



# ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

# 2017

## Rights and Resources Initiative

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### Partners



### Affiliated Networks



## The Rights and Resources Initiative

The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) is a global coalition consisting of 15 Partners, 7 Affiliated Networks, 14 International Fellows, and more than 150 collaborating international, regional, and community organizations dedicated to advancing the forestland and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. RRI leverages the capacity and expertise of coalition members to promote secure local land and resource rights and catalyze progressive policy and market reforms.

RRI is coordinated by the Rights and Resources Group, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. For more information, please visit [www.rightsandresources.org](http://www.rightsandresources.org).

## Supporters



The views presented here are not necessarily shared by the agencies that have generously supported this work, or all of the Partners or Affiliated Networks of the Coalition.

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Cite as: Rights and Resources Initiative. 2018. 2017 Annual Narrative Report. Washington, DC: RRI.

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# Overview of 2017: Letter from the Coordinator

**2017 was marked by contradiction and uncertainty.** Growing inequality, populism, and political turbulence threatened local livelihoods and local activists, as well as longstanding national and international governance structures. Social media and “fake news” amplified echo chambers and deepened social and political divisions. The disastrous effects of climate change, already causing great damage to millions of vulnerable people, became a “new normal,” increasing uncertainty and threats to social and economic development—and stability—for everyone.

At the same time, local communities’, Indigenous Peoples’, and women’s rights movements were increasingly connected and influential, using technology and political opportunities to advance their agendas in both national and international arenas. The growing number of community and indigenous leaders spearheading alternative development models were more active in, and increasingly elected to, local politics. And the fact that many of these newly elected leaders are women became a significant source of hope.

In this report, we share an update on RRI’s contribution to this much larger human story—what the RRI Coalition learned and achieved in 2017. We also share the Independent Monitor’s report on our work in 2017 and his assessment of our progress toward the goals we set in 2012, when we embarked on our last five-year strategic plan.

We in the Secretariat are proud of and humbled by the Coalition’s accomplishments over the last five years. I recall when we first set our goals in 2012 for the 2013-2017 Framework Program. Many of our donors thought we were wildly ambitious. Yet the Independent Monitor’s report found that the RRI Coalition achieved the vast majority of targets we set in 2012—many by 200 percent.

Together we “made the case” in the international arena for Indigenous Peoples’ and communities’ land and forest tenure rights among governments, development institutions, and large corporations—a tremendous change from 2013, when it was a struggle to make community land and forest rights part of global discussions on climate change, conservation, and development. We achieved crucial gains on the ground and created a new suite of tools and instruments to advance community rights. The Tenure Facility—incubated by RRI since 2012 and formally launched in 2017—is the world’s first and only organization devoted solely to supporting indigenous and community projects to scale up rights recognition. Its six pilot projects have already advanced tenure security over almost 2 million hectares of community and indigenous land. And most importantly, these efforts demonstrate the possibility for quick and dramatic results if donors trust in local people and their allies to implement large-scale projects to secure land rights.

The Independent Monitor’s assessment reaffirms the values that have brought us success so far: the importance we place on convening and connecting to enable cooperation and scale up efforts; evidence-based data and analyses to inform and empower change agents; and flexible and adaptable planning and implementation. Most importantly, the report notes the power of the Coalition, which amplifies all our voices and helps us achieve far more than we ever could alone.

These values—and the power of high hopes, trust, and collaboration—also underpinned the successes of this unique Coalition in 2017. These include the Stockholm Conference, which brought together over 300 participants from almost 60 countries to take stock of the global state of indigenous, community, and rural women’s land rights and develop a shared path forward to scale up rights recognition; the publication of *Power and Potential: A Comparative Analysis of National Laws and Regulations Concerning Women’s Rights to Community Forests* and an increased focus on gender justice across the Coalition; the growing success of the Interlaken Group in bringing a broad group of NGOs, companies, investors, development finance institutions, and donors to the table; the advancement of women’s and community land rights under the peace process in Colombia; support for communities to negotiate with companies and secure their rights in Liberia; and the Tenure Conference in Indonesia, which opened up new possibilities for collaboration between government and civil society. Last, but not of least importance, the senior management of RRG is stronger than ever before, and ready to deliver on the ambitious goals we’ve set for the next five years.

It won't be easy for them—or for any of us. We witnessed, and fought against, crushing rollback and unprecedented risks in 2017. Brazil scares and worries us all. And the horrific increase in murders and criminalization of land rights defenders reminds us why we are in this fight. The increase in tied funding has constrained work at the country level, and the funds available for opportunistic, unforeseeable work to seize emerging opportunities are increasingly scarce, meaning we need new partnerships and strategies to meet the needs of the people this Coalition exists to support.

One thing we know for certain is that moments of uncertainty are also opportunities for innovation and progress. RRI's third Strategic Program, which kicked off in January, aims to propel a new global initiative to secure women's property rights; strengthen and connect front-line defenders; transform economic development and conservation practices to respect locally defined development and conservation models; and consolidate and coordinate the emerging suite of tools for respecting rights.

The international governance structures and institutions that were built decades ago to guide global progress are crumbling, creating opportunities for new and more adaptive instruments to take their place. We—the RRI Coalition—did our bit in 2017 to make sure that within this new world there's an alternative architecture of institutions that directly finance and support Indigenous Peoples', communities', and rural women's rights and ideas for development—ideas that can help us mitigate the climate crisis and build a more equitable and prosperous world. We'll continue to do this in 2018 and beyond.

Thank you.



**Andy White**  
Coordinator

Rights and Resources Initiative

## Examples of RRI Impact in 2017



### Indigenous and rural women's community land rights were advanced on the ground and better positioned within broader development narratives

In 2017, growing attention to women's land and property rights within the global development community set the stage for increased and more coordinated efforts to recognize women's tenure rights. At the same time, while many organizations have programs to support women's land rights, few focus on the indigenous and rural women who rely on and manage the world's community lands. To this end, RRI contributed to raising awareness of the needs and contributions of this unique group of women through the release of its groundbreaking *Power and Potential* report; regional and global convenings on indigenous and rural women's tenure rights; and support for country-level actors to advance their rights.

#### ***New research set a global baseline for recognition of indigenous and rural women's land rights***

RRI's 2017 flagship report, *Power and Potential*—which evaluates 80 community-based tenure regimes in 30 low- and middle-income countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America—provides an unprecedented assessment of developing countries' legal frameworks regarding women's rights to community forests. The report reflects inputs from around the Coalition with respect to data collection, peer review, and case studies—contributing to a more unified narrative and shared language across RRI. It can also be used more broadly as a baseline for monitoring global progress toward women's land rights, especially with respect to SDG Indicator 5.a.2.

Critically, *Power and Potential* reveals that governments are failing to meet their international commitments to provide adequate protections for indigenous and rural women. It also finds that secure community land rights and the legal advancement of women go hand in hand, and that women's governance (leadership and voting rights) and inheritance rights are the least protected.

The report's formal publication in May 2017 was accompanied by case studies delving into women's rights around the world, including in Indonesia, Peru, and Liberia. Two additional research projects highlighted the gender-differentiated impacts of large-scale land acquisitions (in Indonesia and Ethiopia) and the impact of women's agency and leadership in customary, collective regimes (in Zambia and Bolivia).

This new suite of research was released through collaborative media and digital outreach strategies that capitalized on the breadth and diversity of the RRI Coalition, and also spurred new relationships. Contributions from around the Coalition—including case studies and accompanying research, blog posts, social media content, and prepared spokespeople from around the world—resulted in a coordinated global launch and press coverage from outlets in eight countries. In addition, partnerships with If Not Us Then Who? and the Ford Foundation resulted in a savvy digital outreach strategy, including two accompanying videos in three languages. Experimentation with paid promotion during the report launch also resulted in numerous lessons learned, including the recommendation to dedicate more resources to outreach and promotion on Twitter.

