



ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

2018

Rights and Resources Initiative

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The Rights and Resources Initiative

The Rights and Resources Initiative is a global Coalition of more than 200 organizations dedicated to advancing the forestland and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women. Members capitalize on each other's strengths, expertise, and geographic reach to achieve solutions more effectively and efficiently. RRI leverages the power of its global Coalition to amplify the voices of local peoples and proactively engage governments, multilateral institutions, and private sector actors to adopt institutional and market reforms that support the realization of rights. By advancing a strategic understanding of the global threats and opportunities resulting from insecure land and resource rights, RRI develops and promotes rights-based approaches to business and development and catalyzes effective solutions to scale rural tenure reform and enhance sustainable resource governance.

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.

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Letter from the Coordinator

For those of us invested in the struggle for the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and ethnic and local communities—and community women in particular—2018 encapsulated both the hope this work can instill, and the scale of the challenges we face.

On one hand, our new report *At a Crossroads*—covering 92 percent of the world's forests—found that over 150 million hectares of forestland have been recognized as owned or designated for Indigenous Peoples and communities since 2002, an area three times the size of Spain. Implementation of existing legislation in just four countries would secure at least another 150 million hectares and benefit over 200 million people. If existing laws were implemented in another five countries, conflicts over forest ownership would be reduced and community rights secured in over half the developing world's forests. Putting into practice land reforms to recognize local peoples' rights in the forest sector represents the greatest opportunity we have to make immediate progress on the climate and inequality crises that undermine development and peace globally—and at the same time advance gender justice for the over 1 billion indigenous and rural women who use and manage community lands.

The substantial gains made by members of the Coalition and their local partners in getting the right laws and policies adopted in the first place, and the outstanding early results of the Tenure Facility in implementing them, demonstrate the unprecedented possibility of progress. The Tenure Facility alone—incubated by RRI and now successfully established in Stockholm—enabled communities to advance rights recognition over more than 6.5 million hectares of land in the past two years. This quick progress speaks to the history of tremendous effort by local peoples, and the speed at which laws can be implemented when funding is provided directly to rights-holder organizations and their allies. And closer coordination between the strategic initiatives instigated in 2018—the Tenure Facility, Interlaken Group, MegaFlorestais, Land Rights Now, and Landmark Map—is already expanding the number of countries where private and government actors are supporting this agenda, increasing the number of countries where the Tenure Facility can effectively invest.

But tragically, 2018 also saw a continued surge in authoritarian nationalist political movements that are reversing hard-won gains. President Bolsonaro in Brazil is rolling back legal and regulatory protections for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendent communities. And Colombian President Iván Duque recently labeled Indigenous Peoples “terrorists” and is undermining the peace agreement that committed to expand recognition of indigenous and community rights across the country. Even where such movements have not assumed power, shrinking democratic spaces and declining respect for human rights fed the tide of violence and criminalization targeting communities in 2018. Many governments around the world continue to criminalize and murder indigenous and community leaders for defending their rights.

So we enter 2019 with a dual challenge—devising strategies to better support and enable local organizations to respond to and confront unprecedented threats, and scaling up our work to seize the growing number of new opportunities. The lessons of 2018, included herein, inform our path to 2020 and beyond.

“*By simply implementing existing legislation in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, and Indonesia, the world could double the gains made in the past 15 years, and much more could be achieved if other countries followed their lead.*”

- 2018 *At A Crossroads*

In solidarity,

Andy White

Coordinator

Rights and Resources Initiative



About this Report

This report describes the major initiatives and impacts of the RRI Coalition in 2018 and a number of lessons learned throughout the year.

It is organized by 2018 Priority Objectives, which are linked to the five-year Strategic Objectives set forth in RRI's third Strategic Program (SPIII, 2018-2022). In their briefest form, the 2018 Priority Objectives are as follows:

1. Advance women's property rights, voice, and leadership in community lands and forests
2. Leverage new analyses to advance the field and influence changemakers
3. Influence finance, business, and conservation practices to support rights-based models
4. Ensure independence of the Tenure Facility and advance connection and coordination of existing initiatives
5. Strengthen the RRI Secretariat with increased capacity in fundraising, human resources, and administration

While RRI's efforts at the country level to catalyze rights recognition and the amplifying power of the Coalition to mobilize rapidly in response to emerging opportunities and threats are discussed throughout this report, we've included two new sections to better convey these core pillars of RRI's work:

1. Spotlight: Years of effort lead to greater recognition of rights at the national level
2. Spotlight: Leveraging the power of the RRI Coalition

Since 2008, Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) has mobilized and leveraged the collective power of over 200 organizations, taking advantage of windows of opportunity to alter global discourse on respect for Indigenous Peoples', local communities', and rural women's rights, and supporting colleagues at the national level in their decades-long efforts to create the conditions for successful and sustained implementation of tenure reforms.

Fortunately, RRI's unique structure and theory of change—the synergistic combination of connecting and convening global-local actors with often unlikely allies; building the evidence base that drives new narratives and influences changemakers; and innovating and incubating new initiatives designed to work together in country to advance national tenure reform—have stood the test of time. Country-level policy reform continues to leverage the Coalition's vast network and analyses to inform and influence governments, and paves the way for successful implementation of land rights. The passage of Liberia's Land Rights Bill in 2018, for instance, resulted from over a decade of tireless advocacy and behind-the-scenes work by Coalition members—including regular use of the Strategic Response Mechanism to take advantage of unforeseen windows of opportunity. After a decade, Coalition members have successfully set the stage in Liberia for implementation of communities' rights in 2019 and beyond.

To read the annual Independent Monitor's report on RRI's outcomes and impact in 2018, please [visit](#) the RRI website.



Priority Objective 1: Advance women's property rights, voice, and leadership in community lands and forests

Recalling 2018 Priority Objective 1: Scale up global efforts to secure rural women's property rights, voice, and leadership within community land and forest. Advance gender equitable policy reforms in India, Nepal, DRC, Colombia, Liberia, and Peru

Strengthening indigenous and rural women's rights and voices within and beyond their communities

Women constitute over half of the 2.5 billion people who depend on collective land rights to support their livelihoods, and often bear primary responsibility for meeting their households' needs for food, energy, traditional medicine, fodder for livestock, and other culturally significant items. Despite this, their unique contributions to managing community-held territories—which comprise over 50 percent of the world's land—remain poorly understood and poorly supported.

Since 2017, RRI has developed analysis to track progress on the legal recognition of indigenous and rural women's land and forest rights; supported national advocacy efforts to ensure gender-equitable policy in both statutory and customary tenure regimes; and engaged with local, national, and international women's networks to expand advocacy capabilities and foster shared learning. Sensing the need for greater coherence and engagement on the critical issues of women's collective land rights, RRI convened gender experts and practitioners from 14 countries in May 2018 in Washington, DC to identify the most pressing issues preventing indigenous and rural women from fully realizing their rights. Building on cross-cutting challenges and opportunities, the group articulated five priorities for increasing global efforts to secure women's property rights, voice, and leadership within community lands and forests. These include the need to:

1. Prevent and redress the criminalization and abuse of women defenders of land and resource rights;
2. Strengthen rural and indigenous women's capacities to promote their own economic alternatives within their communities;
3. Secure rural and indigenous women's meaningful and effective participation in community governance, including their ability to hold leadership positions and make forest/resource management decisions;
4. Ensure rural and indigenous women are able to participate as active agents in national laws, policies/regulations formulation, and implementation; and that their rights to community lands and forests are formally recognized in statutory laws; and
5. Integrate emerging narratives on the crucial contributions of indigenous and rural women's tenure rights in global, regional, and national platforms.

With these priorities in hand, the Coalition is now finalizing a globally relevant Gender Justice Strategy for the next four years. Supported by the recently established Gender Justice Advisory Group—comprised of representatives from all regions and sectors—the RRI Secretariat will take the lead in defining the contours of this strategy in 2019, and supporting its implementation across the Coalition and beyond.

