

RISE Assessment

(Created by the Learning By Giving Foundation)

The RISE assessment is a tool created by Rebecca Ricio (Director of Experiential Philanthropy Program at Northeastern University) in partnership with the Learning by Giving Foundation (www.learningbygivingfoundation.org). The RISE framework is used to evaluate a non-profit organization to increase efficiency and purpose with charitable giving. The four RISE elements provide a more objective process for thinking through the practices and qualities of a non-profit organization and the practices and qualities of that organization result in success or failure. The RISE framework assesses the Relevance, Impact, Sustainability and Excellence in Management and Operations.

Panthera

(<http://www.panthera.org/>)

Mission:

Ensure the future of wild cats through scientific leadership and global conservation action

EIN: 20-4668756, Registered 501(c) 3

Form 990 and audited financial statements are located on their website
(<http://www.panthera.org/action-center/donate>)

Relevance

1. Clearly articulates and understands the need for the service or benefit it provides.

1a. Can define the scope of the need or issue it addresses. Does it know who is affected, where they are, how the need or issue affects them, and where there are gaps in current services?

3 -Scope of need defined with significant detail

2a. Understands the underlying causes of the need or issue it addresses.

3 - Clear understanding of underlying causes

3a. Recognizes other stakeholders or actors affected by or engaged in addressing this need, including other nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, community

organizations, public agencies, and donors.

3 - Some recognition of stakeholders

Panthera has numerous partners the work with on the various programs that they have. Please see the Panthera website for a full list: <http://www.panthera.org/partners>.

2. Demonstrates a depth of understanding of what works in response to this need.

2a. Demonstrates familiarity with evidence and best practices related to this need by citing research, data, reports, past experience, or other reliable sources of information.

3 -High level of familiarity

Panthera lists numerous scientific publications, technical manuals and books pertaining to large cat conservation. These include but are not limited to status reviews, discussions and support of methodologies, and causes of conservation threats. <http://www.panthera.org/publications>
This doesn't even include the expertise of all of the staff members. Many staff members have been working with large cats for numerous years and therefore have a great deal of working knowledge of what methodologies work best and how to implement them.

3. Demonstrates a depth of understanding of the community/individuals it serves.

3a. Has meaningful relationships with the individuals and community it serves. For example, does the organization demonstrate cultural awareness and roots in the community?

3 - Significant evidence of respectful relationships

One example of their dedication to involving the community is the Lion Guardians Program. Partnering with a local lion conservation group, Lion Guardians, Panthera works to employ Maasai warriors to protect rather than kill lions. Another example is the Pantanal Jaguar Project. Panthera is working to save the Jaguar in the Brazilian Pantanal by creating a Jaguar corridor. They are doing this by partnering with local

ranchers to incorporate conservation into the cattle management practices.

3b. Substantively engages the individuals and community it serves. For example, does it hire members of the community as staff or engage them as advisors or board members?

3 - High level of engagement

Panthera has On-the-Ground staff in countries that are home to the species they aim to protect; staff members are hired from that country. For example, Panthera has hired Daniela Araya as a Field Scientist for the Costa Rica Jaguar Program. Daniela Araya is from San Jose, Costa Rica and received her BA from the National University of Costa Rica. Another example is Sanjay Gubbi, hired as the Coordinator of the Tiger Program. Sanjay Gubbi is a native of India, received his Master's Degree in Conservation Biology and has years of experiences saving Tigers in India.

4. Given your assessment of these criteria, please give your overall rating of confidence for the organization's Relevance.

High confidence

Impact

1. Has a clear definition of success.

1a. Defines the social benefit it provides in specific terms.

3 - Social benefit is clearly defined and specific

1b. Has a clear definition of success; clearly explains what results it is trying to achieve.

3- Clear definition of success

In the letter from the Chairman, he defines the ambition of Panthera (as a whole) to be to save all large cat species across their ranges. Many of the Panthera programs have clear definitions of success also. For example, the Tigers Forever program has a goal of increasing the tiger populations at key sites by 50% over the next ten years

(<http://www.panthera.org/programs/tiger/tigers-forever>). Some of the programs seem to lack measurable details. Overall Panthera does a good job of clearly describing their goal and/or mission within each program and as a whole.

1c. Definition of success includes meaningful life change or a discernible benefit for the individuals or community served.

3 - Highly meaningful life change or benefit

Panthera clearly describes the benefits to saving large cat species (<http://www.panthera.org/about>). Large cat species require large swaths of land and adequate prey availability; therefore, protecting these species acts to protect the other species that inhabit the same areas. Panthera describes large cat species as indicators of ecosystem health.

2. Logical program design.

2a. Has a sound rationale for the way it has chosen to address the need or issue, based on research, past experience, best practice, etc.

3 - Very sound rationale

2b. There is a logical relationship between the organization's activities and its intended results.

3 - Strong relationship between activities and results

2c. Results are likely to "stick" over time for the intended beneficiaries.

3 - Results highly likely to "stick"

Panthera has such a wide range of programs and it also has numerous programs for each cat species that positive results will likely "stick" for the future. They are also working in conjunction with many other organizations increasing the likelihood that their work will result in positive benefits for large cat species well into the future.

