



KIMBERLY LAND COUNCIL

PRINCIPLES & GUIDELINES FOR DIRECT ACCESS FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CLIMATE ACTION, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND FIGHTING DESERTIFICATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET



I. Preamble

Indigenous Peoples have, since the Rio Conventions were adopted, participated in the processes related to climate change, desertification, and biodiversity and effectively contribute to the goals and targets adopted by Parties. In all these processes, Indigenous Peoples not only sought to introduce language in decisions to ensure that their rights are fully recognized and promoted, such as rights to lands, territories and resources, respect for their traditional knowledge systems, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and self-determination.

Part of the constant demand by Indigenous Peoples, other than rights recognition, is that adequate and accessible financing be made available to support their self-determined climate actions on the ground to combat climate change, desertification, and biodiversity loss. There have been some efforts to establish funding mechanisms that address this demand by Indigenous Peoples by different institutions. However, it has been noted, by a study commissioned by Rainforest Foundation Norway¹, that less than 1% of funding actually reaches Indigenous Peoples to secure tenure rights and manage forests in tropical countries. Governments must also recognise the false dichotomy of developed and developing countries in regard to funding initiatives and actions directed to Indigenous Peoples.

The reality of Indigenous Peoples is that we live across all types of bio-cultural regions and we are all experiencing the same marginalisation from States and their instrumentalities. For Indigenous Peoples there is no difference where we are located - whether developed or developing countries - our ways of life are threatened because our rights to our territories and resources are not secured or respected.

¹ Indigenous people get less than 1% of climate funding? It's actually worse: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/11/indigenous-people-get-less-than-1-of-climate-funding-its-actually-worse-commentary/>



II. Vision

The vision of the initiative is to establish a permanent independent Indigenous-led global funding mechanism to support global coordination, solidarity and experience/knowledge sharing, lobbying and advocacy work for Indigenous Peoples from the seven-social cultural regions to contribute to efforts towards enhanced biodiversity conservation, slowing and halting desertification, protecting all life and effectively respond to the impacts of climate change.

III. Why Indigenous Peoples want to achieve this goal?

Indigenous Peoples should have direct access to, and direct management of funding to ensure that resources effectively supports their self-determined needs and solutions. **Direct access means direct negotiation and discussions with financial partner countries or funders to determine level of funding, parameters, and agreements on the funding mechanisms.**

Indigenous Peoples need to take the lead in actions within their land and territories related to addressing the various impacts of climate change, desertification, and biodiversity loss. As they have organized themselves into effective alliances to promote and exercise their rights, so too will they organize to deal with the opportunities and challenges brought about by funding possibilities.



IV. What do Indigenous Peoples mean by direct access?

Direct Funding that respects and upholds the Principles and Spirit of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has clearly stated that funding for Indigenous Peoples should strengthen the exercise of their right to self-determination, including their ability to own, use and manage their lands, territories and resources. This should be the underlying objective of any funding opportunity for Indigenous Peoples, and not to be boxed into climate or biodiversity action. By ensuring that the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination is upheld and safeguarded, the twin issues of climate crisis and biodiversity loss will be better addressed.

V. Some elements of direct access are the following:

Self-Determined Sustainable Development. To define our needs for development, protect and manage our lands and territories by setting our own priorities and developing our own solutions. This requires moving away from donor-centric areas of support.

Broader and Inclusive Areas of Coverage. The mechanism needs to move beyond forests, fortress conservation and climate change activities that are limited in scope, to promote broader and more inclusive areas of coverage that encompasses the diversity of Indigenous Peoples *worldviews, lifeways* including traditional occupations such as, but not limited to, Pastoralism, Hunter-gathering, rotational/shifting cultivation, Fishing, and dryland farming across equally diverse ecosystems and Landscapes from rangelands, savannas, mountains, Forests, deserts, and Coastal areas, to the Arctic.

Integrates Capacity Development. Technical support for human resources, communications, information technology, financial management and accountability systems to support the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples.



VI. Objectives

The main objectives of direct funding for Indigenous Peoples is to enable the promotion, safeguard and respect for the self-determination and distinct lifeways of Indigenous Peoples', while accounting for intergenerational injustices, ensuring fairness and equity in access to funding and areas of support for a more just and cohesive society. In this manner, direct access is necessary for the fulfilment of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment , as well as ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' continue to own, use and manage their territories and resources according to their traditional knowledge and protocols.

The vision of the initiative is to **establish a permanent independent Indigenous-led global funding mechanism for Indigenous Peoples** and see funding flowing to Indigenous Peoples' communities and organisations and Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions that eventually contributes to saving biodiversity, stop desertification, protect all life and effectively respond to the impacts of climate change.

VII. Principles

Guiding Principles and Guidelines

1. Projects developed by Indigenous Peoples should be prioritised over those submitted by intermediaries. Affirmative Action, quotas or dedicated windows of access, in allocation and access to funding should be applied in support of Indigenous Peoples. Existing Indigenous Peoples' led initiatives need to be included, with priority given to projects collectively defined through customary and traditional governance structures over individual proposals. This is critical for addressing:



- I. historical marginalisation and its continuities;
- II. power imbalances in representation and decision-making arenas;
- III. accounting for and accommodating multiples visions of world/development; and,
- IV. promoting equity, cohesiveness, and peace.