Fostering local-global connection, building partnerships, and identifying pathways for impact

Planning for long-term impact did not impede RRI from continuing to implement activities designed to advance indigenous and rural women's land tenure. Specifically, RRI continued to foster local-global connections, support regional advocacy efforts, and provide actionable analysis. Highlights include:

- RRI co-organized a panel at the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum that showcased perspectives from rural and indigenous women from Africa and Latin America on their vital roles in the management and protection of forests in the context of national emission reduction efforts.

- RRI convened a high-level dialogue on the role of rural and indigenous women in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Ottawa, Canada. During the day-long event, rural and indigenous women, alongside diverse stakeholders from the development community, discussed the links between land and resource rights and a host of development and climate priorities, as well as promising practices to collectively drive progress toward meeting these goals. As part of its gender focused engagement in Canada, RRI also coordinated a meeting between members of the Coalition from Tanzania, Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru and Global Affairs Canada to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for advancing rural and indigenous women's rights to land and input in climate change solutions.
- RRI officially joined the Women Deliver "Deliver for Good" campaign to engender each of the SDGs. As a formal campaign "Ally," RRI has provided inputs for advocacy efforts; equipped influencers in the broader women's rights community with usable data and key messages; and reached new audiences.
- After co-leading a panel at the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) in Kenya on the connection between women's rights and long-term restoration targets, RRI joined a group of diverse stakeholders to develop the first GLF "Gender Constituency." This new group aims to ensure that gender equality is addressed in an effective and sustainable manner through—and in the context of—restoration policy and action.
- Building on the release of the 2017 report *Power and Potential* RRI released a follow-up brief, *Legislative Best Practices*, highlighting key attributes of national laws that protect indigenous and rural women's rights to community forests and other community lands. The brief serves as a tool for communities and legislators to advocate for comprehensive legal reforms.

Advancing gender justice across countries and regions

In **India**, the RRI Coalition engaged the National Women in Agriculture Grassroots Network (MAKAAM), a powerful national network active on agriculture and gender and pushed them to incorporate the agenda of forest rights and gender. RRI supported MAKAAM's national process of consultation on women and forest rights, as well as their work advocating and mobilizing additional grassroots networks for individual and collective forest rights for women. This has led to the inclusion of the forest rights agenda as a core issue by peasant women's networks in India, creating a powerful new ally for forest rights movement and a force multiplier for RRI Coalition advocacy. It provides an example of how the powerful networks and mobilizations working on women's rights can become allies in the land and forest rights mission at country, regional, and global levels.

In **Indonesia**, the RRI Coalition supported women-led coffee producer groups in Bengkulu, Sumatra to receive funds from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). In 2018, a financing agreement was signed between the coffee producer cooperative and the MoEF for almost US\$500,000 to help producers renew their plantations, cultivate indigenous coffee varieties, and market their unique product. Together, secure rights and support for women-led locally based forest enterprises set an example for other customary forest users to access funds to improve their livelihoods and protect their lands. It also demonstrated that timely and judicious intervention by the RRI Coalition can catalyze considerable financial support for women-led community forest enterprise, filling a critical gap in resources and serving as a model for similar groups in Indonesia and other parts of the world.

In **Nepal**, the RRI Coalition, led by the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), has been advocating for the passage of the draft Forest Rights Law, which would recognize community forest rights throughout the country. With RRI's support, FECOFUN was able to ensure the incorporation of women's land rights in the Forest Rights Law through meetings with the government and creation of a watchdog committee on gender and land issues.

In **Liberia**, a decade-long effort supported by the RRI Coalition and led by Liberian civil society to pass the Land Rights Bill (LRB—formerly called the Land Rights Act) was ultimately successful. The Bill was signed into law in September 2018—paving the way forward for a number of countries in the region. In addition

to providing a path to recognition of community lands, the efforts of RRI's Collaborators in Liberia ensured that the LRB included significant gender provisions and protections for marginalized youth, stipulations that previous draft versions failed to include.

In **DRC**, the Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Development (CFLEDD) achieved a breakthrough with the enactment of a provincial decree in the province of Equateur recognizing women's right to own land—making Equateur the first and, to date, only province in DRC to do so. This breakthrough resulted from advocacy and campaigning supported by RRI since 2016. While no national legal framework exists for the recognition of women's land rights in DRC, CFLEDD is building on this success to influence the national land reform process to include women's rights. (See "Spotlight: Leveraging the Power of the RRI Coalition" for more.)

Building on previous work in **Peru** with the National Organization of Indigenous Andean and Amazonian Women (ONAMIAP) and others to ensure the rights of rural and indigenous women are taken into account in a suite of community land titling projects, RRI continued to support ONAMIAP's engagement in the working group for one of the largest titling projects, PTRT3. As members of this working group, which includes representatives from the Inter-American Development Bank and other implementing firms, ONAMIAP influenced the content of guiding documents to include gender-sensitive provisions, such as trainings for community women and awareness-raising trainings with project implementers on gender equity and interculturality to ensure understanding and compliance with gender policies and indigenous rights. This effort provides a model at the national and international level for ensuring that global projects (which often fail to trickle down to or include communities) can both involve community members in the monitoring and decision-making of such projects, and push for the gender-sensitive implementation of projects.



Priority Objective 2: Leverage new analyses to influence changemakers

Recalling 2018 Priority Objective 2: RRI analyses leveraged to advance the field and to influence priority changemakers

Inspiring collective action and new commitments at the Global Climate Action Summit

As the global climate crisis accelerates, the need to recognize and secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women has never been more urgent. Building on this recognition, the Global Climate Action Summit in September was identified by the RRI Coalition as a key moment to advance these asks with governors, climate financiers, and other changemakers. At the request of RRI's Affiliated Networks, RRI launched new analyses in advance of the Summit to provide the scientific evidence underpinning this advocacy effort.

The first analysis included the latest update in RRI's signature tenure tracking series on rights to forests, which found that the forest area legally recognized for Indigenous Peoples and communities has grown nearly 40 percent since 2002—to a total of 15 percent of forests globally. A complementary analysis found that communities manage nearly 300 billion metric tons of carbon in their lands and forests. The trust that RRI has built over the years with indigenous organizations allowed for the inclusion of never before published data.

These analyses provided unifying datapoints for a coordinated communications and advocacy effort around the Summit, allowing different organizations to utilize the same core data points, messages, and visuals across all platforms. The collective efforts of the RRI Coalition successfully “broke through the noise” to ensure that indigenous rights were part of the conversation. (See “Lessons Learned” for more.)

RRI's Affiliated Networks, Partners, and Collaborators used this data in their advocacy efforts with changemakers, contributing to the [key commitments](#) from the Governor's Task Force—a group of 38 governors from 10 countries covering one-third of the world's tropical forests—to partner with forest peoples to advance climate action. RRI's Director for Strategic Analysis and Global Engagement also participated in a press conference before the launch of a commitment from nine foundations pledging a total of US\$459 million to forests and Indigenous Peoples. Collaborative communications engagement around the message that community land rights is a climate solution led to a massive breakthrough in mainstream media coverage.

These successes built on years of advocacy and efforts by the RRI Coalition and the broader movement to secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women as not only a human rights imperative but also a key climate solution. This effort also demonstrates how RRI's data is leveraged to support Coalition members and equip broader advocacy efforts. The data was subsequently included in the 2018 New York Declaration on Forests progress assessment report on Goal 10 and the CLARA Missing Pathways to 1.5 degrees report. The RRI Secretariat is working to ensure that its data is more easily accessible to indigenous colleagues and other advocates, with new tools planned for 2019.

Spurring demand for rights-based approaches to REDD+ in DRC

In 2018, RRI completed an analysis of the impact of REDD+ projects on Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Mai-Ndombe Province in DRC. The study provided a mapping of all existing and planned REDD+ initiatives in the province, as well as a cross-cutting contextual analysis of risks that connects REDD+ to human rights. Accompanying research examined how rights to and ownership over carbon are defined in countries engaged in REDD+.

Alongside media outreach, direct outreach to decision-makers on the results of these analyses—including the donors of the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) project in DRC—helped open a space for dialogue on REDD+ and other forest development projects in the country, and led the FCPF to strengthen its operational work to respect Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land rights. This analysis provided a critical tool for communities and advocates to advance community rights recognition, and revitalized discussion toward ensuring a rights-based approach to REDD+ projects.

