

PRINCIPLES ON EQUITY, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS IN THE RANGER WORKFORCE



INTERNATIONAL
**RANGER
FEDERATION**



INTRODUCTION

Rangers¹ play a vital role in protecting cultural heritage, natural resources, and ecosystems, contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and mitigating climate change impacts. Investing in and supporting rangers is crucial to maintaining a professional and diverse ranger workforce, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or social background.

Equity and equality are fundamental objectives outlined in the URSA Action and the Chitwan Declaration. These goals advocate for equal opportunities, fair working conditions, and human and labour rights protection for all rangers. Rangers can bring about positive change and shape the future of their profession by identifying barriers and devising effective strategies to overcome them. Establishing principles, guidelines, and practices that equity, equality and rights, supporting diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunities can create a flourishing and respected workforce.

Indigenous peoples and local communities constitute a significant portion of the ranger workforce and play a pivotal role in global conservation efforts. These groups have developed distinct surveillance, protection, and problem-solving systems independent of formal institutions. By providing equitable recognition and support, we can ensure the sustainable management of critical areas and facilitate the prosperity of Indigenous communities and local groups.

Transformative measures are necessary to rectify existing inequities and discriminatory practices within the ranger sector. Underrepresented groups often face barriers to career advancement, resulting in segregated workforces and limited upward mobility. Ranger leadership must prioritise equity, equality, and rights to cultivate an inclusive workplace culture. Implementing these principles creates equitable and diverse work environments, enhancing reputation, mitigating legal consequences, and fostering a positive public image.

Embedding an equity, equality, and rights framework by 2025 is essential for the ranger sector to achieve its objectives and contribute to the SDGs. The perspectives of rangers on the challenges and opportunities related to equity, equality, and rights within their workforce are crucial in shaping principles, guidelines, and initiatives that provide equal opportunities and recognition to all rangers, regardless of their backgrounds.

¹ Definition of a Ranger: A wide range of working titles are in use globally, all of which fit the definition of the term "Ranger". A number of additional titles have been identified. For this document, the term ranger will be used to refer to any of the relevant working titles. For more information on the definition and additional titles, visit the [IRF's Ranger Code of Conduct](#)

The recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) sets an ambitious “30x30” target (Target 3) of effectively conserving and managing at least 30% of the world’s lands, inland waters, and coastal and ocean habitats, a goal that requires a capable workforce. With Rangers at the forefront, the IRF’s Draft Strategy pillars, including Ranger Advancement and Professionalism, Ranger Networks and Learning, and Organizational Sustainability and Capacity, ensure essential standards for workforce sufficiency, diversity, and recognition. Envisioning a world where rangers are recognised, valued, respected, and supported as key guardians of our planet's natural and cultural heritage, the International Ranger Federation (IRF) aims to realise this vision by 2030. This commitment to fostering global acknowledgement for rangers as key guardians of our planet's natural and cultural legacies underscores the IRF's dedication to developing, advancing, promoting, and advocating for the ranger profession globally in its critical role in conserving our natural and cultural resources.

PURPOSE

Incorporating equity, equality, and rights principles in the ranger workforce creates a fair, inclusive, and diverse working environment that offers all rangers equal opportunities, fair treatment, and recognition. It aims to reduce discrimination, protect human and labour rights, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a positive organisational culture. The ranger workforce can thrive by prioritising these principles, leading to more effective conservation practices and sustainable outcomes. Promoting equity, equality, and rights within an organisation involves creating an inclusive and fair environment where all rangers have equal opportunities and access to resources. Furthermore, these principles are not limited to only the ranger workforce; they apply to ALL individuals occupying managerial and leadership positions within all conservation organisations and protected areas. These principles ensure the holistic integration of equity, equality, and rights across all levels of engagement and responsibility, regardless of individuals' backgrounds or characteristics.

PRINCIPLES

1. PROMOTING EQUITY, EQUALITY, AND RIGHTS:

- a. **Non-discrimination:** It is ensured that no ranger is subjected to unfair treatment or discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics².
- b. **Equal opportunity:** Equal access to employment, training, advancement, and personal development opportunities is provided.
- c. **Fair policies and practices:** Policies, procedures, and practices that promote equity and equality are established and implemented, ensuring consistent enforcement. These practices are unbiased, transparent, and fair to all. Decisions related to hiring, promotions, and compensation are based on merit.
- d. **Inclusive culture:** An inclusive and respectful culture is fostered where diversity is valued, and rangers from different backgrounds feel welcome, heard, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.

