise rangers as 'essential planetary health workers'<sup>1</sup>.

Following the Kunming-Montreal agreement<sup>2</sup>, this document outlines how that can be achieved, through a commitment by countries, agencies, managers, NGOs and donors to ensuring that a diverse ranger workforce is able to deliver what has been agreed in a professional, responsible and accountable way.

# THE RANGERS FOR 30 BY 30 FRAMEWORK

The 'Rangers for 30 by 30 Framework' (Figure 2) defines essential requirements for **Conditions**, **Conduct** and **Competence** for a **Workforce** that is **sufficient in numbers, diverse and recognised**.

Figure 2. The Rangers for 30 by 30 Framework



1 Ranger Round Table Policy Note (2022). Essential planetary health workers: Positioning rangers within global policy. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/1210/?tmsv=1671783842>

2 <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222>

## REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK

IRF and the other members of URSA have identified the following essential elements of support to ensure implementation of the four components of this framework and the deployment of a workforce that can deliver effective and equitable management of 30% of the planet and contribute to the overall implementation of the GBF. A list of key references and support materials for each component is included at the end of this document.

### WORKFORCE

The overall requirement is that the formal workforce is fully professionalised and that others in ranger equivalent roles are enabled to adopt professional standards according to the contexts of their work. Minimum essential elements are:

- **Adequate.** We know that workforce numbers are around 1/3 of what is required even to meet current requirements. The total workforce will need to grow by at least 1.5 million if 30 by 30 is to be effective. The most recent recommendation for average numbers of rangers is one per 26km<sup>2</sup> (Appleton et al., 2022).

- **Formal Recognition.** The ranger occupation needs to be formally recognised nationally and internationally, including acknowledgement of community and Indigenous rangers and guardians. Ranger employers also need to recognise the rights of rangers.

- **Established Standards.** Implementation of a global framework of standards, adapted to local contexts, provides a foundation for the ranger occupation to be established as a respected profession.

### CONDITIONS

Many rangers endure unacceptable working conditions and have insecure and unfair terms of employment. Like any other workforce, they should have the right to 'Decent Work' as defined by Sustainable Development Goal 8. To be able to work effectively, safely and securely rangers need:

- **Contracts, pay and benefits** that are fair and in line with other comparable occupations.

- **Adequate health, safety and security** from the dangers of their work.

- **Working conditions, workplaces and equipment** that allow them to work safely and effectively.

- **Equality and equity.** Ranger teams should be more diverse and should reflect the communities they serve. All rangers should have fair treatment and equal opportunities.

### CONDUCT

To avoid and address conflict, ensure observance of legal and ethical responsibilities, prevent abuse and misconduct, and become respected members of the community, all rangers need:

- **Clear mandates** for the level of authority they carry, along with guidance on mandates, limits of authority and responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable people and ensuring and protecting the rights of others.

- **Codes of conduct** that provide clear guidance to rangers on their mandates and on requirements for responsible and accountable delivery of their duties.

- **Support and training** from employers and donors to observe guidance on conduct and safeguarding.

- A high level of **competent leadership and oversight.**

In parallel, local communities need mechanisms to enable equitable governance, to air grievances and to seek redress without retaliation.

### COMPETENCE

Rangers and those responsible for them should know what is expected of them and be able to do it. Surveys show that many have inadequate job descriptions and are not sufficiently trained. They need

- **Clear job descriptions** that set out what is expected of rangers in terms of skills, knowledge, attitude and personal attributes.

- **Training and continuous learning** to ensure the establishment and maintenance of competence.

# A CALL TO ACTION

for establishing and maintaining an effective ranger work force.

## Donors and funding frameworks

- Should recognise that investments in biodiversity conservation require planning for and deployment of an adequate, professional and permanent workforce.
- Should engage with national labour ministries and agencies over protected and conserved areas workforce planning.
- Should ensure that the framework of Workforce, Conditions, Conduct and Competence are incorporated into funding and support mechanisms for the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Should acknowledge the role of the community and Indigenous workforce in management of protected and conserved areas, and work with their leaders to provide appropriate support.
- Should support the IRF and URSA to promote and operationalise the framework and monitor progress.

## International Bodies

- The International Labour Organisation should recognise the ranger occupation, include it in official occupational registers and develop a regulation on ranger employment (based on published IRF and URSA guidance).
- The Convention on Biological Diversity should ensure that programmes and funding mechanisms for implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework include full consideration of workforce needs and issues.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) should better recognise and adequately support the role of rangers in protected and conserved areas as tools for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- IUCN should include a resolution on protected area workforces in its next Congress.

## Governments

- Should officially recognise rangers and other protected area occupations. Ranger workforces need to be institutionalised, ensuring working conditions and training entitlements similar to other service occupations. This will prevent typical 'boom and bust' cycles of project-based workforce support.
- Should acknowledge the role of the community and Indigenous ranger workforce in management of protected and conserved areas, and work with their leaders to provide appropriate support.

## Employers

- Should adapt the IRF and URSA standards and guidance to fit the national context, and adopt and institutionalise them through training and inclusion in job specifications.

## NGOs and other providers of technical support

- Should incorporate IRF and URSA standards into their systems for project management and safeguarding.
- Should encourage and enable partners to adopt IRF and URSA standards and guidance, adapting them where necessary to local contexts.
- Should incorporate IRF and URSA standards into capacity building activities.
- Should explore innovative mechanisms for funding rangers and ranger activities.