The report notes that for REDD+ to successfully achieve conservation and economic development, the recognition of community land rights is a vital prerequisite. Yet it finds that most of the projects active on the ground—as well as those planned—are not adequately taking rights into account. Understandably, results of this analysis stirred mixed views from the interests supporting and/or engaged in REDD+ processes in the DRC and more broadly at the international level. However, doing so also helped raise the critical need to better anchor rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in the context of REDD+ engagements, leading to increased deliberation between the DRC government, the donor community, local and international civil society organizations, and communities themselves on ways to address noted challenges. The report also proved instrumental in spurring related analyses by collaborators on related topics such as benefit-sharing.

The release of the report revitalized the debate around REDD+ in the country to the extent that WWF, responsible for implementing the Mai-Ndombe REDD+ project, forcefully made [a public response](#) to the analysis while suggesting possible efforts to improve their consultation processes. The DRC government, as part of the response to the report, brought together key stakeholders to discuss implementation of the FPIC Ministerial Arrêté that was passed in 2017. The RRI Coalition also successfully opened dialogue with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. (See “Lessons Learned” for more.)

BOX 1. TARGETED COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH “BIG IDEAS. IN BRIEF.”

Achieving recognition of community land rights at scale requires reaching new audiences that have not yet embraced this agenda, including the wider women’s rights and climate communities. We know that the same messaging does not resonate with every audience, and, increasingly, people prefer to consume content that is short and tailored to their interests. To get beyond our echo chamber, RRI is focused on producing increasingly tailored content that is based on the target audiences’ values and demonstrates how securing community land rights helps them reach their goals.

One tactic of this strategy is the new “Big Ideas. In Brief.” (BIIB) series, which reaches changemakers beyond RRI’s core constituency via opinion pieces and articles in outlets they read. These are also shared with the RRI Coalition and mailing list. In 2018, the BIIB series replaced RRI’s Annual Review, which tried to reach many audiences with one piece that was ultimately too long and not targeted enough to bring new audiences on board.

Several 2018 BIIBs were placed in tier-one media outlets—including the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times*—highlighting community land rights through the lens of criminalization in Colombia and globally, respectively. These pieces reached audiences who could have significant influence but have not yet fully embraced the community land rights agenda. Other articles focused on reaching target audiences in specialized outlets such as the World Economic Forum, which is widely read by companies and others interested in the 2020 deforestation agenda, and the Women Deliver blog, which is widely read by the women’s rights community. A more sophisticated approach to testing and measuring the effectiveness of both traditional and social media engagement—including paid promotion to reach and learn about target audiences—has informed new approaches and opportunities to link the RRI Coalition’s core messaging to dominant narratives.





Priority Objective 3: Influence finance, business, and conservation practices to support rights-based models

Recalling 2018 Priority Objective 3: Scale up finance, business, and conservation practices in support of rights-based models and initiatives, focusing on Malawi, Liberia, Cameroon, Kenya, Indonesia, Laos, Peru, and Colombia

Progressive global companies and investors increasingly recognize that insecure community land rights pose an operational and reputational threat. A growing number have made commitments to address tenure security in their supply chains, yet implementation has proven challenging. Many commitments by global companies have not been taken up by their suppliers. Progressive companies and investors are increasingly focused on seeking practical solutions to ensure implementation of best practices on land rights within their producer-level (upstream) supply chains and portfolios. RRI responded to this emerging challenge in 2018 by leveraging the efforts of Coalition members and the Interlaken Group to convene spaces in developing countries for upstream supply chain companies, local civil society, community representatives, and developing country governments to come together and begin to address issues of insecure land tenure.

As encouraging as these steps are, evidence from Forest 500 shows that private sector commitments and actions to date remain at odds with the unprecedented challenges of the global forest agenda and the growing climate crisis. Few companies and investors are set to meet their 2020 deforestation reduction commitments, and experts and practitioners increasingly recognize the need to advance locally defined economic alternatives to large-scale land-use schemes. The Coalition's work in 2018 laid the groundwork for acting on the operational and policy/regulatory developments that are urgently needed to support alternative models of sustainable economic development, anchored in rights-based approaches and the aspirations of local peoples.

Creating a "safe space" to effectively engage the private sector at the country level

In 2018, the RRI Coalition responded to increasing demand from downstream companies and investors for national-level fora where they could engage with supplier companies, civil society, and host government representatives in an atmosphere of mutual trust and collaboration. Building on the success of previous Interlaken Group workshops in Kenya and Cameroon, engagement in Malawi provided proof of concept that the "safe space" model for company-community engagement at the country level can be effective, even in environments where trust is rare. Efforts of the Coalition to influence and engage companies and investors in Kenya, Liberia, and Indonesia highlighted the persistent power asymmetries that exist between communities, the private sector, and developing country governments, and the need to empower local peoples in order to bridge it.

The potential to catalyze impacts beyond the scope of RRI and Interlaken Group involvement was demonstrated in **Malawi** at a workshop in July, co-hosted by the Interlaken Group, World Bank, Malawi Ministry of Lands, and Malawi Investment and Trade Commission. The workshop brought together 52 representatives from government, civil society, and local companies to assess the implications of the new Customary Land Act for land-based investments. At the close of the workshop, participants created the Large-Scale Land Based Investment Platform, an informal collaboration among companies, CSOs, and communities to ensure that land-based investments in Malawi are profitable for companies, while respecting community land rights and encouraging socio-economic growth. The Platform is currently working with RRI Partner Landesa to develop a case study on a cooperative out-grower scheme, the lessons from which will be applicable to multiple commodities and geographies. The workshop, which was enabled by the neutrality and legitimacy of the Interlaken Group as a global multi-stakeholder body, represents one of the first ever moments where leaders from civil society, private sector, and government in Malawi have looked past a contentious history marked by distrust and conflict to identify shared challenges and begin to collaborate.

In **Kenya**, RRI supported a country-level workshop hosted by Forest Peoples Programme and Chepkitale Indigenous Peoples Development Project (CIPDP), resulting in the creation of the Community Land Action

Network (CLAN), a platform for communities to coordinate and speak with a unified voice. Such networks respond to a major gap in efforts to drive more sustainable investments by helping communities to better organize themselves and more effectively engage or negotiate with companies, investors, and governments. Drawing on guidance provided by the Interlaken Group on how communities can productively engage the private sector, CLAN's 2019 agenda includes the development of a private sector engagement framework for communities to address grievances with companies and investors, and capacity-building for communities to use the Community Land Act to address land dispossession.

The RRI Coalition also supported efforts to hold the private sector accountable at the country level. In **Liberia**, Green Advocates worked with Inclusive Development International (IDI) on behalf of the Liberian Civil Society Oil Palm Working Group to map the investment chain of four oil palm companies and identify and hold accountable the investors financing companies that are infringing on community rights. This work resulted in the creation of a strategy to communicate the results of the analysis to affected communities, efforts to support and inform future engagement with the oil palm sector, and increased participation by CSOs in existing and emerging multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 (TFA 2020) to ensure greater inclusion of tenure rights. Moreover, Green Advocates filed a complaint on behalf of a project-affected community in Maryland County, resulting in Maryland Oil Palm Plantation (MOPP) losing a critical US\$1.5 billion loan. The Liberian experience is instructive for civil society and communities across the developing world on the range of strategies available to influence the investors behind upstream companies, as well as monitor and leverage corporate impacts on rural lands and forests.

In **Indonesia**, RRI supported AsM Law Offices in engaging with companies in the forest products and oil palm sectors to facilitate implementation of commitments and policies to respect human rights and community land tenure. To this end, AsM leveraged the Interlaken Group's Land and Forest Rights Guidance as the touchpoint around which to develop and test toolkits and training modules on business and human rights, and roll-out to field level staff. The work is of critical importance because the lessons being learned in Indonesia are helping to bridge the global knowledge gap and respond to corporate demand for practical and field-ready solutions to implement policies in practice. The work will expand in 2019 by introducing the Interlaken Group's VGGT Guide to industry associations and additional companies.

