

# Press release: IWT conference 2018: new funding for counter-poaching training in Africa

On the first day of [the fourth international Illegal Wildlife Trade conference](#) in London (Thursday, 11 October 2018), £900,000 of new funding has been announced to develop a new British military counter-poaching taskforce.

The announcement builds on the significant success of, and lessons learned from, the UK's previous work to train rangers in Gabon and Malawi.

Operatives will be deployed to train African park rangers in more effective and safer counter-poaching techniques. The project aims to reduce the number of poaching incidents by catching poachers and bringing them to justice.

The UK will work in partnership with targeted countries to provide support for intelligence mapping, interception tracking tactics and operations management.

Training carried out by [the British Army](#) in Gabon and Malawi during 2018 has been well received with 84 Ecoguards being trained in Gabon, which will double by the end of the year, and 120 Rangers partnered in Malawi.

UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

The illegal wildlife trade is one of the most serious issues of organised crime facing the world. In the last year alone more than 100 rangers were killed on the front line of the fight against poachers – as an international community we must do everything we can to support their vital work. The ranger programme we are funding provides professional training and builds capability to tackle this crime across Africa.

This demonstrates the UK's global leadership and delivers our commitment in [the 25-Year Environment Plan](#).

UK Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

The training we already provide has made a significant difference to the protection of some of the planet's most magnificent wildlife.

As the British Army now takes its world-renowned training further across Africa, those responsible for this abhorrent practice should be looking over their shoulders.

Maj James Cowen, who led the deployment in Malawi, said:

Having seen the beauty of these animals up close, and how at risk their survival is due to poaching, we are more determined than ever to stop these criminals in their tracks.

Planning is currently ongoing to identify countries and parks across the region with which the British Army will partner and assist over the next year.

Assistance can be tailored to the needs of the specific parks and consists of both base located training, such as command and control and paramedic, and a partnering model that sees UK soldiers living and operating with Rangers – helping Rangers to improve techniques and procedures whilst the UK soldiers have been able to improve their own skills in tracking and bush craft; a true partnership.

Environmental Crime, which includes the illegal wildlife trade and illegal logging, is the fifth most lucrative serious organised crime and is estimated to be worth up to £17 billion a year.

The two-day conference in London (11 to 12 October 2018) is bringing more than 80 nations together including international political leaders, conservation organisations and individuals interested in closing down the vile trade in wildlife.

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## **Press release: Regulator publishes Sector risk profile 2018**

The Sector Risk Profile 2018, published today (11 October 2018) by the Regulator of Social Housing, highlights health and safety issues, failures to meet stakeholder expectations and reliance on sales as significant potential risks for social housing providers to manage.

The report, now in its sixth edition, sets out the range of strategic and financial challenges facing the social housing sector. It is designed to help registered providers, board members and others to understand the operating environment and to think strategically about how their organisation can manage its risks.

Whilst the sector continues to have to manage a range of issues to ensure that it remains viable and well governed, the regulator has highlighted 3 key areas for boards to consider. Boards should:

- be clear about their health and safety responsibilities, both for stock that they own and stock that they manage, to ensure that tenants are safe in their homes and staff are safe at work
- consider their stakeholders expectations in their decision making, including tenants and residents; lenders and investors; and central and local government
- ensure that sales activity is underpinned by an understanding of local housing demand and the mitigations available if sales and staircasing do not match expectations

This year's publication also emphasises risks to specialist providers, including the particular risks inherent in lease-based providers of supported housing, on which the regulator will be issuing a further report in due course.

Fiona MacGregor, Chief Executive of RSH said:

The risks facing each organisation will depend upon the scale and nature of that business. It is important that boards understand the specific issues that they face, carry out adequate stress testing and plan meaningful mitigations. We will look for assurance from providers that they have robust stress tests, internal control systems and appropriate risk management. We will also continue to monitor the exposure that sales risks have on the sector as part of our quarterly review of providers' overall financial strength.

The aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire has seen unprecedented scrutiny of the social housing sector, landlords' relationship with their tenants, and public interest in the sector's wider social role. In this context providers must show how they are delivering on their social purpose and objectives, and meeting their promises and commitments. Where things go wrong providers should be open and transparent and look to put the issue right as quickly as possible. Failure to do so could not only undermine stakeholder confidence in individual providers but also affect the reputation of the sector as a whole.

The regulator's Sector Risk Profile 2018 is available on the [RSH website](#).

1. The regulator's annual Sector Risk Profiles are available on the [RSH website](#).
2. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range

of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants. For more information visit the [RSH website](#).

3. See our [Media enquiries page](#) for press office contact details. For general queries, please email [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or call 0300 124 5225.

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## **Official Statistics: Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire: Final 2017 data**

This release contains the data on UK wood production, imports and exports to be submitted to international organisations for the production of international statistics on forest products.

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## **National Statistics: Renewables obligation: certificates and generation, June 2018**

Monthly data for June 2018 on the number of certificates issued for generation under the Renewables Obligation (table ET 6.3).

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## **Official Statistics: Timber Forecast Questionnaire 2018: UK forecasts**

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Forecast Questionnaire (TF) collects estimates for the current year and forecasts for the coming year of removals, production and trade of wood and wood

products. Statistics are collected annually by the UNECE.