# GUIDANCE AND PUBLICATIONS

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## Workforce

### Key publications

Appleton, M.R., Courtiol, A., Emerton, L. *et al.* Protected area personnel and ranger numbers are insufficient to deliver global expectations. *Nat Sustain* 5, 1100–1110 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-022-00970-0>

Stolton, S., *et al.* (2023). Essential planetary health workers: Positioning rangers within global policy. *Conservation Letters*, 00, e12955. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12955>

### Other publications

Appleton, M. R; *et al.* (2021). What will it take to professionalize rangers? *Parks Stewardship Forum*, 37(1). <https://dx.doi.org/10.5070/P537151748>

Moreto, W., Elligson, R., Singh, R., & Aisha, H. (2023). Blurred lines- Indigenous state rangers: An exploratory assessment. Universal Ranger Support Alliance. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/1283/?tmstv=1691380384>

Ranger Round Table Policy Note (2022). *Essential planetary health workers: Positioning rangers within global policy*. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/1210/?tmstv=1671783842>

Seager, J. (2021). *Working Towards Gender Equality in The Ranger Workforce: Challenges & Opportunities*. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/645/?tmstv=1671783841>

### Forthcoming publications

International Ranger Federation and Universal Ranger Support Alliance (due 2023). *Equity and Equality in the Ranger Workforce*.

International Ranger Federation (Due 2024) State of the Ranger Report.

## Conditions

### Key publications

International Ranger Federation and Universal Ranger Support Alliance (2023). Protected and Conserved Area Rangers Convention: A draft International Labour Standard. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/>

### Other publications

Anagnostou, M., Gunn, V., Nibbs, O. *et al.* An international scoping review of rangers' precarious employment conditions. *Environ Syst Decis* 42, 479–503 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10669-022-09845-3>

Belecky, M., Singh, R. & Moreto, W. (2019). Life on the Frontline 2019: A Global Survey of the Working Conditions of Rangers. WWF [https://files.world-wildlife.org/wwfmsprod/files/Publication/file/blpy2c\\_wwf\\_rangers\\_survey\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://files.world-wildlife.org/wwfmsprod/files/Publication/file/blpy2c_wwf_rangers_survey_report_2019.pdf)

Belecky, M., Parry Jones, R., & Singh, R. (2021). Employment conditions of public sector rangers: A major under addressed problem. *Parks Stewardship Forum*, 37(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/P537151749>

Iraola, M.J., Barrueco, S., Bertzky, M., Singh, R. and Galliers, C.M. (2022). Safeguarding the Rights and Well-being of Rangers. Part 1: Principles. Universal Ranger Support Alliance and Part 2: Guidance and Tools. International Ranger Federation and Universal Ranger Support Alliance. <https://www.ursa-4rangers.org/>

# GUIDANCE AND PUBLICATIONS

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## Conduct

### Key Publication

International Ranger Federation (2021). Code of Conduct for Rangers. International Ranger Federation. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/619/?tmstv=1691380384> (available in multiple languages).

### Other publications

Stolton, S., Timmins, H.L. and Dudley, N. (2022). Building Trust with Rangers and Communities: A scoping report for URSA. Volume 1: Scoping Report and Initial Findings. Universal Ranger Support Alliance <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/941/?tmstv=1691380384>

Stolton, S., Timmins, H.L. and Dudley, N. (2022). Building Trust with Rangers and Communities: A scoping report for URSA. Volume 2: Case Studies. Universal Ranger Support Alliance. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/960/?tmstv=1691380384>

USAID (2022). Training and monitoring best practice guide: Rights-Based Training for Rangers in National Parks and other Protected Areas; Protected Area Social Safeguards: How-To Guide: Community Engagement; Protected Area Social Safeguards: Grievance and Redress Mechanisms. [https://biodiversitylinks.org/library/resources/5c-1\\_training-and-monitoring-best-practice-guide\\_30mar22\\_508.pdf](https://biodiversitylinks.org/library/resources/5c-1_training-and-monitoring-best-practice-guide_30mar22_508.pdf)

## Competence

### Key publication

International Ranger Federation and the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (2023). Global Ranger Competences: a concise summary of skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed by a competent, professional ranger. International Ranger Federation and the Universal Ranger Support Alliance. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org/download/1371/?tmstv=1691380384>

### Other publications

Appleton, M.R. (2016). A Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PATRS-002.pdf>

Lotter, W.D. et al. (2016). Anti-poaching in and around protected areas: Training guidelines for field rangers. International Ranger Federation. <https://www.internationalrangers.org/wp-content/uploads/Anti-poaching-Training-Guidelines.pdf>

Maggs, G., et al. (2021). A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49494>

Woodside, D. P. & Vasseleu, J. (2021). Shaping a global strategy for building capacity and performance of rangers in and around protected areas. Parks Stewardship Forum, 37(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/P537151746>

## International Ranger Federation (IRF)

The 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.

[www.internationalrangers.org](http://www.internationalrangers.org)

## The Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA)

URSA is a coalition of conservation organisations supporting and promoting the International Ranger Federation to build a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers, who can act effectively as custodians of the natural world. We help them advocate for the creation of inclusive and effective teams at the forefront of protecting nature, people, and the planet. Our time-bound support prioritises recognition, resources and representation for rangers around the world.

[www.ursa4rangers.org](http://www.ursa4rangers.org)

### URSA Members



Cover photo: Members of the Masungi-Bayog Ranger Team © Renz Perez / Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc.  
Back photo: Portrait of Singye Wangmo using walkie talkie in Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan.

International Ranger Federation and Universal Ranger Support Alliance (2023). *Rangers for 30 by 30: a professional workforce to guarantee equitable and effective management of protected and conserved areas (revised version)*. International Ranger Federation and Universal Ranger Support Alliance. <https://www.ursa4rangers.org>