Developing a shared agenda to support community-led enterprises and economic alternatives

Though there has been encouraging progress made on the part of the private sector to respect community land rights, it is clear that the actions of progressive companies and investors will not be enough to mitigate climate change, maintain biodiversity, and reduce poverty in the developing world, among other sustainability goals. Most are struggling to implement and comply with commitments to reduce deforestation and respect human rights themselves and within their supply chains. Yet, developing country governments continue to invite and prioritize large-scale investments in natural resources as a primary vehicle for promoting economic growth, even though this approach drives environmental damage and yields limited benefits to local communities. A more diverse suite of economic development models are required if the world is to deliver the critical environment and development agendas, especially those approaches predicated on the rights and aspirations of local peoples.

In response to this emerging imperative, RRI and Rainforest Alliance co-convened a workshop in Oaxaca, Mexico in August of 2018, to develop a shared agenda for advancing community-led enterprises and economic alternatives, and develop operational and policy guidance to scale up government action and investor support for such initiatives. With steering support provided by IIED, Forest and Farm Facility, and the Tenure Facility, the meeting gathered global experts and community forestry practitioners from 13 countries across Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Participants collectively identified key gaps and strategies for scaling up community-led enterprises, and committed to further joint collaboration in 2019. Critically, they identified the need for a global narrative on the role of locally defined economic models and secure land rights in the context of the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the Paris climate agreement.

Building on the results of this initiative, RRI will collaborate with this emerging coalition of experts in 2019 and

beyond to assess the contributions of community-led enterprises and land-use economies to both elevate community voices and provide high-level policy guidance for policymakers, private investors, and development finance institutions at national and global scales. (See “Lessons Learned” for more.)

Changing the conversation on conservation with “Cornered by Protected Areas”

Alongside private sector investment, conservation investments are a major influence in the forest sector in developing countries. While it is widely recognized that Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and indigenous and rural women play a critical role in protecting the lands and resources we all depend on, dominant conservation models have failed to focus on securing community rights as key to achieving conservation outcomes.

To influence the conversation on conservation, the RRI Coalition co-authored a brief with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, on the impact of conservation on Indigenous Peoples and local communities, which was launched at the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum through a dedicated website at www.corneredbypas.com. The analysis found that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are investing substantially in conserving their forests—up to \$US1.71 billion in the developing world—and are achieving at least equal conservation results with a fraction of the budget of protected areas. Yet it also affirmed the negative impacts of protected areas across regions, including significant human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Case studies from five countries demonstrated the complex relationship between communities and protected areas.



The launch helped draw the Forum’s attention to the critical importance of community contributions to tropical forest conservation in the context of both climate and biodiversity priorities. It ensured that news stories around the event included not only the importance of forests but also the key role of the Indigenous Peoples and local communities who protect them. Since the Forum, it has continued to influence public discourse, and is regularly cited in news articles on the connection between communities and conservation.



Priority Objective 4: Ensure independence of the Tenure Facility and advance connection and coordination of existing initiatives

Recalling 2018 Priority Objective 4: The Tenure Facility is firmly established as an entity and opportunities to connect it to MegaFlorestais and the Interlaken Group to accelerate implementation of land rights is piloted

Transitioning the Tenure Facility to independence

Since its formal establishment in Sweden in 2017, the RRI Coalition has provided backstopping support to the Tenure Facility as it transitions toward operational independence. In 2018, RRI supported the refinement of the Tenure Facility's results framework and monitoring and evaluation system; helped prepare a baseline analysis for measuring progress; provided communications and learning support; and connected the Tenure Facility to other tenure instruments and initiatives. In the field, RRI contributed to the identification of projects, proponents, and delivery partners, and conducted essential context analyses to identify the most promising opportunities for advancing rights recognition on the ground for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. All of these projects were built on and made possible by decades of effort by indigenous and community leaders and RRI Coalition allies who drove the policy reforms, and created the political support and operational capacity necessary to implement them. As a result of this and the ongoing work of project proponents, the Tenure Facility enabled communities to advance rights recognition over more than 6.5 million hectares of land in the past two years.

In addition to these contributions, the RRI Secretariat provided ongoing communications support to the Facility in 2018, ensuring continuity as the Tenure Facility's Secretariat hired and onboarded its first communications director in mid-2018. In this capacity, RRI supported the completion of a Tenure Facility communications strategy, followed by development of the Facility's brand guidelines and a playbook to ensure consistent messaging and branding. The communications strategy and portfolio of products developed with support from RRI in 2018 have laid the groundwork for the Tenure Facility to strengthen its global positioning among donors and other key constituencies as the sole financial mechanism devoted exclusively to supporting the efforts of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to secure their land rights.

As a result of RRI support and the ongoing work of project proponents, the Tenure Facility enabled communities to advance rights recognition over more than 6.5 million hectares of land in the past two years.

Strengthening the growing community of practice on the implementation of collective tenure rights

In October 2018, the RRI Coalition co-organized a Learning Exchange with the Tenure Facility and the Indian School of Business (ISB). The event, held at ISB's campus in Hyderabad, India, convened Tenure Facility project leaders representing Indigenous Peoples' organizations and civil society, high-level representatives from government, and technical experts from research institutions. The event strengthened the burgeoning community of practice that had been built through previous exchanges, expanding it to encompass leaders from recently initiated projects and trusted allies and experts from government and civil society. The ability to leverage these attendees as ambassadors for the Tenure Facility and as thought leaders who can further disseminate lessons learned enables the Tenure Facility's community of practice to have additional impact in catalyzing global support for community land rights on the ground.

Lessons emerged from the Learning Exchange for project leaders, for the Tenure Facility Secretariat, and for RRI.

Key takeaways for project leaders included:

- Tenure Facility projects are achieving major results. After only a few years, projects are successfully shifting the political and development discourse toward the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land rights, and in the process, they are helping leverage millions of dollars of additional investment from other sources in many countries.
- Local governments are stepping up to the challenge in many countries and becoming strong allies to the initiatives under way, while central governments remain more reticent overall.
- Tenure champions and solutions are everywhere, even in resistant governments or when barriers to implementation emerge. It is increasingly clear that the Tenure Facility and collaborating organizations need to nurture relationships with these champions to maintain the momentum for change and be ready to seize new opportunities as they emerge.
- Projects are helping to catalyze learning and innovation, generating increasingly sophisticated ideas, tools, and strategies to facilitate and accelerate implementation. Collectively, project leaders now have better access to learning, language, and support from a growing community of practice, allowing for the ongoing expansion of the geographies and political landscapes wherein tenure reforms can be effectively initiated.

For the Tenure Facility as an institution, the event crystalized its distinct comparative advantage in focusing on bottom-up approaches and responsiveness to the needs of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and disenfranchised ethnic communities in their own struggle for recognition.

For RRI, the event demonstrated the value of facilitating exchange and learning among project leaders, advisors, and allies and building a stronger community of leaders pushing for tenure reforms. RRI's ability to co-organize and convene this event, and its relationships with key project leaders and other important actors in the land rights space, added value for participants and will allow this community of practice to grow its influence around the next learning exchange in 2019.

Catalyzing new partnerships and collaboration among the growing network of initiatives and instruments supporting the recognition of community land rights

Collaborations between RRI-catalyzed initiatives increase global recognition of rights

The family of initiatives and instruments that the RRI Coalition has incubated over the years (see Box 2) has demonstrated that engagement with constituencies who are not natural allies to Indigenous Peoples, local

BOX 2. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES CATALYZED BY RRI

- **Tenure Facility:** A flexible financing mechanism to support the implementation of projects to delimit and register indigenous and community lands.
- **MegaFlorestais:** A network of public forest agency leaders dedicated to strengthening forest governance, tenure reform, and leadership.
- **Interlaken Group:** A network of investors, corporations, NGOs, and community leaders dedicated to expanding and leveraging private sector action to secure community land rights.
- **LandMark Map:** The world's first data platform to graphically display community lands and facilitate respect by investors and governments.
- **Land Rights Now:** A global alliance of hundreds of indigenous and community organizations and NGOs coordinating communications and advocacy on tenure issues.

communities, and rural women (such as forest agencies and companies) can produce results.

