

FGASA PROFESSIONAL TRAILS GUIDE CERTIFICATE



The FGASA **Professional Trails Guide** conducts a guided nature experience on foot to view potentially dangerous animals having accumulated the FGASA required guiding experience on foot in areas with all the Big 5 dangerous animal species.

The FGASA Professional Trails Guide will be compliant with all FGASA requirements as well as legally compliant with NDT and CATHSSETA.

The FGASA Professional Trails Guide Certificate consists of the following:

COMPULSORY

Compulsory components

- **FGASA Lead Trails Guide** - Conduct a guided experience to view potentially dangerous animals (VPDA)
- The required **PFTC unit standards** (Professional Firearms Trainers Council):
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the Firearms Control Act 2000 (Act No 60 of 2000) applicable to possessing a rifle(Code:117705)
 - Handle and Use a manually operated Rifle or Carbine (Code:119651)
 - Handle and use a manually operated Rifle or Carbine for Business Purposes (Code: 123519)

- The FGASA **Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH)** Certificate (*Refer to the FGASA ARH Brochure for more information*)
- The FGASA **Professional Field Guide qualification** (*Previously known as FGASA Level 3*)
- A **Tracker Level II** certificate
- A valid **Wilderness Level 2** first aid certificate
- The required **active guiding experience** in areas with all the **Big 5** dangerous animal category species
 - 600 hours (500 in the workplace – guiding related, 100 can be non-guiding, eg rhino monitoring)
 - 300 encounters (10 per animal category. These must be in the work place during guiding based activities).

FGASA PROFESSIONAL TRAILS GUIDE

At this level the Professional Trails Guide:

- Is operating as a **Professional Trails Guide** on foot in dangerous game areas.
- Has the basic knowledge considered essential to register and legally conduct a guided nature experience on foot in dangerous game areas as a FGASA Professional Trails Guide.
- May be operating as a competent guide on foot in a number of different sites as a Professional Trails Guide. A Site in this case usually refers to a particular Game or Nature reserve, National Park in which dangerous animals occur.
- Has previously attained the **Professional Field Guide qualification**.
- Has the minimum required **600 hours** of experience in dangerous game areas that have all of the **big 5 animals**.

- Has been declared competent against the requirements of the FGASA **Lead Trails Guide** theoretical and practical assessment.
- Has attained a FGASA **Tracker II** Certificate.
- Has a valid, up-to-date Department of Labour recognised **Wilderness Level 2** First Aid certificate.
- Has the required PFTC unit standards (*If carrying a rifle for guiding*)
- Has the required FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH) Certificate (*if carrying a rifle while guiding in dangerous game areas*)

How do I get a FGASA Professional Trails Guide Certificate?

Once you have qualified as a FGASA Lead Trails Guide, attained the Tracker Level II Certificate and logged the required hours and encounters as a Lead Trails Guide you will be eligible to be awarded the FGASA Professional Trails Guide.

Experience required to be eligible for the FGASA Advanced Trails Guide Certificate:

- The experience required for a Trails Guide to be awarded the FGASA **Professional Trails Guide** Certificate is to have logged a minimum of **600 hours** of guided experiences on foot in areas with all categories of Big 5 animals. This experience can be gained in different reserves and **100 hours** of this can be **non-guiding experience** such as tracking, rhino monitoring, anti-poaching, etc.
- Your logbook must be sent to the FGASA Johannesburg office for verification of your guiding experience.
- On a Backpack Trail (sleeping in a tent) – 15 hours per day can be logged. Sleep-out Trails (not sleeping in a tent/keeping watch) – 18 hours per day can be logged.

Dangerous Game Logbooks

All dangerous animal encounters (Refer to the *FGASA definition of an encounter*) as Lead Trails Guide must be recorded in the FGASA Dangerous Game Logbook.

Dangerous game encounters

The logged approaches to view potentially dangerous animals for the Professional Trails Guide must include species from all categories of potentially dangerous animals from the list below:

- Elephant bull
- Elephant breeding herd
- Buffalo bull
- Buffalo breeding herd
- Lion & leopard
- White & black rhino
- Hippopotamus



An *encounter* is one of the following:

- the guide needs to respond to the animal because of the animal's behaviour and not the lack of behaviour (e.g. a feeding elephant across the river cannot be regarded as an encounter, but the elephant crossing the river towards the side of the trail group to feed or carry on with life and whose path will intersect with the current position of the trail group can be regarded as an encounter)

OR

- a reaction from the animal ie. animal may or may not be aware of the position of the trail group that requires the guide to respond (e.g. charging or threatening behaviour from the animal, or an animal which is moving in the direction of the trail group because it became aware of something or because that is the available escape route for the animal)

OR

- an unintentional chance contact at very close quarters with an animal unaware of the trail group, but which requires extreme caution and readiness from the guides to extract the trail group from the area and ensure the safety of man and beast (e.g. a sleeping buffalo at 5 or 6 yards).

Sightings of dangerous game on foot outside the above criteria are regarded as "sightings" and do not contribute to the required number of encounters.

Please note:

- **An animal may not be provoked in any way to get a reaction. This is unacceptable.**
- **FGASA does NOT promote any form of enforced encounters.**

FGASA requirements for the recording of experience

The experience on foot required for the Professional Trails Guide **cannot** be carried out by driving a vehicle to a potentially dangerous animal (Big 5 species) and then getting out of the vehicle to approach this particular animal on foot. This is NOT an encounter.

The logged experience required must include walking without initially knowing the exact location of a Big 5 dangerous animal, possibly tracking of the animal in question, approaching the animal taking into consideration all the environmental and client factors with safety in mind at all times. View the animal and move away leaving the animal as it was found. Obviously if circumstances change and the animal becomes aware of the approaching humans then the required action should be taken to ensure the safety of all.