Findings were also effectively tailored for regional- and national-level contexts via regional factsheets and infographics, as well as country-level launch events. In Jakarta, a press event on the importance of secure tenure rights in **Indonesia's** forest communities featured women leaders from across the country, and was attended by journalists from major national and international media. Findings from *Power and Potential* were also packaged with new research from CIFOR and **Peru's** national indigenous women's network ONAMIAP, and presented at a joint advocacy event in Lima. The event discussed gender inequalities in the implementation process of current titling projects, and the need for stronger protections for indigenous women's tenure rights. As a result of this engagement—in which women leaders spoke directly to policymakers and international donors—indigenous women became members of regional monitoring committees under one of the largest land titling projects in Peru, the IDB-backed PTIRT-3 project.

### ***Convenings shaped the narrative and resulted in new strategies to advance women's land rights***

Key findings from *Power and Potential* informed a wide variety of global forums throughout 2017, including the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting, COP 23, the World Bank Land Conference, and the International Association for the Study of the Commons Conference.

These findings were also presented during regional meetings convened by RRI in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to identify strategies to accelerate the recognition of women's rights within collective land tenure systems. These workshops aimed to map and develop strategic alliances between existing regional initiatives; expand regional networks; and identify opportunities to advance rights. They became the starting point for the development of comprehensive regional themes and perspectives on gender and community tenure, and through this process, helped identify areas where the RRI Coalition can add the most value.

At the international level, RRI's 3rd International Conference on Community Land and Resource Rights in Stockholm further emphasized the gender justice theme through a dedicated strategy session on rural and indigenous women's rights and leadership in collective lands. The session was informed by the outcomes from the three regional RRI workshops and co-organized by RRI Coalition members including CADPI, CIFOR, Landesa, REFACOF, ONAMIAP, and FECOFUN. Bringing together diverse perspectives from grassroots and civil society groups, academia, international NGOs, donors, and the private sector, the session worked toward the articulation of a new global partnership on indigenous and rural women and community land rights, including efforts to showcase and document their increasing leadership. Toward this end, discussions took stock of strategies and tools being used to

***“ Unless women have equal standing in all laws governing indigenous lands, their communities stand on fragile ground. Safeguarding women's rights will cement the rights of their communities to collectively own the lands and forests they have protected and depended on for generations. ”***

**- Victoria Tauli-Corpuz  
UN Special Rapporteur on the  
Rights of Indigenous Peoples**



secure indigenous and rural women's rights, as well as current issues, challenges, commitments, and "gaps" in advancing this work. The conference culminated in an initial set of recommendations to move this agenda forward and explore a global initiative dedicated to indigenous and rural women's land rights.

The inputs from RRI's regional workshops and the discussions that emerged from the Stockholm Conference will inform RRI's upcoming Global Gender Justice Advisory Group meeting (May 2018) and the development of Coalition-wide strategies to advance women's rights and leadership within community-held lands.

### ***Women organized to advocate for stronger rights in legislative and policy frameworks at the national level***

In **Liberia**, RRI Collaborator the Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI) worked to increase community members' (especially women and youth) knowledge of REDD+ programs, and mobilized women to participate in a national dialogue on REDD+ and climate change in November 2017. The dialogue gained national-level recognition and spurred a commitment by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to hold four more regional consultations on REDD+ and gender.

In **Colombia**, the 2016 peace agreement, ongoing agrarian reforms, and increasing climate investments presented risks and opportunities for securing women's land and forest tenure rights. In 2017, Afro-descendant, peasant, and indigenous women built off of efforts to ensure that women's collective land rights featured in the National Public Policy of Rural Women. They finalized a set of guidelines for the creation of said policy, and used these guidelines to access decision-making spaces. As a result, Afro-descendant and indigenous women became part of a commission monitoring the implementation of gender perspectives in laws stemming from the peace agreement.

And in **Peru**, the mobilization and engagement of indigenous women at the national level led to concrete recommendations for the inclusion of indigenous women in decision-making on the implementation of land titling projects at the regional and national levels. As a result of this engagement, indigenous women became members of regional monitoring committees under one of the largest land titling projects in Peru, the IDB-backed PTRT-3 project.

Collectively, this work is positioning RRI both to advance indigenous and rural women's community land rights within the broader development narrative, as well as to shape global and regional narratives concerning women's tenure security within community-based tenure systems.



## Change agents at the national level promoted community land rights and secured greater commitments to recognize rights

Across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, RRI convened collaborative dialogues, capacity-building exercises, and advocacy campaigns that drove tangible progress on the recognition of Indigenous Peoples', communities', and rural women's land and resource rights. These efforts coalesced around two types of gains in particular: 1) greater recognition of indigenous and community land rights by national and local governments and scaled-up commitments to work with communities; and 2) an increased awareness of rights, resources, and tools among communities, which led to concrete achievements—from community mapping to filing land claims with governments.

Throughout 2017, RRI Partners, Collaborators, and Affiliated Networks capitalized on valuable political moments, such as mobilizing support for a proposed Forest Rights Law in Nepal in the context of the country's shift to democracy, and embedding respect for indigenous and Afro-descendant land rights into Colombia's peace and reconciliation process. This progress achieved in 2017 also opens the door for further positive momentum at the national and local levels in 2018.

### Asia

In **Indonesia**, RRI supported initiatives to bridge the longstanding implementation gap between government commitment and local-level realities with respect to securing tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The culmination of these efforts was the [Jakarta Tenure Conference](#) in October 2017—a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the Indonesian government and the Civil Society Coalition for Tenurial Justice. At the conference, President Joko Widodo announced the establishment of nine new village forests (*hutan desa*) covering 80,228 hectares and awarded customary forests covering 3,341 hectares to nine *adat* communities, a strong indication that the government is opening the door to greater transparency and accountability in working with indigenous and local communities. Recommendations from the conference have been incorporated into a Joint Action Plan for tenure reform, which is expected to be finalized in early 2018.

In **India**, RRI continued to support local and regional Collaborators to scale up Community Forest Resources (CFR) rights recognition for local forest communities across the country under the Forest Rights Act. RRI Collaborators supported the Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) to make more than 1,500 CFR claims in Odisha and Jharkhand. RRI also supported Collaborators with a Strategic Response Mechanism to [campaign](#) for safeguarding tribal and forest dweller rights within the US\$6.5 billion Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) and try to ensure that part of the CAF funds are transferred directly to Gram Sabhas. RRI also supported advocacy on rights in Protected Areas in India.

In **Nepal**, seizing on valuable political opportunities that emerged in government elections in 2017, stakeholders from the country's Constitutional Assembly, political parties, and civil society organizations came together to push for the enactment of a proposed Forest Rights Law, which would codify legal recognition of land, forest, and carbon resource rights for a wide range of marginalized communities. Throughout 2017, RRI Collaborator FECOFUN conducted advocacy campaigns at the local level to raise awareness of the proposed Forest Rights Law and generate public support for the inclusion of indigenous and community resource rights in the new government framework.

### Africa

With RRI's legal and technical support, Collaborator Green Advocates helped six local communities in the Wologizi Mountain Range of **Liberia**—an area marked for large-scale concessions—develop GIS maps to document use of their land and resources. Communities are now selecting leadership, preparing to apply for land titles, and developing a land-use management plan; they have also agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to designate a community customary land and natural resource area in the Wologizi region. This initiative is expected to serve as a nationwide model for joint community organizing around land rights.

In Liberia's Sasstown area, where oil palm and small-scale mining activities are on the rise, RRI Collaborator Social Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development (SESDev) trained local communities to negotiate with investors in areas

that earmarked for concession expansions. SESDev helped ensure that residents were familiar with their rights, and supported 11 communities in the establishment of an interim land governance structure through the development and adoption of a land-use management plan and by-laws. As a result of SESDev's intensive outreach activities, these communities are now actively monitoring palm oil company Golden Veroleum Liberia and a small-scale mining company to ensure their activities are proceeding without the violation of the communities' free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).