Each initiative is established, speaks to a different audience, and addresses a different gap in promoting the realization of secure community land rights. However, it has also been recognized that each initiative can better achieve its goals by leveraging each other's capacities, learning, and networks.

This is especially true at the national level, where advocacy builds political space for reforms, but bridging the implementation gap requires much more coordination between initiatives. For example, the private sector can be leveraged to influence governments to move on implementation and advocate for conflict-free supply chains; local-global connections can promote local implementation; and cross-sector collaborations can respond to increasing criminalization and violence against land rights defenders.

To this end, one of the key goals of the RRI Coalition in 2018 was to explore a series of natural but untapped opportunities to increase collaboration among this platform of instruments:

- Members of the Interlaken Group and leaders from the Tenure Facility and its Board participated in the 13th convening of MegaFlorestais, held this past June in Sweden, which brought together leaders from nine of the most forested countries in the world and focused on forest owners as a driving force of the local economy. RRI and the Tenure Facility also provided specific examples of best practices for use in participating countries.
- A joint Tenure Facility and Interlaken Group panel was organized at the TFA 2020 General Assembly on May 16 in Accra to highlight trends in corporate adoption of tools and solutions to secure rights on the ground, as well as present the Tenure Facility. Following this engagement, the Tenure Facility and the Interlaken Group have been exploring national-level collaborations to leverage private sector actors as allies in supporting tenure recognition processes.
- On August 27-29 RRI, in collaboration with IIED and the Rainforest Alliance, hosted a multi-stakeholder workshop in Oaxaca, Mexico to develop a global roadmap to support and expand locally controlled forest enterprises (LCFEs). The meeting was facilitated by Sally Collins, Co-Chair of MegaFlorestais, and Judi Beck, Pacific Forestry Centre Director of the Canadian Forest Service. The workshop yielded the elements of a collective strategy to increase support for LCFEs, and demand for more global coordination to respond to gaps and challenges constraining the success of the LCFE sector. RRI is spearheading this new initiative, and working with the coalition catalyzed in Oaxaca to define a global analysis to orient locally-defined economic models at the heart of economic development, climate change mitigation, and poverty reduction efforts (see Priority Objective 3 for more).

These preliminary actions resulted in a clear takeaway: there is value in deepening relationships and establishing more formal connections between the initiatives—while at the same time ensuring that they retain their independence. Building on these steps, a full coordination meeting was held in November 2018 with representatives from all five initiatives, in parallel with the RRI Global Strategy Meeting, to map out potential bilateral collaborations. Already, some of these proposed connections are coming to fruition. For example, the first Land Rights Now campaign of 2019—a call on Panamanian President Varela to protect forests and recognize the land rights of the Naso Tjër Di—was born out of coordination with the Tenure Facility that began during the November meeting.

This convening also led to an agreement to establish a more formal connection and a road map for action, which was further fleshed out in March 2019.



Priority Objective 5: Strengthen the RRI Secretariat with increased capacity in fundraising, human resources, and administration

Recalling 2018 Priority Objective 5: The RRI Secretariat is further strengthened with increased capacity in fundraising, human resources, and administration

Targeting investments in Secretariat staff and systems development

In 2018, RRI continued to strengthen the Secretariat, and by extension the Coalition, to better respond to emerging changes in the greater ecosystem within which it operates. The appointment of a new chief operating officer brought a fresh perspective on RRI's systems and procedures, leading to renewed commitment to enhancing staff capacity and to strengthening RRG's overall performance. As a result, dedicated investments have been made to strengthen donor coordination and fundraising activities, streamline financial management and reporting, and further staff engagement, motivation, and empowerment. (See "Lessons Learned" for more.)

Fundraising

To lead the fundraising effort, a resource mobilization expert was brought into the fold of RRI's management structure in 2018 and made part of its formal strategic management team in 2019. During this time, RRI's Resource Mobilization Plan was updated and aligned with the priorities of its 3rd Strategic Program (SPIII) to strengthen RRI's position in the field, minimize risks, and enhance opportunities to leverage resources for the Coalition as a whole. And to support implementation, the fundraising function was enhanced with a curated set of tools and processes for a more strategic approach to identifying and cultivating new donors and stewarding existing donors. As a result of these changes, 20+ new foundations have been identified for active cultivation and a list of 27 additional donors are "on hold" pending additional research, dramatically shifting RRI's historical focus on limited subset of bilateral donors. (See "Lessons Learned" for more.)

In addition to a more strategic approach to securing future funding, RRI adopted a new tracking system for existing grants that has resulted in 100 percent on-time reporting to current donors. A new 2018-2022 logframe has been leveraged to increase alignment across the organization and an improved independent monitoring process was accepted by the Coalition and current donors. Both allow for an annual assessment of progress against SPIII, an important measurement of programmatic impact and a fundraising tool to ensure alignment between mission and revenue.

Organizational Performance

In 2017, an organizational mapping exercise of the RRI Secretariat was conducted, providing a baseline of employee satisfaction and a roadmap for improving organizational performance. Building on the results of this analysis, RRG initiated a number of system-level changes and provided targeted training to both operational and management staff. Management training to improve internal decision-making processes and the delivery of RRI's work program led to the adoption of new procedures for coordinating internal work flows, setting management priorities, strengthening accountability, and enhancing staff leadership. To improve the identification and eventual retention of human resources, cross-functional teams are now appointed to carry out recruitment and ensure more comprehensive vetting of selected candidates. RRI's matrix structure has been redeployed to favor the cross-fertilization of ideas, strengthen joint commitments, and improve internal coordination. And public speaking training was provided to outward facing staff from RRI and the Tenure Facility to improve their communication skills in diverse settings and situations.

Beyond these developments, RRI continued to foster a culture of transparency, risk mitigation, and accountability. New policies aimed at identifying and safeguarding vulnerable people and addressing abuse and harassment in the workplace were adopted and reviewed by staff, ensuring protection of employees and mitigating risks to the organization. Additionally, RRI updated its entire employee handbook, rolling out new and updated policies including travel and expense management, environmental responsibility, social media usage, and whistleblower policies. Updates to whistleblower-related policies included establishing clear compliance

officer responsibilities and development of standard procedures for investigations and Board reporting.

Finance and Administration

2018 was a critical year for RRI's financial management and related processes. A new financial management system was instituted, associated processes were updated, and organization-wide staff training was delivered to streamline RRI accounting procedures and better support reporting against grants. As a result, cost analysis shows over US\$110,000 in annual savings and a US\$40,000 one-time savings.

Moreover, staff training and exposure to the budgeting process has resulted in a much better understanding of the need to identify funding sources prior to committing to expenses, as evidenced by the increased interaction between the program and finance staff, improved adherence to established procedures, and staff proactively identifying new opportunities for funding. In the fourth quarter, RRI rolled out a new intranet system that streamlines employee access to HR, finance, communications, and general office information and documents.

RRG has also moved forward in the process of setting up an international satellite office in Montreal, completing the process for legal registration with the government of Quebec, establishing a local payroll provider, and setting up new Canadian currency-based bank accounts. The 2018 grant application to Montreal International was approved in January of 2019, providing funding to support this expansion. Steps to identify and staff the satellite operation are expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2019.

The Finance and Administration team also conducted an organization-wide operational risk assessment and reviewed key risks and mitigation activities with the Audit Committee and the full Board of Directors. An annual process for revisiting the risk assessment and communicating with the Board was adopted by Board resolution and will be implemented throughout 2019.

Board of Directors

In 2018, RRI strengthened the RRG Board of Directors, its highest governance body. In January, RRG arranged a training for Board members and Partners that focused on Board governance, member roles and responsibilities, leadership styles, and best practices. In addition to providing guidance for onboarding new and future Board members (since 4 out of the 11 RRG Board seats are drawn from Partner organizations), the training is credited with helping Board members reflect on current Board practices and identify areas for improvement. As a result, several documents were developed and adopted by the end of the year, specifically: 1) a Board accountability statement recalling for each Board member their roles and responsibilities; 2) terms of reference for each Board committee (executive, governance, and audit) and officer (chair, secretary, and treasurer); and 3) a new conflict of interest policy and process to mitigate risks. Together, these efforts are expected to improve the Board's effectiveness and efficiency and strengthen its overall leadership.