² [Protected characteristics | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.ehrc.org/)

2. FOSTERING WORKPLACE CONDITIONS THAT PROMOTE EQUITY, EQUALITY, AND RIGHTS:

- a. **Vision and goals:** Management is committed to equity, equality, and rights by setting a clear vision, goals, and values that promote fairness and inclusivity.
- b. **Safe and inclusive environment:** A safe and healthy work environment that meets or exceeds industry standards will be implemented - an inclusive and non-discriminatory physical environment that protects the rights of rangers. Safety protocols, training and resources to support ranger safety are prioritised through appropriate safety measures, such as protective gear, first aid training, and communication equipment, to reduce the risk of injury or death.
- c. **Transparent communication:** Open and transparent communication channels are promoted, encouraging dialogue, feedback, and collaboration, allowing rangers to express their concerns freely.
- d. **Equitable Compensation and Promotion:** Transparency and fairness in compensation policies and benefits are ensured by regularly reviewing them and identifying and addressing possible disparities in pay based on gender, race, or other factors. Transparent promotion processes are implemented, providing equal opportunities for all qualified rangers to advance in their careers. This includes clearly defined criteria and fair selection procedures.
- e. **Grievances:** A confidential grievance policy and procedures for reporting misconduct and protecting whistle-blowers are established and implemented. A zero-tolerance outlook on bullying, harassment, and discrimination and subjecting offenders to disciplinary procedures are promoted.
- f. **Accommodation and accessibility:** Measures are implemented to accommodate the diverse needs of rangers, including reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities, ensuring accessible facilities, and considering the needs of those with families.
- g. **Performance-based evaluations:** Performance evaluations are based on objective criteria to ensure fair and unbiased assessments of rangers' contributions and achievements.
- h. **Recognition of diverse contributions:** The diverse contributions of rangers from different backgrounds are celebrated and acknowledged, ensuring that the achievements of all individuals are valued and recognised.
- i. **Improve working conditions:** Adequate and safe equipment, facilities, and infrastructure will enhance performance and efficiency. Improved health care and essential services will ensure that rangers maintain their physical and mental health, enabling them to perform their critical duties.

3. COLLABORATING TO STRENGTHEN EQUITY, EQUALITY, AND RIGHTS:

- a. **Unity:** Strengthening collaboration among stakeholders, conservation organisations, NGOs, community rangers, Indigenous rangers, local communities, etc., is essential for leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise. This ensures that their needs and perspectives are considered and that the ranger workforce represents the communities they serve.
- b. **Employee participation:** Rangers are encouraged to actively participate in initiatives, committees, or resource groups focusing on equity, equality, and rights. This allows their voices to be heard and contributes to developing inclusive practices.
- c. **Sharing best practices:** Existing platforms (e.g. The Ranger App) are used to share best practices and success stories related to equity, equality, and rights, both internally

and externally, to inspire and inform others.

4. IMPLEMENTING TRAINING PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES.

- a. **Comprehensive training for all:** In adherence to our fundamental principles of equity, equality and rights, comprehensive diversity training is provided to rangers, extending to those occupying management and leadership roles. This training encompasses various topics, including diversity, inclusion, unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity, cultural differences, cultural competencies, respectful communication, anti-discrimination, and harassment. Customised to cater to the diverse needs within our ranks, this training endeavours to heighten awareness, challenge stereotypes, foster inclusivity, empower rangers to address inappropriate conduct and foster a safe and respectful workplace environment.
- b. **Equity, Equality, and Cultural Training:** Existing management and leadership will equip themselves with the requisite skills in equity, equality, rights, and cultural competency. These targeted training initiatives will empower leadership to construct inclusive teams, adeptly manage diverse talents, and mitigate biases in their decision-making processes.
- c. **Rights and legal obligations:** Rangers know their rights, obligations, and legal protections under anti-discrimination and labour laws. This includes information on reporting procedures, available resources, and the consequences of violating rights and policies.
- d. **Mentorship initiatives:** Mentorship programs and formal and informal networking are established in partnership with external ranger networks. This offers additional support and guidance outside the immediate work environment, expands networks, and provides diverse perspectives and opportunities.
- e. **Strategic Leadership Training for Underrepresented Communities:** Investing in specialised training for underrepresented communities cultivates a diverse talent pool, offering organisations a competitive edge and demonstrating a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. This initiative enhances the involvement and longevity of underrepresented staff and guarantees fairness by providing equal access to training, resources, and mentorship opportunities. These training programmes will address systemic inequalities by methodically breaking down barriers and promoting equity, propelling the transition toward a more inclusive managerial workforce.

CONCLUSION

By embracing the principles of equity, equality, and rights and implementing the above principles, the ranger community can create a more inclusive, diverse, and empowered workforce. Recognising the value of all rangers, regardless of their background, and providing them with equal opportunities and support will enhance the effectiveness of conservation efforts and contribute to a more just and equitable society. Committing to equity, equality, and rights should be an ongoing effort, continuously evolving and adapting to create an environment where every ranger can thrive.

These principles must be adapted depending on social and cultural realities and the environmental context.

This draft guideline document supports the following documentation and should be read and understood in the context thereof¹:

- a. The IRF Ranger Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Adoption.
- b. Working Towards Gender Equality In The Ranger Workforce: Challenges & Opportunities.
- c. Addendum A - Definitions related to Equity, Equality and Rights.

¹ For extensive guidelines and resources for rangers, consult the following websites: [Resources IRF](#) and [Resources - URSA | Universal Ranger Support Alliance \(ursa4rangers.org\)](#)