RRI's work in **Kenya** focused on advancing the secure customary land rights of the country's forest-dwelling communities, utilizing the legal framework of the 2016 Community Land Act. In 2017, RRI supported the Katiba Institute and the Forest Peoples Programme's training initiatives for local communities to move forward with mapping customary lands, registering land claims, and applying for community land titles. Two stand-out cases of capacity-building are the Elgion Ogiek community, which has produced maps of forest destruction, sacred sites, and other crucial cultural sites; and the Sengwer community, which has created zoning plans and community maps.

## Latin America

Within the context of ongoing agrarian reform processes and implementation of the 2016 peace accord, the RRI Coalition in **Colombia** made strides toward safeguarding indigenous and Afro-descendant rights and territories. RRI provided crucial support to the National Afro-Colombian Peace Council (CONPA) for its involvement in the Inter-Ethnic Commission for Peace, a coalition of indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders. RRI worked with the council to coordinate and consolidate proposals from Afro-descendant communities and organizations to ensure that community land rights are respected, strengthened, and protected in the Colombian peace process.

Together, an alliance of RRI Collaborators produced [new data analyzing threats to collective Afro-descendant lands](#), which revealed that for two decades the Colombian government has failed to adjudicate 271 claims for collective Afro-descendant lands. A corresponding launch event was attended by members of Colombia's National Land Agency, and spurred a new government commitment to establish an ongoing dialogue with PCN (*Proceso Comunidades Negras*); prioritize titling 74 communities in 2018 and 2019; and review the status of the remaining 197 applications.

Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups in Latin America continued to highlight their positions as key contributors to the fulfillment of national climate change commitments. In **Colombia**, members of the RRI Coalition influenced the national REDD+ strategy through the submission of two community monitoring proposals for consideration in the Institutional Panel of Community Monitoring, a forest monitoring and networking space for civil society organizations and communities. And in **Peru**, RRI Collaborator AIDSESP (*Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana*) in alliance with Andean indigenous organizations CNA (*Confederación Nacional Agraria*), CCP (*Confederación campesina del Perú*), and *Pacto de Unidad*, developed a joint advocacy strategy to provide inputs to Peru's NDC and climate change strategy in line with the indigenous groups' common agenda, and a plan to establish a platform to exchange experiences and best practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

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## Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation were demonstrated and acknowledged in global fora

For years, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women have struggled for recognition in global climate negotiations that pushed them to the margins. Previous [research](#) from RRI found that the vast majority of governments' plans to fulfill their obligations under the Paris Agreement—known as Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs—failed to make the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land and resource rights a key part of their climate solutions. However, in 2017, UNFCCC parties took a pathbreaking step—agreeing for the first time during COP 23 to the creation of a [platform](#) for local communities and Indigenous Peoples to share their knowledge and tools for improved adaptation and mitigation.

This progress is the result of years of ongoing advocacy by indigenous and community groups, who also organized a "[Guardians of the Forest](#)" media and advocacy campaign in the weeks leading up to COP23. RRI supported this initiative with evidence on the science of community contributions to climate change adaptation and mitigation, including new data on the limited recognition of the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Green Climate Fund (GCF) projects and investments. In support of the GCF engagement strategy of RRI Partners and Collaborators, an in-depth review of the Fund's application of existing social and environmental safeguards and policy frameworks across 11 approved projects (with potential impacts on communities) found notable shortcomings in nearly every aspect of the GCF's commitments to indigenous and local community rights. Presented in draft form during the 46<sup>th</sup> SBSTA meeting of the UNFCCC in Bonn Germany (May 2017), the report was officially launched at the Royal Society of London in the context of the Guardians of the Forest initiative and leveraged by RRI Partners and Collaborators to inform their ongoing advocacy efforts. Results of this collective action yielded substantial gains in early 2018.

RRI Partners' and Collaborators' engagement with the GCF focused on two major themes: 1) direct funding access for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to support community-driven climate solutions; and 2) efforts to strengthen safeguards for the protection of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, including self-determination; historical reparation; and strengthening of community land and resource rights across GCF projects and investments. Emerging recommendations were subsequently used by the GCF to inform draft policies on Indigenous Peoples, social and environmental safeguards, and gender equality, leading to the adoption of a new Indigenous Peoples' policy and Environment and Social Management System, which were passed with minor revisions at the GCF's 19<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting in March 2018.

Growing recognition of the critical role that Indigenous Peoples play in climate change mitigation and adaptation has opened new opportunities to learn from the significant environmental, social, and economic benefits associated with community tenure recognition. In 2017, RRI sought to elevate this topic at both the national and global levels.

At the national level, RRI helped position Afro-descendant community-based management plans as key to fulfilling **Colombia's** national climate change commitments. RRI Coalition members developed two significant pilot projects: one in Indigenous Peoples' territories (*Confederación Indígena Tayrona in Sierra Santa Marta*) and the other in Afro-community lands (*Consejo Comunitario de Yurumanguí*), both designed to track deforestation and forest degradation through community monitoring systems. As a result of these successful pilot projects, the proposal from these communities was integrated into the National Monitoring Roundtable (*Mesa Nacional de Monitoreo*) and the rights of Afro-descendant communities were concretely integrated into the Green Climate Fund's Indigenous Peoples' Policy.

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As **Indonesia's** National Determined Contribution (NDC) aims for a low carbon and climate resilient future with a 26 percent emissions reduction by 2020, various sessions of the Tenure Conference assessed the progress of the NDC targets and REDD+ programs in Papua and other particularly vulnerable islands.

A panel focused on climate change discussed the work of the Papua Low Carbon Task Force in mapping, and how the social forestry and agrarian reform targets can contribute to fulfilling the NDC, including the impacts of REDD+ projects. Carbon mapping initiatives demonstrated the incredible value of the primary forests in Papua, and provided NGOs, policymakers, and government officials with statistics to support sustainable, tenure-secure climate initiatives. RRI Collaborators, CIFOR, and the Norwegian government collaborated on this panel, resulting in a robust and fruitful discussion.

Peatland was another major focus of the 2017 Tenure Conference, resulting in a dedicated panel. Indonesia has 83 percent of tropical peatlands in Southeast Asia, which cover 10 percent of the country's land area or about 20 million hectares of peat, making it a rich biodiverse carbon sink. The panel highlighted the importance of protecting peatlands against threats (concessions, habitat destruction, forest fires, etc.), and of working closely with the Peatland Restoration Agency (BRG) and the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The panel demonstrated that secure tenure can be a critical incentive for sustainable management and prevention of fires in the peatlands. Restorative mapping initiatives are active in tracking the target of restoring 2.4 million hectares of peat and representatives of the BRG in the session agreed to scale up their restoration efforts.

## New tools and pre-competitive networks better equipped private sector actors to adopt and promote best practices and resolve longstanding conflicts with communities

Over the last several years, many progressive investors and companies with large land-based operations have recognized the need to respect community land rights. Some are now shifting from trying to better understand their exposure to tenure risks toward actively implementing commitments to respect community land rights. This shift occurred in large part due to the dissemination of research by RRI and others, as well as the creation of precompetitive “safe spaces”—most notably the Interlaken Group—that have allowed these companies to better understand the risks that insecure land tenure poses not only to the reputations of companies and investors, but also at the operational level.

However, implementing these commitments has proven challenging. Companies often purchase from suppliers over which they have difficulty exercising leverage, or have claims to land that third parties acquired decades ago without performing proper due diligence.