Spotlight: Years of strategic coordination lead to greater recognition of rights at the national level

The work of the RRI Coalition in priority countries and regions supports the efforts and vision of the indigenous and community men and women who have been working to advance their rights for decades by supporting their efforts to create the conditions necessary for tenure reform. This work is long term, leverages RRI's global-level connections to pressure governments and key private sector actors, and paves the way for successful implementation of land rights. The progress discussed below is the result of years of advocacy efforts.

Setting the stage for tenure reform with the passage of the progressive Land Rights Bill in Liberia

After a decade of advocacy by Liberian civil society supported by the RRI Coalition, Liberia adopted a pro-community Land Rights Bill (formerly known as the Land Rights Act). By recognizing community land rights without requiring a formal deed and title, the Bill provides a framework for a more prosperous and peaceful Liberia and sets an important precedent for all of West Africa to follow.

To achieve this result, the CSO Working Group on Land raised public awareness about the importance of community land rights and regularly convened a diverse group of stakeholders to coordinate and strategize on advocacy in an ever-changing, politically challenging context. This work took many forms, including technical support to build the capacities of communities and CSOs; support for opening political spaces of engagement with decision-makers; help rallying the support of various stakeholders; and media engagement. Demand for more robust international support culminated in a Land Rights Now Campaign in 2018, targeting President George Weah through digital, social, and traditional media outreach and requesting that he sign into law a progressive Land Rights Bill. This exemplified the benefits of close coordination between the strategic initiatives and the Coalition. (See Priority Objective 4 for more.)

Building on their collective efforts to prevent the passage of a watered-down version of the law in 2017, the Working Group helped usher in a final version that met nearly all the demands of communities and their advocates, including specific provisions on the rights of women. The work of the Coalition is far from complete, however. As attention shifts toward implementation, ensuring proper regulations, raising awareness among local communities to equip them to engage in the implementation process, and building support among key stakeholders will remain vital.

Securing greater representation in national land titling, economic development, and peacebuilding processes in Latin America

In **Colombia**, RRI Collaborators ONIC, CONPA, and the Traditional Authorities of Colombia and Gobierno Mayor secured greater involvement in implementation of the peace agreement. These organizations are all members of the Ethnic Commission for Peace, the body created to represent indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in peace negotiations and monitor the implementation of the "Ethnic Chapter" of the peace agreement, which safeguards indigenous and Afro-descendant collective rights. In 2018, RRI supported the Commission in launching a report on the status of implementation of the Ethnic Chapter, which found that 54 percent of the Ethnic Chapter provisions have not been implemented. This work led to indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations establishing an agreement with Colombia's new administration to include commitments from the Ethnic Chapter in the country's next five-year National Development Plan (which will guide policy from 2018-2022). In addition, the Ethnic Commission succeeded in becoming institutionalized within the UN system in Colombia, and gaining representation within the entity established by the peace agreement to provide transitional justice to victims of the armed conflict. As a result, the Ethnic Commission now has direct access to key actors and mechanisms leading implementation of the peace agreement, and is better positioned to ensure respect for community rights.

In **Peru**, the RRI Coalition's efforts resulted in new agreements between indigenous organizations and the

government to strengthen local economic initiatives in national development plans and a roadmap to define a national Community Forestry Plan. First, the “Unity Pact” (a body that integrates five national-level indigenous organizations) solidified a proposal for a comprehensive public policy on indigenous economies, which was presented to the Peruvian government at a public event in February 2019. This was the culmination of a two-year process led by RRI to consolidate contributions from the country’s Andean and Amazonian indigenous groups. RRI, in alliance with the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDESEP) and Rainforest Alliance, successfully promoted an agreement among the national forest agency (SERFOR), indigenous organizations, and regional government representatives to create the pillars of a community forest management public policy that integrates the vision of indigenous communities and indigenous women.

In both countries, RRI’s facilitation and coordination allowed for the identification of common issues and amplification of previously distinct advocacy initiatives to ensure the respect of collective rights, thus staving off rollback at this critical moment of increased pressure on collective lands and threats of criminalization.

Leveraging RRI data, analysis, and messaging in support of the Forest Rights Act in India

RRI remains focused on leveraging the power of India’s Forest Rights Act (FRA) to scale up recognition of indigenous and community land rights, using a combination of evidence-based analysis, advocacy, and capacity-building to create the ecosystem necessary for successful implementation of the law. In 2018, 1,800 community forest rights claims were initiated with support from the Tenure Facility, while RRI contributed to creating the necessary ecosystem for implementation to fully take hold.

While India’s national government has remained insensitive to forest rights issues, RRI supported advocacy to ensure that the incoming governments in three states (Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan) included FRA implementation in their party platforms. These state-level successes demonstrate that a bottom-up approach can succeed in mobilizing key government actors who can ultimately tip the scales of change.

To complement this work, RRI built the legal capacity of communities to assert their land and forest rights under existing laws. Court cases have been filed to create precedence, and efforts were made to counter lawsuits filed by conservation groups against the FRA. RRI also leveraged the power of women’s grassroots networks (see Priority Objective 1), supported FRA implementation training for nearly 250 people, and continued to support www.landconflictwatch.org to document conflicts between the government and the private sector. (See “Leveraging the Power of the Coalition” for more.)

Finally, RRI worked closely with researchers and collaborators in India to produce analysis and conduct advocacy to support CSO efforts to counter rollback. Outcomes on this front include delaying implementation of the US\$8 billion Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, which poses a major threat to the FRA and community rights; preventing passage of a National Forest Policy that could undermine the FRA; and the withdrawal of an order prohibiting recognition of forest rights in Tiger Reserves by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

RRI intervention has helped Collaborators and movements in India to revive the Forest Rights Act. Although barely 10 percent of the FRA’s potential has been realized, it has already become the largest land reform in India’s history. In 2019 RRI will continue to leverage data and advocacy to ensure that the FRA becomes part of party platforms for this year’s upcoming elections, build legal capacity to defend the FRA, create a positive environment for implementation of the FRA on the ground by the Tenure Facility and other actors, and leverage the increasing recognition of land rights to catalyze a democratic, rights-based restoration of India’s forests.



Spotlight: Leveraging the power of the RRI Coalition

Much of RRI's work is building the ecosystem necessary to drive long-term progress. But there is also an acute need to address rapidly developing situations, including both imminent threats to communities and unexpected opportunities to catalyze rights recognition. RRI's unique Coalition structure and dedication to ensuring flexible funding allow Coalition members to meet these challenges in a changing world where political, social, and economic precarity are increasingly the norm.

In 2018, we saw the power of this 200+ organization Coalition deployed in multiple ways. The Strategic Response Mechanism (SRM)—which complements annual planning—allowed members of the Coalition to apply for funds to respond to unforeseen windows of opportunity to advance rights recognition. Coalition members are often already embedded in developing situations and poised to seize these opportunities to drive forward progress.

The Coalition also mobilized at key moments, with members capitalizing on their individual strengths and amplifying one another's work. It was increasingly clear that the Coalition is a valuable tool to combat the rising violence against land rights defenders. As the political winds shift toward nationalism, progress made in the last decade is at grave risk. Leveraging the Coalition's size and flexibility to overcome these challenges will be increasingly critical in the years to come. (See "Lessons Learned.")

Combatting criminalization at national and international levels

Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women face growing criminalization and violence in response to defending their lands. All of the Coalition's work serves to prevent criminalization, as secure, legally recognized community land rights make it more difficult for governments to label communities illegal in their own territories or call them terrorists for defending them. But the Coalition also combats this trend directly by supporting efforts in key countries to address criminalization on the ground, and by elevating these issues in global discourse.

Supporting victims of criminalization, influencing development projects, and raising awareness at the national level

In **Indonesia**, RRI's co-founded criminalization fund provided emergency support to defenders who have been arrested. The fund is administered through a coalition of civil society organizations, showcasing how collective networked action can be leveraged to protect rights.