2. Consistency in promotion, respect and application of the agreed principles for Indigenous Peoples' self-determined development. Projects or interventions must align with this objective – whether these are initiated/solicited by communities or are introduced;

3. Support areas/interventions informed by Self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Priority must always be towards interventions that have been designed and solicited by Indigenous Peoples/communities;

4. Full and effective leadership, including through FPIC & Community protocols, to support ownership by Indigenous Peoples. In instances where partners initiate the planning for projects, these processes should allow for the priorities of the communities to be taken into account and create pathways to leadership. While projects can result in multiple benefits for the whole world, the priority should be on meeting the needs of the communities and facilitating community ownership;

5. Clear and supported Safeguards against adverse impacts of interventions in Indigenous Peoples' territories. Projects should not just look at “needs” of communities but also the effects of these in the cultures, values and relations of the communities. Effective safeguards are those defined by



Indigenous Peoples within their respective territories and not those imposed upon them by other institutions;

6. Non-discrimination & Inclusivity of Indigenous Peoples' community groups, lifeways, livelihoods & landscapes. Funding should be equally available for all Indigenous Peoples and not select geographies, ecosystems or organisations, so as not to leave anyone behind. Special focus should be made to ensure equal participation and access of Indigenous women, youth, and people living with disabilities;

7. Transparency regarding the source of the funding. Financial resources and funding allocated to Indigenous Peoples' initiatives, specially from private sector and foundations, should not come from activities that violate national or international laws. Transparency on where resources come from activities that extract from, pollute and are environmentally destructive should be clearly disclosed to Indigenous Peoples;

8. Respect to Indigenous Peoples' cultures and languages. Projects with Indigenous Peoples should accommodate their cultures and languages whenever possible, in order to ensure our elders, knowledge holders, the youth and all Indigenous Peoples are able to participate effectively, if they so wish. Standardised use of the English language and current cultural practices of the environmental conservation sector not always welcome the participation of Indigenous Peoples and their diversity;

9. Partnership and effective collaboration between Indigenous Peoples and financial partners. To build competencies and skills that can make Indigenous Peoples' organisations more effective and sustainable in implementing funds, effective collaboration is needed;



10. Zero or minimal Intermediaries and institutional layering so that Indigenous Peoples can guide and ensure efficiency in decision-making and reporting, Indigenous peoples-friendly bureaucracy, unnecessary administrative expenses, and to maximise resources reaching to the ground/ community level. When intermediaries are necessary, they must be the choice of the Indigenous Peoples organizations (IPOs), after a thorough vetting process that includes transparency on the costs involved and the track record of such intermediaries.

VIII. Governance Mechanism

Indigenous Peoples must be allowed to determine structure and processes that led to greater decentralisation of decision-making processes and accountability, as well as how to eliminate corruption and gatekeeping of resources. The mechanism must strive for equality in representation across all 7 socio-cultural regions and all ecosystems, as well as across demographics to include Indigenous women, youth and people living with disabilities, respecting the distinct regional realities of the Indigenous Peoples of the region.

How the funding will look like, must be developed in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. This includes Indigenous Peoples determining funding and program themes, timelines, and processes including how funding will flow to the communities, such as:

- a. Mechanisms for selection of projects;
- b. Involve Indigenous Peoples in development of criteria;
- c. Evaluation of proposals.



IX. Actions

Way forward - how the process rolls out. Reaching out to both Indigenous Peoples and funders. Fundable actions include:

- d. **Land tenure:** direct access funding could be used to help Indigenous Peoples' ensure the land tenure of their territories, strengthening their land rights
- e. **Maximize investments, including through debt swaps:** towards recognizing Indigenous Peoples' as the guardians of our ecosystems, public and private financial partners could ensure Countries are pursuing debt redirection or debt relief strategies, where the financial resources could flow directly to Indigenous Peoples instead of the payment of the financial debt to public and private banks to repair the ecological debt caused by unsustainable development.
- f. **Loss and Damage:** Providing resources to help Indigenous Peoples deal with costs and needs associated with losses and damages, including that of intangible and non-economic losses and damages.
- g. **Distinct lifeways and sustainable livelihoods:** Towards restoring, protecting or improving sustainable lifeways, livelihoods and practices including those led by vulnerable groups (Indigenous women, youth, People living with Disabilities, etc.)



X. Indicators - how to measure the work?

Short-Term: Indicators that can measure and track short-term impacts and success.

1. Trends in percentage share of global resources per sector and regions reaching Indigenous Peoples/communities;
2. Spectrum of sectors/ecosystems and thematic areas of interest to Indigenous Peoples supported;
3. Trends in Indigenous Peoples' overall wellbeing, and representation in decision-making arrangements of existing funding mechanisms;
4. Trends in grievance/complaints reported arising from interventions implemented within Indigenous Peoples territories;
5. Trends in criminalization, harassment, torture, including death of Indigenous Peoples human rights and environmental defenders;
6. Trends in incidences and level of poverty among Indigenous Peoples community groups;
7. Trends and number of new initiatives based on self-determination of Indigenous Peoples;
8. Trends and level of capititation in new funding initiatives targeted at Indigenous Peoples;
9. Trends in number of IPOs accessing new and additional resources;
10. Trends in synergetic actions/collaborative efforts taken by Indigenous Peoples funding actors.



Long-term: Indicators that track more long-term benefits that can't be captured in short-term data collection.

1. Trends in the social and cultural determinants of health and wellbeing important to the affected Indigenous Peoples' population;
2. Trends in number of effective adaptation and mitigation responses;
3. Trends in ecosystem management and restoration of ecosystem services and Indigenous Peoples' lifeways;
4. Trends in return of land rights/land tenure;
5. Trends in climate data (water quality, soil quality improvement, etc.);
6. Trends in biodiversity (return/loss of animal species, traditional plants, etc.);
7. Trends in restoration of traditional food and knowledge systems and access to food (food sovereignty and security).

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By the world's Indigenous Peoples