### ***The Interlaken Group met private sector demand for actionable guidance and safe spaces for engagement with communities and civil society***

In 2017, RRI supported key actionable guidance to private sector actors with land-based operations through the release of the Interlaken Group's *Land Legacy Issues: Guidance on Corporate Responsibility*. The term “land legacy issues” refers to “enduring grievances with affected communities or historic land occupants or their descendants related to the terms and processes by which land was previously acquired.” These issues are notoriously thorny, as the process of land acquisition by companies is frequently obscure, and often the concessions in question have been sold to new claimants who were not privy to the original due diligence process—if any was conducted.

To produce this guidance—the first of its kind—the Interlaken Group had to achieve consensus between stakeholders from global civil society, indigenous and local communities, and the private sector. Given the complex and contentious nature of these issues, this consensus was unprecedented. The resulting guidance, intended for senior-level professionals of companies with large, land-based operations, clarifies companies’ roles and responsibilities in assessing and addressing risks associated with legacy land rights grievances; provides actionable steps for both upstream and downstream companies to prevent land issues from arising or deteriorating; and gives advice on dispute and mediation mechanisms to mitigate or resolve grievances when they do arise. Additionally, it provides operational-level guidance for diagnosing, addressing, and monitoring legacy land issues, as well as recommendations for preventing future problems.

Along with voicing a need for operational guidance, companies and investors have increasingly sought out fora to engage with local suppliers and civil society. To that end, the Interlaken Group began to engage at the country level, with a view toward catalyzing change in upstream investment and supply chains. This began in 2017 with workshops in Kenya and Cameroon, in which investors and downstream buyers were able to speak directly with local suppliers, community representatives, and civil society. Crucially, multinational buyers and investors had the opportunity to impress upon local suppliers that they would not continue to include them in their supply chains unless suppliers took steps to proactively address tenure risk in their operations.

RRI's Stockholm Conference also provided Interlaken Group participants the opportunity to reconvene at the global level and revisit their commitment to and vision for the Interlaken Group, taking into account lessons learned from the country-level workshops and other 2017 innovations. The result was an unprecedented agreement between leaders from progressive companies, investors, and NGOs on a [Vision and Agenda](#) to transform corporate practice on land rights to advance the SDGs. The statement calls specifically for the international community to scale up efforts to secure community land rights and strengthen communities’ ability to exercise their rights; fulfill

**“ RRI supported the noticeable and ongoing transformation of the private sector to respect local rights by providing guidance, strategic analysis, and new data. ”**

**- 2017 Independent Monitor Report**

their obligations to implement FPIC before acquiring or leasing community land; acknowledge and fairly address legacy land issues in existing enterprise concessions and conservation; increase support to existing instruments and initiatives by increasing investments that secure land rights; and improve coordination and collaboration to support this agenda. The statement affirmed participants' ongoing commitment to address the land rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women as a precondition to doing business.

Recognizing the potential for this vision to reach new audiences, RRI further developed the communications platform for the Interlaken Group, redesigning the website and launching an Interlaken Group newsletter. The website redesign makes the site more user-friendly, particularly as the suite of Interlaken Group tools and content grows, and a dedicated newsletter allows the Group to reach high-level private sector and civil society representatives, and other new audiences. An in-depth article on the Interlaken Group published in *Devex* and a piece written for DFID's *Land Bulletin* also shared the Interlaken Group's message beyond its current reach. Going forward, these efforts will enable the dissemination of Interlaken Group research and analysis to become more granular and country- and sector-specific.

### ***RRI continued to document the risks of insecure tenure to communities and companies alike***

RRI played a key role in documenting the operational risks of insecure tenure for companies and investors. In February, RRI released analyses documenting the drivers of tenure conflict in Western, Eastern, and Southern Africa, and later in the year released companion analyses for Continental and Maritime Southeast Asia. In both regions, the analyses found that displacement of communities from their customary territories—and not their desire for increased compensation—was the primary driver of tenure conflict, and that once begun conflicts often drag on for decades and become increasingly intractable. These analyses underscored the urgency for companies and investors to improve their performance on land rights and to find new solutions to addressing disputes with communities.

At global Interlaken Group convenings, companies also voiced a desire to have research not only on the costs of insecure tenure, but also on examples of best practices by companies that had succeeded in mitigating tenure risk and working proactively with communities to address conflict. RRI's ATEMs program worked with the companies Illovo Sugar, Portucel, and New Forests to produce three case studies documenting the steps these companies have taken with communities as well as national and international civil society to resolve longstanding legacy land issues. The case studies were presented at the 3rd International Conference on Community Land and Resource Rights in Stockholm in October, to reach not only private sector audiences but also a broad audience among those looking to improve private sector performance on land rights.

At the national level, RRI worked with Collaborator JKPP in **Indonesia** to create an online database, [www.tanahkita.id](http://www.tanahkita.id), mapping land-related conflicts as well as data for indigenous ownership and management claims. To date the portal has data on 258 cases from across Indonesia—cases that affect 75,000 individuals, 2.8 million hectares of land, and investments exceeding US\$250 million. The portal is open access and provides Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and civil society with a powerful tool for holding the state, companies and investors, and conservation NGOs accountable. A similar online database called [www.landconflictwatch.org](http://www.landconflictwatch.org) was also supported in India. To date, this comprehensive online database has data from 573 land conflicts affecting 7.6 million people and US\$1.89 trillion worth of investments.



## The world's largest and most diverse conference on community land rights culminated in strategic action plans to increase rights recognition

On October 4-5, 2017, over 300 people from almost 60 countries gathered in Stockholm, Sweden at the international conference *Reducing Inequality in a Turbulent World: Scaling-up strategies to secure indigenous, community, and women's land rights*. The conference aimed to raise awareness of community land rights as a prerequisite to decrease inequality and deliver on global goals; assess the status of promising instruments to secure community rights; and encourage greater commitment and action from key stakeholders. Participants hailed from indigenous and community organizations, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, and governments.

This was the third in a series—following conferences in Interlaken in 2013 and Bern in 2015—showcasing RRI's unique role as a convener and connector of both global changemakers and on-the-ground advocates in key countries. It is this reach that allows RRI to “punch above its weight,” as one donor put it, to catalyze reforms larger than any organization could achieve alone. The Independent Monitor's 2017 report notes that RRI's ability to join elements of the Coalition to create “a common voice” and become a “unified movement” has allowed it to strategically advance community land rights with comparatively little financial investment. Previous conferences originated RRI's many collaborative tools—including the Interlaken Group, the LandMark Map, and the Land Rights Now Alliance.

On the eve of the Stockholm Conference, a high-level event at Sida headquarters provided a key forum for raising awareness on community land rights and garnering commitments from key stakeholders. The *Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) Development Talks, “Land rights—combating climate change and advancing peace and gender equality,”* was cohosted by the Ford Foundation and served as the official launch of the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility (the Tenure Facility). The event positioned the Facility and the indigenous and community-led projects it supports as a solution to global climate and development challenges. Capitalizing on the presence of key spokespeople, including Sida Director General Carin Jämtin and Ford Foundation President Darren Walker, the event garnered significant media coverage for both RRI and the Tenure Facility.

The successes from the Tenure Facility pilot project, research on the incidence of land-based conflicts between companies and communities, and spokespeople from across the Coalition helped raise global awareness of the need to secure community, indigenous, and rural women's land rights to reduce the risks of conflict, realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global climate commitments, and further peace, justice, and prosperity. The suite of outreach products and events in Stockholm resulted in substantial press coverage—including at least 88 articles in 20 countries and 7 languages. Top coverage included The Guardian, several AFP and Reuters articles, Agencia EFE, El Pais, and Fast Company.