In **India**, RRI supported [Land Conflict Watch](#), a rapidly growing monitoring platform for journalists and advocates that has tracked over 600 land-related conflicts in under 2 years. It has rapidly become the most important source of data and analysis for land conflicts in the country and has helped shaped the rights-based discourse in India through extensive citations in analysis and stories in major media outlets. It has become a valuable hub for the larger network of front-line activists and researchers engaging with rights issues.

In **Ghana**, RRI provided support to Coalition Partner Civic Response for work with the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources (MLNR) to successfully reboot government discussions on tree tenure guidelines and benefit-sharing regulations. Moreover, Civic Response has worked with nearly 100 communities to build capacity to report forest infractions using mobile apps. These activities have strengthened the legal framework and regulatory capacity for supporting community livelihoods while simultaneously strengthening forest conservation in Ghana.

The RRI Coalition also used media outreach to draw attention to the devastating impacts of criminalization and the urgent need for governments to address it, including through an op-ed in the *New York Times* on extrajudicial killings of community and social leaders in **Colombia**; and an op-ed on the *Washington Post* on the murder of Guatemalan activists, increasing international pressure on leaders in these countries to act.

Awareness-raising in support of the UN Special Rapporteur, and mobilizing when she faced criminalization

Through an SRM, RRI supported the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-

Corpuz's efforts to convene indigenous leaders from around the world to give testimony on the violence and legal persecution they face for defending their lands. The meeting—held in March in Geneva—informed a report by the Special Rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018.

At the Special Rapporteur's request, RRI used traditional and digital media outreach to draw attention to these issues, including through the creation of a dedicated website at [TheyShouldHaveKnownBetter.com](https://www.TheyShouldHaveKnownBetter.com) to house the Special Rapporteur's report, related testimonies, and resources.

Outreach led to significant international attention to the violence and legal harassment confronting Indigenous Peoples, and highlighted the situation in countries around the world. The Special Rapporteur also requested a dedicated website for cases and data on the efforts of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to conserve forests (see Priority Objective 3).

When the Philippines government falsely labeled the Special Rapporteur herself a terrorist in response to her activism, the RRI Coalition mobilized to support her. At her request, the Coalition focused not only on ensuring her safety but also on drawing attention to how criminalization impacts Indigenous Peoples around the world.

These efforts led to a resolution from the European Parliament on the extrajudicial killings and persecution of human rights defenders that specifically urged the government of the Philippines to remove the Special Rapporteur from its list of terrorists; numerous statements of support, including from private sector actors; and high-level media outreach including a feature in the *New York Times* and an op-ed in the *Financial Times*. RRI also coordinated signatures for Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact's official "sign on" letter and supported the development of individual letters to Philippines embassies at the request of RRI Partners.

The Special Rapporteur has since been removed from the terrorist list, as has longtime indigenous activist and co-convener of the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group for Sustainable Development Joan Carling. RRI is working with both the Special Rapporteur and Joan Carling to lay the groundwork for a Land Rights Now campaign in 2019 to combat criminalization at both the global and national level.

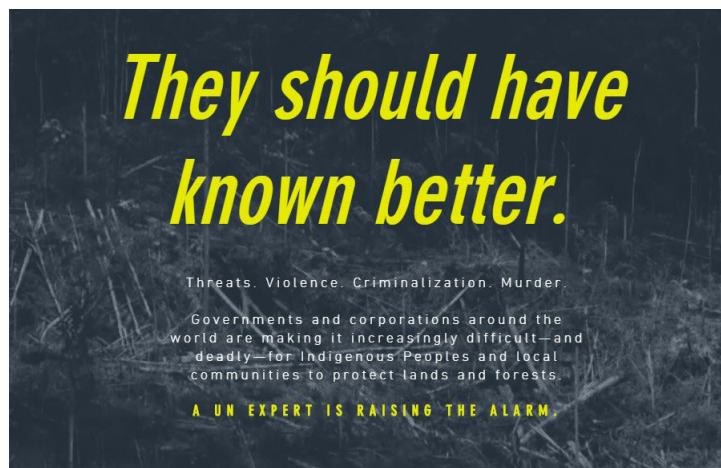
Addressing unforeseen threats and opportunities with the Strategic Response Mechanism

The Strategic Response Mechanism (SRM) is a unique RRI program designed to enable timely, flexible responses to unforeseen opportunities and threats related to community land and forest rights. It complements RRI's annual planning process by allowing it to rapidly respond to unexpected and time-limited windows of opportunity with funding to Coalition members of up to US\$50,000, allowing RRI to be effective in shifting political landscapes. Since 2008, RRI has used the SRM to influence important legislation concerning land and resource rights, support civil society engagement with national governments, and maximize opportunities for the private sector to respect local communities' rights to their lands and resources.

Three SRMs continued from 2017 with a carried-over financial cost of approximately US\$173,259. Across 2018, a total of 9 new SRMs were approved and contracted for an additional US\$438,560. Yet, this fell far short of the heavy demand for SRM projects throughout 2018, demonstrating the need for this rapidly deployable support mechanism.

Examples of the SRM in Latin America, Africa, and Asia

In Latin America, RRI provided an SRM to the National Coordination of Quilombolas (CONAQ) in **Brazil** and



the Process of Black Communities (PCN) in **Colombia** to devise new advocacy strategies to secure Afro-descendant community land rights based on the legal and administrative experiences in both countries. A series of exchanges resulted in a roadmap identifying next steps to resume the collective land titling process in Brazil, per a Brazilian Federal Supreme Court ruling. While resulting recommendations have yet to be applied due to the subsequent change of government in Brazil, a plan for ongoing collaboration between PCN and CONAQ has been defined, featuring a revised advocacy strategy for implementation when the appropriate political window arises in Brazil. Furthermore, the strengthened relationship between CONAQ and PCN—two major Afro-descendant organizations in the Latin America region—is an important step toward what communities consider the critical construction of a more robust strategy to position the collective land rights of Afro-descendant peoples as a priority at the regional and international levels.

In the wake of successful efforts to recognize women's collective land rights in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC), the Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Development (CFLEDD) received an SRM to support advocacy on the inclusion of women's rights in DRC's national forest policy, as well as the recognition of local communities' and Indigenous Peoples' tenure rights when the moratorium on logging concessions is lifted. Following an initial series of meetings with delegates from regional environmental networks, NGOs, and civil society to develop an advocacy strategy for ensuring community involvement in the revision of DRC's national forest codes, CFLEDD hosted a national validation meeting to affirm civil society's position, and led exchanges with FONAREDD (Fonds National REDD+) and DRC's parliament to advance community rights—receiving widespread national media coverage. Today, DRC's women's groups are working more closely with the government and women's rights are more strongly supported in DRC's forest governance policies.

In **Nepal**, an SRM was leveraged to secure the interests of Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in local government regulations and policies, as part of Nepal's transition to a three-tier government structure. In addition to convening, training, and orienting local government representatives on community forestry issues, RRI support enabled the development of model forest right laws to empower CFUGs, the removal of regulatory barriers, and efforts to initiate the implementation of these laws. Results to date are promising: ten municipalities have initiated the implementation of the model forest law; and five local governments have begun collaborating with district officials to prepare for implementation, as well as align resources and support to CFUGs. A gender policy for local government was prepared and is now owned by the government itself. A series of national and regional forums to clarify the role of local government led to a decision that FECOFUN will lead on sustainable forest management and protection at the national level.

BOX 3. HOW SRM PROPOSALS ARE EVALUATED AND APPROVED

SRM proposals are evaluated and approved through a simple, expedited process, typically within 30 days. Prospective grantees must complete a Concept Note Template that includes an implementation plan, deliverables, outcomes, and a timeline. Projects are vetted and, if they move forward in the application process, must be approved by the Executive Committee of the RRG Board of Directors. In order for an activity to qualify as an SRM, the activity must meet the following five criteria: 1) exploits a political window of opportunity; 2) supports a critical moment in a social mobilization process; 3) exploits higher-risk opportunities and could expand RRI relationships; 4) is a new or newly expanded activity; and 5) is dependent on incremental funding/connectivity at the right strategic moment to produce outcomes.