3. Evaluating its performance.

3a. Holds itself accountable for results.

2 - Holds itself somewhat accountable

Panthera updates the website and social media outlets regularly with information on their programs. Therefore people are able to see how each program is doing in terms of reaching their goals. There are no direct performance measurement methods used on the website.

3b. Engages in evaluation or performance measurement to measure its results.

1 - No evidence regarding use of evaluation

It is not easy to find measures of evaluation on the website. The Panthera website and various program websites are very detailed and extensive however they do not make performance evaluation an obvious part of their public information. Keeping this in mind, the absence of this information on the website does not mean that the organization is not carrying out performance measurement and evaluation.

3c. The metrics or measurements used are adequate to demonstrate that the intended social benefit is being provided.

1 - Measures do not exist or are not adequate

There are not obvious measures put in place available to view online. Again, this does not mean that they are not being undertaken.

4. Given your assessment of these criteria, please give your overall rating of confidence for the organization's Impact.

High confidence

Sustainability

1. Business model is clearly defined.

1a. Provides sufficient information to convey what it spends money on.

3 - Comprehensive information on expenses

Panthera provides a comprehensive financial audit report for each year. These reports breakdown functional expenses, assets and SOMETHING. It is also important to note that currently the Chairman and his family cover Panthera's overhead (e.g. administrative costs) so that 100% of donations go to the field. (for more information on this Erin Adams may be contact via eadams@panthera.org or 646-786-0405)

<http://www.panthera.org/action-center/donate> (financial Docs...page 4 starts functional expenses breakdown)

http://www.panthera.org/sites/default/files/Panthera_Fact_Sheet_2012.pdf (info Sheet)

1b. Provides sufficient information to convey the types of income it receives, such as foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, individual donations, and fees for services provided.

2 - Some information on revenue

Panthera receives financial support from individuals, corporations, grants etc.; however, there is no breakdown of ratios.

1c. Demonstrates a logical connection between the work it does and how it secures money to support that work.

3 - Strong connection

100% percent of gifts go towards fieldwork due to the contributions of the Chairman and his family to cover overhead costs.

2. Offers a strong value proposition for the funders it seeks.

2a. Articulates an attractive message that appeals to the type of funders it seeks.

3 - Highly appealing value proposition

<http://www.panthera.org/action-center/donate>

2b. Demonstrates worthiness of its funders' support.

3 - Very likely to meet expectations

Panthera is highly dedicated to meet the expectation of its funders. With the financial help of the Chairman, Thomas Kaplan, any funders donations are directed to the field. Funders are also able to designate which program their funds will go to support.

3. Business model is viable now and into the future.

3a. Revenue is consistently equal to or greater than expenses. (Organization is not running a deficit.)

3 - Revenue exceeds expenses

Most recent 990 form (2012) shows a net revenue of \$514,906

3b. Has diversified revenue sources that are viable into the future and resilient against economic downturns.

3 - Highly resilient

Panthera receives funding from a variety of sources (e.g. individuals, corporate sponsorships, grants, endowments).

3c. Provides evidence that its finances are well-managed.

3 - Strong evidence is provided

Panthera provides an annual financial and audit report for the public to view. In addition, they also have a well-qualified Chief Financial Officer, Gary Baldaeus. They also have a Leadership Gift Specialist, Kathyrn Reidy, to steward gifts from foundations and individuals.

4. Given your assessment of these criteria, please give your overall rating of confidence for the organization's Sustainability.

High confidence

Excellence in Management and Operations
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1. Organization is recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity.

1a. Letter of determination can be confirmed.

3 - Can be confirmed [IRS Exempt Organizations Status Check](#)

2. Staff are qualified.

2a. Leadership team is identified.

3 - Identified with details about qualifications

This is a very larger organization however most staff members are listed on their website and all of the leadership staff have descriptive biographies detailing their experience and expertise.

2b. Leadership team's qualifications reflect relevant knowledge and experience.

3 - Significant skills, knowledge, and experience

3. Board of Directors is qualified and engaged.

3a. Members of the board of directors are identified.

3 - Identified with biographical information

3b. Composition of board reflects relevant skills, knowledge, experience, access to resources, and familiarity with the community.

3 - Significant skills, knowledge, and experience

Please see biographies on the Panthera website (<http://www.panthera.org/people/board-directors>)

3c. Board members play a meaningful role in supporting the organization through their work and financial support.

2 - Somewhat meaningful support

Based on the biographies the Panthera website, it is hard to tell exactly how each member serving on the Board of Directors actively participates in the activities of Panthera. Dr. Rabinowitz, the CEO, is the only Board Member with a direct supporting role described in his biography. He conceptualized and initiated the Jaguar Corridor (from Mexico to Argentina) and the Tiger Corridor Initiative (Indo-Himalayan region of Asia).

4. Marketing and communications support and convey the organization's ability to achieve the RISE hallmarks.

4a. Materials are appealing and professionally written and designed.

3 - Very professional and appealing

4b. Materials clearly communicate the information an informed funder or stakeholder might seek.

3 - Comprehensive information

5. Given your assessment of these criteria, please give your overall rating of confidence for the organization's Excellence in Management and Operations.

High confidence