There was also significant digital and social engagement. RRI broadened its sphere of influence by providing pre-prepared social media content to international actors from different sectors (e.g., women's rights, environment, private sector) on how secure land rights are connected to their missions. This strategy took advantage of existing relationships RRI has built, created new ones for future launches, and resulted in sharing and engagement from influencers such as FAO, UNDP, IFC, EIB, USAID, and the World Bank. Paid campaigns targeted individuals who follow large international development agencies and successfully made the case for why land rights are deeply connected with sustainable development. These efforts drove 8,638 unique visitors to the Tenure Facility website between September 1 and October 20. On October 4, #landrightsnow was the number two trending hashtag in Sweden.

At the conference itself, three strategy sessions—on rural and indigenous women's rights and leadership in collective lands, strategies and mechanisms to scale-up implementation from the local to national level, and connecting and leveraging international support



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structures to advance indigenous and community land rights—developed action plans to increase recognition of community land rights around the world.

For example, the session on the rights of rural and indigenous women took stock of available tools for securing community land rights, and concluded that it is still necessary to “make the case” for why recognizing women’s rights within communities is integral to development agendas. The group’s collective action plan includes developing a “go-to hub” for resources and strategy development; documenting cases of women’s leadership and creating learning opportunities to connect women leaders; growing a diverse enough partnership to engage political actors; and advocating for the inclusion of gender perspectives in private sector due diligence. These recommendations and other findings from the strategy session will inform RRI’s nascent Global Gender Justice Advisory Group, which will be formalized in 2018 and will guide Coalition-wide strategies to advance women’s rights and leadership within community-held lands.

All sessions included speakers from the private sector. For the first time, the conference also included an “Innovation Zone,” which highlighted technology and other innovative strategies used to secure rights.

RRI co-organized the conference with Sida, the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Swedish International Agriculture Network Initiative, and the International Foundation for Science. It was held in collaboration with the Land Rights Now Alliance, the Interlaken Group, and LandMark, with Devex as the media partner.



## Communities advanced their rights over almost 2 million hectares of forestland with support from the Tenure Facility

In 2017, the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility (the Tenure Facility) demonstrated the value of a funding institution dedicated solely to supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' efforts to secure their rights to lands and forests. The Facility supports communities and their allies to take advantage of existing laws and policies that have not been implemented by governments due to lack of capacity, resources, or will. Its six pilot projects in Cameroon, Indonesia, Liberia, Mali, Panama, and Peru have advanced indigenous and community land rights over 1.7 million hectares of customary lands and forests. The pilots proved that with funding and technical support, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations can achieve significant results in securing tenure rights in a short period of time.

The Tenure Facility also achieved key milestones in 2017 toward becoming a fully independent organization: it is now formally established in Stockholm with a full board of directors, Executive Director Nonette Royo, and funding secured from Sida, the Ford Foundation, the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA), Acacia, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

The Facility was formally launched on the eve of the Stockholm Conference in Sweden, at an October 3 *Sida Development Talks*, "[Land rights—combating climate change and advancing peace and gender equality](#)." The event brought together indigenous leaders, forestry experts, investors, Sida Director General Carin Jämtin, and Ford Foundation President Darren Walker to discuss the importance of community, indigenous, and rural women's land rights for global development and climate goals, and positioned the Facility as a solution to insecure land rights.

The event drew major attention from press and policymakers alike, and shared the successes of the pilot projects, which have already had major breakthroughs in securing community land rights and generating economic and environmental benefits that bolster the global race to slow the warming climate and combat inequality.

In **Indonesia**, the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) led a Tenure Facility pilot project that advanced tenure security over 1.5 million hectares of land belonging to 200 indigenous communities and achieved recognition of 230,000 hectares. Through peer-to-peer exchanges, AMAN ignited a movement that is spreading from district to district as local authorities adopt the approach of using local legislation to secure Indigenous Peoples' land and forest rights.

In **Mali**, the Tenure Facility helped resolve local land-based conflicts that were among the root causes of the civil war. With support from the Facility, the National Coordinating Body of Peasant Organizations in Mali (CNOP) and HELVETAS Mali organized and trained 17 local land commissions to resolve conflicting land claims, decreasing local conflict by as much as a third and contributing to greater stability throughout the country. Pilot leaders are planning to extend this work to those communities most directly affected by the national conflict.

The Tenure Facility supported the Native Federation of the River Madre de Dios and Tributaries (FENAMAD) in partnership with the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law (SPDA) and the Regional Government of Madre de Dios (GOREMAD) in **Peru** to secure land titles for the territories of five indigenous communities totaling 64,000 hectares. With Tenure Facility support, SPDA is now up-scaling this unique partnership between an indigenous federation, an NGO, and a regional government to resolve longstanding conflicts over land tenure and implementation problems throughout the country.

In **Panama**, Panama's Indigenous Peoples Coordinating Body (COONAPIP) advanced titling of 223,500 hectares in four territories and resolved 18 tenure conflicts over 1,200 hectares. The national association of indigenous

*“The Tenure Facility already has considerable visibility and high expectations, but RRI’s efforts to birth the idea were, in the words of interviewees, ‘a brave move’ requiring ‘patience and diligence’ to achieve ‘above and beyond’ expectations towards a launch that was ‘phenomenally successful.’”*

- 2017 Independent Monitor Report

organizations also trained more than 250 people in indigenous rights and law, built its own capacity for tenure implementation, and established a course on indigenous rights at the University of Panama's Faculty of Law.

The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), FCI, Development Education Network (DEN-L), and Parley Liberia, along with Liberia's Land Commission, tested and refined a practical and scalable method for enabling local communities in **Liberia** to self-identify, the first step in Liberia's Land Rights Policy for communities to gain collective title to their customary land.

In **Cameroon**, NGOs advanced land tenure security by developing and securing broad support for a standard methodology for participatory community mapping across different ecosystems and cultures. If scaled nationwide, the methodology could secure community rights over more than 5 million hectares within five years.

These successes underscore the value of the Tenure Facility as a platform for demonstrating and disseminating tools and approaches for securing indigenous and local community land rights. In 2017, the Tenure Facility convened two "Learning Exchanges" in Dakar and Stockholm to bring pilot leaders together to share lessons and experiences. The Facility also developed a learning strategy to ensure that lessons from the field are captured and shared across organizations and regions, thus helping to build a global community of practice dedicated to scaling up recognition of community, indigenous, and rural women's land rights.

Finally, the Tenure Facility took major steps toward becoming fully independent in 2017. RRG supported the transition of the Tenure Facility secretariat from RRG to the newly established institution in Stockholm, Sweden. Indufor drafted a transition plan and presented it to the Board of Directors and donors in early 2017. The plan covered the following functions of the Secretariat: operational, grant management, project identification, governance, strategy, and communication. RRG staff and Indufor implemented the plan throughout 2017 in consultation with service providers in Stockholm. The main achievements in 2017 included legal registration of the Tenure Facility in Stockholm, recruitment of the Executive Director and the Chief Operating Officer, arranging financial management of the Tenure Facility, completing the initial readiness assessment, and establishing an MoU between RRG and the Tenure Facility.

## RRI's unique coalition structure was leveraged to raise awareness and build political momentum via strategic convenings at all levels

In 2017, collaborations across the Coalition led to both new political commitments and concrete actions to further recognize rights—successes that were influenced by RRI's ability and willingness to convene disparate stakeholders to navigate complex issues and articulate shared agendas. The most recent Independent Monitor's report notes that RRI plays the role of a "boundary spanner," helping to "translate between different contexts and viewpoints, mediate conflicts, and create opportunities for learning." In 2017, RRI played this role at all levels—in the contexts of the global RRI Coalition, in networks such as the Interlaken Group and MegaFlorestais, and in RRI national coalitions to address specific issues.

At the beginning of the year, RRI welcomed the addition of its seventh Affiliated Network, Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA), which represents Indigenous Peoples from countries across the Amazon. The participation of RRI Partners and an expanded category of Affiliated Networks in the yearly planning process served to broaden RRI's reach and strengthen its local-global ties.