Reflections and Lessons Learned

A number of critical lessons emerged in 2018, laying the groundwork for 2019 and beyond.

Existing legal instruments and support mechanisms are inadequate to protect and defend front-line defenders. The RRI Coalition received unprecedented demands for legal support and protection by community leaders who are on the front lines of increasingly violent and political efforts to subvert the customary and legal rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural and indigenous women. Unfortunately, there are insufficient resources, systems, nor structures in place to assist front-line defenders. As a part of planned interventions for 2019, RRI will draw on the experience of the Coalition to assess the current state of play and identify the need for and/or opportunity to enhance strategic coordination on this issue, raise dedicated funding, or establish more permanent structures.

RRI must mobilize its broad Coalition to directly combat the expansion of rollback and criminalization. Insecure land rights are a root cause of criminalization and violence against Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as unrecognized rights enable governments to declare communities illegal on their own lands. In the long term, therefore, all RRI's work serves to circumvent criminalization. Yet it is increasingly clear that RRI must also leverage its broad Coalition to confront the immediate threats facing land rights defenders, including broader rollback of rights. This is especially true given that criminalization is used as a tool to silence communities advocating for their rights, and often targets leaders. In 2018, efforts to combat criminalization in the Philippines demonstrated that the broad reach of the RRI Coalition can be an effective tool to support land rights defenders. This will be a priority for RRI in 2019 and beyond. (See "Leveraging the Power of the Coalition.")

To seize opportunities for scaling up rights, the world needs an actionable roadmap. Governments, companies, investors, and the broader international community are increasingly recognizing the critical importance of clarifying and securing community land rights to enable private sector investments, strengthen progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, and achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement. Unfortunately, guidance on the actual actions that different constituencies can take to advance the land rights agenda in specific jurisdictions is sorely missing. In light of this gap, RRI aims to develop—in collaboration with Partners and Collaborators, and the support of the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)—the first ever global opportunities map for scaling up collective tenure security.

Cultivating new champions is essential for meeting the Coalition's targets. We know that the number of potential allies who have not yet fully embraced community land rights remains significant, and that the Coalition needs additional champions to truly scale up recognition of rights. We also know that effectively converting these audiences—and inspiring greater action from those who have already embraced community land rights—requires the use of increasingly targeted communications and data that frames community land rights as a means to advance their goals and the issues they care about. By doing so, RRI hopes to eventually demonstrate that securing community land rights is a strategic driver of the change funders and others seek toward their goals on gender, climate, poverty, human rights, and so on. Ongoing efforts have underscored the need for: 1) high-level, introductory materials on RRI's impact, value add, and theory of change; and 2) improvements to the RRI Secretariat's information and asset management system. Work on both fronts to better connect with and inspire an increasingly diverse group of allies is underway in 2019.

Addressing strategic opportunities in the context of long-term commitments is a delicate balancing act. The RRI Coalition is known for producing high-level analyses and for being responsive to strategic opportunities and rapidly changing situations. Balancing these two prerogatives is a struggle common to many Coalition Partners and Collaborators. However, growing demand for more ambitious and sophisticated analyses, greater involvement in the rapidly evolving ecosystem of rights-based initiatives, and concurrent efforts to seize strategic opportunities are forcing the Secretariat to more effectively prioritize, understand the extent and limitations of its value-add, and better leverage the growing platform of instruments and initiatives that have emerged in the past decade. Maintaining the flexibility to continuously reassess its strategic niche and limit its engagement to what it does best, while creating space for others to demonstrate leadership and initiative will become increasingly essential to the long term success of the Coalition.

Close collaboration with Indigenous Peoples', local communities, and rural and indigenous women's

organizations is key to effectively communicating and leveraging the results of RRI analyses. In advance of the Global Climate Action Summit in September, RRI launched two major analyses: the latest in its signature forest tenure tracking data, and an updated analysis of the amount of carbon stored in community lands. While both contributed to successful advocacy strategies around the Summit, the focus was on the carbon data, meaning that RRI's tenure data—a core piece of its work and identity—did not receive the attention it deserved. In the future, RRI will separate the launch of signature tenure tracking analyses whenever possible. However, RRI's close collaboration with Indigenous Peoples organizations (e.g., COICA, AMPB, AMAN) in the conception, design, and release of the carbon data proved a sound strategy to amplify the dissemination of our findings and influence the dominant narrative on rights. (See Priority Objective 2.)

Coordinated delivery of country analyses with global significance is essential for maximizing impact across audiences and geographies. RRI's strategic analysis on REDD+ projects in Mai-Ndombe province in DRC was a critical advocacy tool for communities and civil society to open dialogue with REDD+ proponents toward a rights-based approach. While a launch in Paris enabled RRI to directly reach funders of these projects, minimal upfront coordination with local collaborators in DRC and some key project proponents at both national and international levels affected emerging narratives and interpretations of the report's actual findings and recommendations. A community member traveled to Paris for the launch, but more extensive national and international stakeholder engagement ahead of the report's release would have ensured more informed dialogue of the report's conclusions and their implications for both project beneficiaries and proponents. (See Priority Objective 2.)

Locally defined economic models and conservation approaches are essential to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable development agenda. Experience shows that private sector action is not a silver bullet for solving the world's environment and development challenges. Complex local realities, insecure community land tenure, and the high opportunity costs of truly sustainable and equitable commodity production have so far constrained companies and investors from bridging the implementation gap between aspirational policies and field-level challenges.

At the same time, the powerful impact of locally defined economic models is poorly understood and poorly supported. To achieve change at the speed and scale required to halt the pace of land use and land cover change, restore the world's forests, and improve livelihoods, the policy and regulatory environments that support large and powerful actors will need to shift in favor of smaller and more sustainable models of economic development. Drawing on the recognition that secure tenure and community-driven economic models contribute to global development goals, the RRI Coalition will build on the work begun in 2018 to make the policy, environmental, and economic case for placing community-led enterprises and community voices at the center of the global climate and development agendas. (See Priority Objective 3.)

Exploring what it means to be part of a gender-sensitive Coalition is an important step to scaling up gender equity in the governance of community lands. The Coalition is committed to increasing the recognition of the essential roles of indigenous and rural women in tackling the impacts of climate change, poverty, and social, political, and economic inequality. While recognizing the importance of advocating for women's rights to use, control, access, and make decisions about land, the Coalition's actions to date have largely been outward-facing—connecting the issue to the mainstream gender movements globally. Going forward, it is increasingly clear that a two-pronged approach is required: one that advocates for, supports, and advances women's equity within Coalition member organizations, while simultaneously connecting the role of women in community lands to the larger narratives surrounding sustainable development and climate change. Operating with a gender lens requires changes in the policies, practices, and systems that perpetuate discrimination and injustices, and that change must begin with a commitment to uphold best practices and standards within the Coalition. (See Priority Objective 5.)

2018 Financial Results

While overall revenue declined between 2017 and 2018, this was largely due to the recognition of the full amount of one US\$4 million multi-year grant in 2017, per Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. In 2018, RRG received or renewed multi-year grants from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and UK Department for International Development (DFID), reflected in the increase in deferred revenue.

Overall, expenses also decreased by approximately 10 percent between 2017 and 2018, led by decreases in consultant spending and subgrants to other organizations. Expenses also shifted from regional programs to our Strategic Analysis and Global Engagement work, largely driven by donor commitments written into grant agreements. The Tenure Facility program maintained similar levels of expenses between 2017 and 2018, but activity shifted from consultants assisting with the establishment of the Tenure Facility toward staff support for large, multi-year grants issued in late 2017 and early 2018. Overall the Tenure Facility program at the RRI Secretariat came in below its expected budget as expenses shifted to the independent entity established in Stockholm in 2017.

Total current assets increased by approximately US\$2 million, to US\$10.5 million total. This is expected to be reduced in 2019 as funds held on behalf of the Tenure Facility program are returned to the funding sources who are developing financing plans for the entity separately from the RRI Secretariat.



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