

# Research-driven NGO adds more on-the-ground workers to make a local impact on a global scale

## The challenge

With a mission to cut global emissions in half and protect the interests of vulnerable populations, WRI researches ideas that help shape public policy around the world. To do this important work, the organization relies on talented people on the ground to gather information, interact with local officials and governments, and develop solutions.

**“We put equity at the center of all our work,”** says Renuka Iyer, Chief Human Resources Officer at WRI. “So that the world’s most vulnerable populations have a voice on the things that impact them. And climate change impacts them quite significantly.”

The organization has offices and staff in several countries, but the breadth of its mission requires workers worldwide, even in countries where it doesn’t have a local entity to hire them.

**“We’re thinking about how we can better do work on the ground,”** says Shefaali Desai, HR International Manager, Global Human Resources, at WRI. “And that involves hiring staff who are technical or policy experts who could meet with local organizations and with local governments on a regular basis—not just flying in and out.”



WORLD  
RESOURCES  
INSTITUTE

### INDUSTRY

Nongovernmental organization (NGO)

### HEADQUARTERS

Washington, D.C.

### RESULTS

#### 6 continents

Workforce expansion through Global Employment Outsourcing (GEO), with employees hired in Kenya, Australia, Sweden, Philippines, Colombia, Canada, Belgium and Argentina

#### 40% cost savings

in global hiring, thanks to partnership with Safeguard Global



**“We can just do the work that we need to do, knowing that Safeguard Global is helping us manage risk in the countries we want to go to.”**

Renuka Iyer, Chief Human Resources Officer

WRI had been relying on consultants in the countries where it doesn't have a local presence, but recently that hasn't been a good option because of the scope of the work needed—projects may take longer than a consultant's contract, or may even be indefinite.

Additionally, the organization wants to ensure that workers receive benefits: "Not just benefits that are required, but in certain cases, there are benefits we want to add," Desai says. "Being able to provide people with health insurance, for example, is important to us. We want to make sure that our staff feel fully taken care of."

Not only did WRI need to find a way to legally employ people in countries where it doesn't have an entity—or employ people where entity setup isn't yet complete—it needed to ensure that everyone hired is in full compliance with all local labor laws.

**"We really wanted to make sure that whoever we're partnering with to hire employees is complying with local laws and fulfilling all the legal obligations,"** Desai says. "It's obviously important for the employees being hired, but (as an NGO) we also have funder obligations, and we want to make sure we're not doing anything to risk funding."



## The solution

WRI began the RFP process to find a way to hire the people needed to further its mission. After evaluating a few different providers, WRI chose [Global Employment Outsourcing \(GEO\)](#), the employer of record solution from Safeguard Global.

An employer of record hires workers on behalf of an organization, handling all the legal and administrative HR and payroll requirements, while the organization manages the workers and their day-to-day contributions.

**"Safeguard Global's footprint is in so many countries, and having one point of contact and standardized processes is a value-add for us,"** Desai says. "We wouldn't need to try to find organizations in each country or payroll companies in each country and have to do the vetting each time."

As part of its partnership with Safeguard Global, WRI currently employs 18 people in Kenya, where the organization is in the midst of a lengthy entity registration process. Once WRI establishes its Kenyan entity, it will transfer the workers to its own payroll in the country—"it's been really great to have that flexibility," Desai says.

In addition to the workers in Kenya, WRI employs people in Australia, Sweden, Philippines, Colombia, Canada, Belgium and Argentina through Safeguard Global.

**"We can just do the work that we need to do, knowing that Safeguard Global is helping us manage risk in the countries we want to go to,"** Iyer says.

Another benefit of GEO that WRI values is the ability to sponsor work visas. "While we try to hire local talent for projects, that doesn't always work out," Desai says.

When WRI hires through GEO, its workers have local HR teams to help answer questions or provide guidance on employment regulations.

"I always tell them that the local HR business partner is their first point of contact," Desai says. "I want our workers to understand the legal (employer of record) arrangement, and also the fact that the local HR partners are the ones who are knowledgeable about the local policies."

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Shefaali Desai  
HR International Manager,  
Global Human Resources

## The results

Since partnering with Safeguard Global, WRI has been able to integrate outsourced workers into its internal infrastructure and offer the same employee experience as the people it employs directly. Things like time sheets and expense reports, as well as IT, project management and performance management—all WRI workers use the same systems.

**"Since we've integrated them into our performance management system, we're able to figure out who's ready for promotion or has a performance issue,"** Iyer says. "So, when we do our salary increases and things like that, it's automatic. We just send that information to Safeguard Global and they just process it."

And because WRI has partnered with Safeguard Global for a number of employees around the world, the organization has been able to save on the cost of global hiring. "We got our costs down by about 40% because of the sheer volume of work," Iyer says.

The ease with which Safeguard Global has enabled WRI to expand its hiring capabilities around the world has let the organization focus on its strategic objectives. For example, where to go to further the mission—not on how to get there.

"Previously, the conversations would be, 'let's find out how we can hire somebody in a particular country,'" Iyer says. **"Now, when we find somebody, we can hire them through Safeguard Global. We create the strategy, and Safeguard Global implements it."**

## About Safeguard Global

Safeguard Global is a future of work company that helps workers and companies thrive in the global economy. Backed by a data-rich technology platform, local expertise, and industry-leading experience, Safeguard Global provides end-to-end solutions to manage people and scale operations. With Safeguard Global, organizations can recruit, hire, operate and pay anywhere in the world, no matter where they are in their growth journey.

To learn more at [safeguardglobal.com/GEO](https://safeguardglobal.com/GEO)