



## Beyond Humans

*When Risk Management meets  
Animal Welfare*

**Animal welfare** concerns the physical and mental wellbeing of animals.

As the world faces growing challenges such as climate change, conflict, biodiversity loss, and expanding human populations, global organisations supporting animal welfare deliver what is often live-saving programming.

This programming not only benefits animals, but also communities, livelihoods, public health, and the ecosystems we all depend on.

Animal welfare organisations often work in complex, and sometimes hostile environments where animal welfare concerns and ecosystems intersect with humanitarian, economic and cultural realities. As a result, animal welfare initiatives can be sensitive and may be perceived differently across different cultural and political contexts.

Operating in **very unique risk landscapes** requires **very specific risk management frameworks, both in terms of safety and security.**

From a **safety** perspective, key concerns can include:

- **Remote and Lone Working:** Isolation and limited access to support and emergency assistance.
- **Health Risks:** Exposure to zoonotic, foodborne and waterborne illnesses.
- **Animal Handling:** Bites, scratches and injuries from distressed animals.
- **Travel & Environment:** Travel safety, extreme weather and challenging operating environments (terrestrial, marine, and/or aerial)
- **Wellbeing:** Stress, burnout, moral injury and compassion fatigue.

From a **security** perspective, key concerns can include:

- **Legal & Regulatory:** Complex laws, regulations and compliance requirements.
- **Humanitarian Recognition:** Limited inclusion in emergency response and coordination.
- **Reputational:** Media scrutiny, misinformation and public criticism.
- **Opposition:** Resistance from interest groups, communities or other stakeholders.
- **Cyber Security:** Cyber threats, online harassment and data breaches.

## So, why does Risk Management matter?

When risk management meets animal welfare, protecting people, animals, operations and reputation **becomes a shared responsibility.**

Drawing on established Risk Management principles and international NGO best practice, **a tailored approach to Risk Management** is key to helping animal welfare organisations identify, assess and mitigate risks while supporting safe, effective and sustainable programme delivery in such unique environments.

## Key Factors to consider:

- **Operating Environment:** Conflict, political instability, crime, civil unrest, natural hazards and public health threats.
- **People:** Staff, volunteers and partners' safety, wellbeing, skills, capacity and access to support.
- **Animals:** Species-specific risks, habitat considerations, endemic zoonotic disease and disease outbreaks, options for safe assessment and handling, access to emergency care, disease transmission risks.

# Key Factors to consider:

-  **Community & Cultural Context:** Local attitudes towards animals, cultural sensitivities, religious considerations and the role of animals in society, livelihoods and survival.
-  **Legal & Regulatory Environment:** Animal welfare legislation, import/export controls, licensing requirements for veterinary equipment and drugs and NGO registration obligations.
-  **Programming & Logistics:** delivery across diverse land, marine, and aerial environments, travel, supply chains, communications, infrastructure and access constraints.

## Key Factors to consider:

-  **Reputation & Stakeholders:** Public perception, media scrutiny, donor confidence, community acceptance and relationships with governments and industry.
-  **Information & Cyber Security:** Data protection, cyber threats, digital communications and protection of sensitive information.
-  **Crisis Preparedness & Resilience:** Organisational readiness to respond to incidents, emergencies and disruptions in challenging environments while maintaining critical operations.

Effective animal welfare work depends on the safety, security and resilience of the people and organisations delivering it, requiring a practical and tailored approach for anticipating risks, making informed decisions, and ensuring compassionate work can continue safely and effectively.

**Risk management is not separate from animal welfare. It enables it.**

At **ILS**, we support global animal welfare organisations in navigating these unique landscapes - helping build ethical, secure, and effective safety and security risk management frameworks even for the most challenging environments.

👉 **Let's talk.** If you or your organisation are looking to strengthen your risk management framework we'd love to hear from you.