RRI capitalized on these connections to amplify its core messages and continue to raise awareness of community land rights at the global level. This was epitomized by RRI's 3rd International Conference on Community Land and Resource Rights in Stockholm, which brought together 300 stakeholders from almost 60 countries around the topic of Indigenous Peoples', local communities', and rural women's land rights. The conference had strong media coverage; aligned with the official launch of the Tenure Facility and Interlaken Group meetings; and contained varied avenues for attendee networking—including thematic "streams" and an "Innovation Zone" to highlight and share new strategies and technologies. In addition, the 12th convening of [MegaFlorestais](#)—an informal global network of leaders of public forest and land affairs agencies—took place this October in Canada, providing a space for leaders to discuss new governance models involving local stakeholders, including ways to support community forest enterprises.

*“ In 2017, RRI continued to have success in convening and networking organizations and 'expanding the number of institutions' involved in addressing the challenges of their mission. ”*

- 2017 Independent Monitor Report

### **The RRI Coalition mobilized in 2017 to better support the agendas of grassroots, indigenous, and women's groups—especially in key advocacy moments**

As noted in the Independent Monitor's 2017 report, a core added value of RRI is how it works in the background to act as "the fill, the thread, that has woven quietly, continuously and perceptively through" the gatherings of collaborating organizations. This can be seen across RRI's convening work at the regional and country level.

In February, RRI launched its Annual Review on the global state of rights and resources in Dakar, **Senegal**—the first time this event had been held outside London. The event, which also featured research from RRI and TMP Systems on investment and conflict in Africa, took advantage of a key moment in Senegal to advance the country's land reform process. The engagement also set the stage for a follow-up effort by RRI and the African Union's Land Policy Initiative (LPI) to convene representatives from land commissions throughout Africa for a three-day workshop in Accra, Ghana in July. The workshop resulted in a set of key recommendations, including agreement from all participants that the resolution of conflicts and the decentralization of land management institutions away from urban capitals and toward rural communities represent crucial steps to address the disparity between communities' rights and what governments formally recognize.

In April in **Brazil**, where indigenous and local communities faced a series of constitutional amendments and pro-industry laws that threatened to roll back their hard-won territorial and constitutional rights, RRI used its convening power alongside #LandRightsNow to launch a campaign to call on Brazil's government to respect communities' rights. Over 4,000 people mobilized in April in coordination with the annual indigenous protest Acampamento Terra Livre ("Free Land Camp"). Alongside this national-level mobilization, an international online petition was launched as part of the #LandRightsNow Earth Day campaign, calling on President Michel Temer and Justice Minister Osmar

Serraglio to end government attacks on indigenous rights and the environment.

In October in **Indonesia**, RRI supported the [2017 Tenure Conference \(Konferensi Tenurial\)](#)—organized by leading Indonesian indigenous and community organizations, their civil society allies, and the government. RRI’s initial seed investment of US\$40,000 was leveraged to raise an additional US\$250,000 from local donors to organize this landmark conference. The conference assessed progress toward implementing a “roadmap” to respect indigenous and community land rights that was agreed on in 2011, as well as the government’s target of recognizing 12.7 million hectares of community land by 2019. During the opening session, President Joko Widodo announced the recognition of nine customary forests covering 3,341 hectares as well as nine new village forests (*hutan desa*) covering a total of 80,228 hectares—a very small step toward achieving the government’s target. The conference resulted in high-level commitment and agreement amongst diverse stakeholders to accelerate progress toward meeting government targets and fully respecting these rights—including a government commitment to pilot a bottom-up approach to prioritize locations for land redistribution and *adat* forest recognition.

The power of the RRI Coalition at the country level was also visible in Latin America. In **Colombia**, the public launch of new data revealing that the Colombian government has failed to adjudicate 271 Afro-descendant collective land claims resulted in a government commitment to review all claims and title a portion of them in 2018. And in **Peru**, an advocacy event that brought together indigenous women, policymakers, and international donors to address women’s participation in land titling projects resulted in more direct coordination between representatives of titling projects and the national indigenous women’s group ONAMIAP. Moreover, indigenous women became members of regional monitoring committees under one of the largest land titling projects in Peru, the IDB-backed PTRT-3 project.

***RRI responded to requests from Coalition members for increased spaces and opportunities to learn from one another and to share best practices***

In April, community leaders from Indonesia toured Guatemala as part of a community-to-community exchange to learn from successful examples of community forest management and the development of community forest enterprises (CFEs). The group visited community forests in the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Petén, one of the greatest examples of community forestry management worldwide with a near zero-deforestation rate. Their second stop was Guatemala’s Cobán area to see how smallholders are managing forests and agricultural lands through a federation of cooperatives, FEDECOVERA. During the exchange, delegates developed road maps for action to implement upon their return, with the support of Rainforest Alliance and the Samdhana Institute, who will continue their support in Indonesia. This exchange led to a new partnership with Rainforest Alliance on their Community Forestry Frontier Initiative (CFFI—a 5-year project to promote CFEs in six countries).

Taken together, RRI’s convening work has allowed the Coalition to grow beyond “the sum of its parts” into an entity with a high level of legitimacy and respect that is building toward a common voice, a common agenda, and a common movement.

***“The greatest value addition for collaborating organizations is not the funding that RRI provides, but the fact that RRI facilitates an open space where critical issues related to land and forest tenure can be discussed and shared, and common strategies toward progressive action developed.”***

- Anonymous Donor  
2017 Independent Monitor Report

## Institutional strengthening increased the Secretariat's efficiency and effectiveness

A key priority for the RRI Secretariat in 2017 was to assess and begin implementing measures aimed at institutional strengthening, many of which are already beginning to improve the organization's capacity to deliver results.

As part of RRI's Ford Foundation BUILD grant, an organizational assessment was conducted on March 27 to help Secretariat staff reflect on RRG's strengths and build organization-wide consensus regarding areas for institutional strengthening. The starting point of this facilitated discussion was a survey that provided the opportunity for staff to consider the Secretariat as a whole, asking what works well and what could be improved. Reflections on these survey questions led ultimately to the identification of three collective priority areas for improvement: 1) Fundraising and Donor Relations; 2) Organizational Culture, and; 3) Financial Management. For each of these, staff identified next steps and made specific recommendations, which were then prioritized and included in RRI's 2017 and 2018 workplans following a review by RRG's Senior Management Team.

Efforts to strengthen these areas began immediately. The new director of finance and administration (F&A), who is a certified public accountant (CPA), restructured the F&A team to better serve the needs of the program teams. This included hiring a dedicated human resources manager and creating grants and contracts administrator positions, which replaced a more generic F&A manager position, and revising the duties of the office manager position to provide more human resources assistance. In addition, a new COO was recruited and an Interim Executive Team (IET) was established to provide continuity of leadership during the RRI Coordinator's sabbatical.

The Secretariat also improved its support infrastructure with the selection and establishment of new and more powerful accounting and human resources systems, both of which are in early stages of implementation. In order to streamline F&A processes, new systems were put in place to handle contract management and disbursements electronically. To reduce the risks associated with foreign exchange rates, F&A also opened an account denominated in pounds sterling.

In order to maximize the impact of RRG activities and better mobilize Coalition members, the organizational matrix was expanded to include all employees. On average, 20 percent of staff time was dedicated to matrix involvement outside of core programs, promoting greater collaboration and contributing to staff members' professional development. In particular, increased joint collaboration took place around the ATEMs, gender justice, and Latin America portfolios; during RRI's 3rd International Conference on Community Land and Resource Rights in Stockholm; and around the engagement of government officials.

Looking beyond the Secretariat, the RRG Board of Directors successfully completed its transition to a new leadership. New directors were onboarded, briefed on their role and RRI's institutional history, and trained on the tools at their disposal such as the Director's Desk online platform. Close communication was maintained with members of the Board throughout the year, and three meetings were organized to discuss important topics related to RRI's governance. In order to complete the onboarding of this new Board of Directors, a training session was developed with an external consultant to focus on the Board's responsibilities related to governance and financial sustainability, which took place in January 2018.