The point being made here, is that the learner guide can log guiding experience on foot in dangerous game areas (*encounters – as per the FGASA definition of an encounter*) carried out in the same manner as the guided experience would be assessed, i.e. as per the previous paragraph and cannot be done by driving up to the animal, getting out of the vehicle, approaching the animal on foot and then recording this as walking experience.

This form of experience will not be accepted by FGASA for viewing potentially dangerous animals on foot experience, as this is considered to be a vehicle approach.

The Professional Trails Guide is assessed by means of:

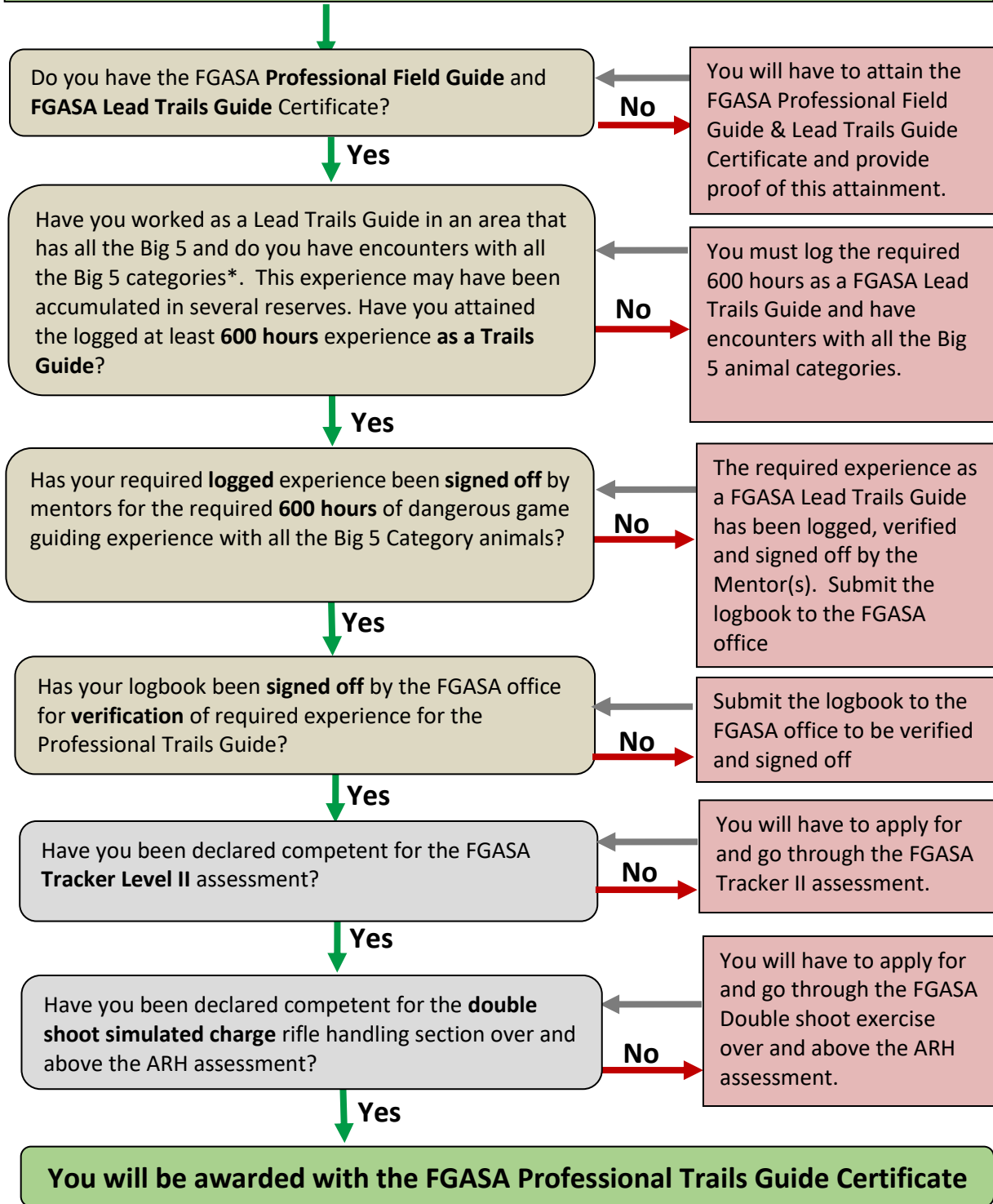
- Proof of the Professional Field Guide Certificate
- Proof of a Lead Trails Guide Certificate
- Proof of a current ARH Certificate
- Proof of a FGASA Tracker Level II Certificate
- Logbook verification (600 Hours on foot)
- Double shoot simulated charge exercise



Practical Shooting Assessment for the Professional Trails Guide

There is an additional practical assessment exercise in the form of the **1st and 2nd Rifle double shoot simulated charge exercise** with a Backpack on (5kg backpack) in the FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling assessment for the Professional Trails Guide. If you have already attained the ARH for the Trails Guide and it is still valid you will only have to do the Double shoot simulated charge exercise, however depending on when your ARH is due for renewal (Remember it is only valid for three years) it may be worth your while to go through the whole ARH shooting assessment while doing the extra Professional ARH exercise.

THE FGASA PROFESSIONAL TRAILS GUIDE QUALIFICATION



Keep logging your active guiding experience as a Professional Trails Guide in dangerous game areas working towards being eligible for the FGASA Professional SKS (Dangerous Game) Qualification. *(Refer to the Professional SKS (DG) Brochure for more information on this qualification)*