Strengthening the Secretariat will continue to be a priority for the foreseeable future. In 2017, RRG finalized the third five-year [Strategic Plan](#) (SPIII) for the years 2018-2022. This third iteration of RRI's strategic plan reflects an understanding that the changing global environment and continuous growth of the RRI Coalition will place ever increasing demands upon the Secretariat. To mitigate risks to RRG and to meet these challenges, under SPIII RRI will continue to strengthen the organization's financial viability and donor accountability; diversify its revenue; advance organizational efficiency, sustainability, and resilience; and improve financial management systems.



## RRI's Strategic Response Mechanism enabled rapid responses to unforeseen opportunities and threats to advance indigenous and community land rights

The Strategic Response Mechanism (SRM) continued to play a vital role in the Coalition's work in 2017—allowing RRI to be effective in shifting political landscapes.

Using a simple, accelerated process to evaluate and approve proposals, an SRM can provide up to US\$100,000 in funding as a rapid response to qualifying projects and activities. To qualify for SRM funding, a proposed project or activity must meet five key criteria:

- Exploit a political window of opportunity;
- Support a critical moment in a social mobilization process;
- Exploit higher-risk opportunities that could expand RRI relationships;
- Be a new or newly expanded project or activity; and
- Be dependent on incremental funding/connectivity at a strategic moment which will produce outcomes.

In 2017, the RRI Board authorized a budget of US\$793,337 for SRM activities, and as of December 13, 2017, the actual amount committed for approved and contracted SRM activities in 2017 was US\$393,004. RRI ultimately supported 18 SRM activities throughout 2017, including six that were contracted in 2016 and one contracted in 2015 but extended into 2017. This section includes three examples of SRM projects that demonstrate the crucial impact of rapid response funding. A full list of all 18 SRM projects is available [here](#).

In **Mali**, RRI provided SRM funding that helped HELVETAS Mali, and its Collaborator RP- SéFA (the Advocacy Network for Securing Land Tenure in Mali), make significant progress in addressing local communities' concerns regarding the ratification of Mali's National Land Policy. The government had previously been poised to adopt this policy without holding consultations. HELVETAS and RP- SéFA changed this by working with the Malian government to conduct both a legal analysis on the National Land Policy's gaps regarding community land tenure as well as regional consultations soliciting input from local communities. HELVETAS and RP- SéFA then produced a memorandum articulating local stakeholders' vision on the land policy. With RRI's support, this memorandum reached the ministry charged with the National Land Policy's adoption.

*In 2017, RRI funded 18 Strategic Response Mechanism activities for a total of US\$393,004.*

As the government of **Indonesia** continued to focus on tourism development, RRI's 2017 SRM funding assisted in ensuring that the rights and territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities were respected and sustained in this context. Funding focused on the proposed priority eco-tourism development policy to help secure clear safeguards to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, both in the policy itself and its implementation. Focusing on the new presidential priority program of eco-tourism development known as "Ten New Balis," SRM funding also supported participatory research and advocacy efforts on Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights. A final report has yet to be submitted, but interim findings presented at a conference attended by government representatives recognized that tourism development should include both an ecological restoration component and the input of all parties, including *adat*, local communities, and CSOs. After its completion, the final report will be shared with concerned ministries to ensure buy-in and support.

In **Brazil**, RRI approved SRM funding to consolidate spaces of negotiation between Brazilian Indigenous Peoples' representatives and the national government to prevent the rollbacks of indigenous territorial rights. In response to a proposed constitutional amendment and legislative reforms in Brazil that could roll back historical gains in collective tenure rights, 3,200 indigenous leaders assembled in the Brazilian capital as part of the Free Land Camp mobilization to advocate for the respect of their territorial rights. With SRM funding assistance, new RRI Partner Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) supported participants in a well-publicized march to Congress to present their demands. Indigenous leaders met with the president of the House of Representatives, who promised to take their needs into account in congressional debates and constitutional policy reforms. The event opened avenues for



further collaboration with indigenous and women's organizations in Brazil and for opportunities to work with ISA to conduct legal analyses and map indigenous territories. It also strengthened relationships between RRI's Affiliated Networks AMPB, COICA, and AMAN, and the Brazilian indigenous organization AIPB. These organizations agreed to integrate their advocacy efforts into the international movement for collective rights by developing a common messaging strategy for a panel on Indigenous Peoples' access to climate change funds at COP 23. The panel demonstrated that international grants are not reaching indigenous communities.

## Reflections and Lessons Learned

A number of critical lessons affected RRI's work and impact in 2017.

**2017 confirmed the value added of RRI's Coalition structure.** RRI's unique role as a convener and connector allows it to leverage the capacity and contribution of multiple actors to catalyze larger reforms than any one organization could achieve alone. The Independent Monitor's 2017 report noted RRI's ability to join elements of the Coalition to create "a common voice" and become a "unified movement" to advance community land rights with comparatively little financial investment.

The trust RRI has earned from community and indigenous organizations, who are willing to share potentially sensitive georeferenced data to facilitate global advocacy, is vital to creating RRI's groundbreaking global analyses. RRI also relies on spokespeople from across the Coalition for its communications and advocacy efforts to drive change at all levels.

Expanding the Coalition to include Affiliated Networks brought thousands of grassroots voices to RRI. Their involvement in RRI strategic development and governance enriched the development of RRI's Strategic Program III (SPIII), which went into effect on January 1, 2018. This involvement has led to a new level of shared ownership and outreach and allowed the Coalition to be more responsive to the needs of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women's groups.

**SPIII highlights the need for RRI to act as a convener at the global level.** SPIII, which covers 2018-2022, seeks to catalyze the legal recognition of an additional 150 million hectares of lands and forests, benefitting over 370 million people.

To achieve these ambitious aims, RRI will need to play the same connecting and convening role at the global level that it has at the national level, particularly with regard to the emerging suite of global instruments poised to scale-up recognition of indigenous and community land rights. These include those RRI has developed and fostered: the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility, the Interlaken Group, MegaFlorestais, the Land Rights Now Alliance, and LandMark. Each speaks to a different audience, and together they form the basis of a new global support structure for community land rights. RRI will need to connect, consolidate, and leverage these instruments to ensure they work together and learn from one another to amplify efforts and secure rights at scale.

Through SPIII, RRI is helping to set the global agenda for advancing community rights recognition and catalyzing collective action. It was agreed on by all Partners, Affiliated Networks, and Fellows, and will play a key role in guiding and coordinating the wide variety of organizations that make up the RRI Coalition to drive forward democratic and inclusive change. A significant part of SPIII is to advance the rights of rural and indigenous women as a global priority.

**Supporting community-led development requires extensive collaboration and learning.** As RRI increasingly seeks to support communities' own models of development—which benefit more people and are more sustainable than traditional models—leveraging the expertise of its Coalition will be crucial.

For example, the April 2017 community-to-community exchange brought community leaders from Indonesia to Guatemala to learn from successful examples of community forest management and the development of CFEs. The group developed road maps to initiate CFEs in their own communities. The success of this exchange involved extensive collaboration with a mix of local, regional, and global organizations, including AMAN, AMPB, ACOFOP, Samdhana, and the Rainforest Alliance. This not only reduced costs, but also leveraged the expertise of each organization: RRI's networking and experience with exchanges, Samdhana's local contacts and knowledge, and the technical expertise of Rainforest Alliance. Rainforest Alliance and Samdhana are handling the follow-up by offering technical support to communities to create CFEs, and the exchange led to a new partnership with Rainforest Alliance on their Community Forestry Frontier Initiative to promote CFEs in six countries over the next five years.

This type of collaboration and learning provides a model for RRI to expand its support for community forest enterprises in the future.

***Focusing on fewer countries is a double-edged sword.*** RRI's 2015 Mid-Term Evaluation identified the inefficiencies of engaging in too many countries, and RRI subsequently scaled back from 15 focus countries to seven. While this has improved efficiencies, it also presented challenges, especially as donor funding to country-level activities is increasingly restricted. RRI's in-country engagement is vital to the success of its global analytics, outreach, and advocacy. While RRI's Coalition structure allows it to remain engaged in countries where it does not fund work, there are significant opportunities for advancing change at the national level that RRI is unable to meet due to funding constraints on country-level work.

***The Strategic Response Mechanism enables RRI to seize unforeseen opportunities, but new sources of funding will be required for RRI to remain flexible.*** Given the complex and highly political nature of tenure reform, RRI was designed and structured to capitalize on emerging opportunities to secure land tenure and prevent rollback. The SRM is particularly effective in meeting these needs as they arise and achieving significant impact with a relatively small budget. Demand for the SRM increases each year, particularly given RRI's reduced funding at the country level.

The Coalition will need to be proactive and innovative in expanding its donor base to ensure that it can continue to offer this kind of flexible funding. To this end, the Secretariat conducted an analysis of potential funding sources and hired a consultant in early 2018 who will assist in refining a resource mobilization strategy and facilitate the organization's plans to reach out to new donors.

***RRI's country-level work lays vital groundwork for Tenure Facility projects.*** Most of the Tenure Facility projects thus far have built on RRI's work, relations, and strategies in-country. In Colombia, for example, the Coalition laid the groundwork for securing recognition of Afro-descendant community territories. In 2016, a unique alliance between civil society, academia, and community groups helped secure the first land title issued in the Caribbean region since 2012. Building on this work, in 2017 RRI supported research from the Pontifical Javeriana University Observatory of Ethnic and Peasant Lands (OTEC) to identify 271 pending community requests for land titles. This paved the way for the government to recognize the land claims, which have been stalled due to a lack of information and capacity. The Tenure Facility will build on RRI's research and advocacy by providing funding and technical support to finalize the land titles.

Now that the Tenure Facility is independent, RRI's knowledge and network will continue to provide insight critical to the scoping of projects. With RRI's country-level work substantially reduced, there is potentially less opportunity for the Tenure Facility to take advantage of RRI's learning and strategy development.

***The Interlaken Group has become a credible, high-profile instrument to accelerate rights-based private sector approaches.*** All development finance institutions are now represented in the group, which quickly coalesced around a Vision and Agenda to respect community and indigenous land rights at the Stockholm Conference. The group also agreed on unprecedented guidance for addressing land legacy issues in company supply chains. These represent significant public commitments from private sector individuals in key companies toward respecting indigenous and community land rights in their operations.

There is more appetite for a pre-competitive space—particularly at the national level—to discuss community land rights than previously anticipated, opening up an accelerated path toward the implementation of rights-based approaches. Responding to the demand of companies and investors engaged in the Interlaken Group, RRI is currently working on additional products aimed at helping companies adjust their practices to conform to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT)—including a document presenting “success stories”—and establishing spaces for dialogue between companies, investors, CSOs, and governments in priority countries.

# 2017 Financial Results

After a challenging year in 2016, RRI strengthened its financial position in 2017.

In 2017, RRI recognized a net surplus of US\$2.6 million, primarily the result of receiving a new multi-year US\$4 million BUILD grant from the Ford Foundation. The recognition of the receivable for the remaining three years of this grant, in compliance with US Nonprofit GAAP requirements, was also the primary driver of an increase in net assets of US\$2.7 million, from US\$1.9 million at the beginning of 2017 to US\$4.6 million at year end.

In 2017, RRI successfully launched the Tenure Facility as a separate legal entity in Sweden, and the new entity received its first direct funding from the Ford Foundation. RRI also received direct funding from Nicfi, Sida, CLUA, Packard Foundation, and Good Energies Foundation to support the remainder of the transition period for the Tenure Facility from an RRI program to a fully independent entity in 2018. The funds received for the Tenure Facility were the primary driver of the increase in cash and equivalents from US\$1 million to US\$5.4 million.

Total expenditures for 2017, on a consolidated basis, were US\$12.6 million, which was within 3 percent of the Board Approved-budget for 2017. All expenditures above the original approved budget were covered by additional funding sources.

The information in this section is based on our preliminary unaudited results for 2017. Once available, RRI's audited financial statements will be available on the RRI website [here](#).

# Independent Monitor's Report on 2017 and Framework Program II (Executive Summary)

*\* Below is an excerpt from the 2017 Independent Monitor's Report. The full report can be viewed [here](#).*

2017 marked a year of transition for the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI). In one aspect, RRI is moving from an organization driven to establish cooperation and commitment, to one that has earned a critical mass of support and has largely achieved global recognition of the land and forest tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This recognition has been established through evidence-based analyses, country-level achievements, and outreach efforts that have “made the case” for the importance of land and forest tenure rights among a great number of governments, development institutions, conservation organizations, and large corporations. Strategically, RRI is now moving from general awareness raising to targeted and segmented advocacy, in many cases to address the lack of implementation of updated legislation.

From a program perspective, 2017 was the last year of the five-year 2013-2017 Framework Proposal (FP II), and a new strategic program for 2018-2022, SP III, was approved. RRI successfully launched the Tenure Facility in 2017, a major achievement that required considerable and innovative efforts over a number of years. An increasing focus on the gender justice theme in 2017 included the publication of a highly-acclaimed analysis that led to successful global and regional media launches. In addition, in 2017 the Interlaken Group increasingly earned support for RRI and tenure rights from many companies, bringing a broader group of NGOs, private organizations, donors, foundations, and DFIs together to the table.

In addition to the adaptations RRI has made to address these transitions, the Coalition achieved impressive results in 2017 against Annual Work Plans and against the cumulative five-year targets of the FP II. For all 67 outcomes defined in 2017 Annual Work Plans, 73 percent were achieved or are on track to achieve (70 percent of the 33 outcomes defined at the regional and country level, and 76 percent of the 34 outcomes defined at the global level). Only three outcomes at the regional and country level were partially achieved; all of these outcomes required government approval or legislative reform for achievement, but did not receive the expected level of government focus or priority. For the six outcomes at the global level that were partially achieved, progress was made, but either national-level change or policy maker decisions were required, outcome achievement was expected beyond 2017, or results were deferred to 2018 due to capacity or funding issues.

For the 17 FP II indicators, all but one have achieved or overachieved their 2017 five-year cumulative target, and 13 of the 17 indicators (76 percent) have overachieved their cumulative target by 200 percent or more. The one indicator that did not achieve its target was related to advocacy work through SRMs, and the target was not reached because an insufficient number of SRMs addressing advocacy were funded through the FP II period.

To achieve these impressive results RRI provides unique and differentiating value. These values include: the ability to skillfully convene and connect organizations to enable collaboration; the provision of evidence-based data and analyses to inform and empower; an appetite for risk including flexible and adaptable planning and implementation; and probably most importantly, the ability to instill mutual trust and initiate collaboration with and among Partners, Collaborators, and stakeholders on all sides of an issue.

For an organization that has largely achieved its annual and five-year program goals, identifying recommendations to improve the RRI monitoring and evaluation system was a challenge. Only two recommendations are noted, one related to the monitoring and evaluation system and one related to the sustainability of RRG capacities:

1. Consider participatory approaches for collecting qualitative results to supplement results frameworks and support reflection and learning.
2. Consider a medium or long-term strategy for RRG staff hiring, development, and succession planning.

While the second recommendation is not specific to the monitoring and evaluation system and is therefore outside the scope of this report, it has been included due to consistent feedback from many interviews and the relevance of RRG management and staff competencies to the achievement of results.



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