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Funding with Purpose

A STUDY TO INFORM DONOR SUPPORT FOR
INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY RIGHTS,
CLIMATE, AND CONSERVATION



Rainforest Foundation
Norway



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the UNFCCC CoP26 in November 2021, leaders from Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and 17 philanthropic foundations made a historic commitment of USD 1.7 billion over the next five years to support efforts to secure, strengthen, and defend Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' (IPs and LCs) rights to their lands and forests. This Pledge reflects the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises and recognizes the essential role that IPs and LCs play in protecting forests. Funding to secure and protect IP and LC tenure is one of the most effective, equitable, and efficient means of preserving and restoring tropical forestlands and the invaluable ecosystems they contain. This emerging consensus is the result of decades of mobilization, research, and advocacy led by IPs, LCs, and their allies.

It is no secret that the rights of IPs and LCs are inextricably linked to the preservation of key ecosystems

and carbon stores. Research has demonstrated that these groups are essential stewards of over half of the world's land area, with customary claims to many of Earth's last intact forest landscapes and home to millions of at-risk species, ecosystems, and carbon stores. The tropics and the Indigenous and community lands therein—notably the Amazon Basin, the Congo Basin, and insular Southeast Asia—serve as key habitats for threatened species and irreplaceable biodiversity. And yet, IPs and LCs in these geographies receive only a fraction of the donor funding that other climate and conservation solutions receive.

This report assesses donor funding for IPs' and LCs' tenure and conservation between 2011 and 2020 to learn from historical trends and outline key opportunities to improve the effectiveness of this funding over the next five years. It proposes to make donor funding more *fit for purpose*—which means that climate,

conservation, and rights funding is channeled in ways that are relevant and appropriate for IPs and LCs and ensures funding engagements are led by their organizations—and flexible, long-term, gender-inclusive, timely and accessible, and mutually accountable.

The report builds on the 2021 study entitled “Falling Short,” which identified the scale of international donor funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management and made recommendations on how to scale up this funding.

KEY FINDINGS

- **IP- and LC-led:** Only 17 percent of IP and LC tenure and forest management funding between 2011 and 2020 mentioned an IP organization, indicating that a low share of funding is under leadership of Indigenous organizations.
- **Mutually accountable:** There is a lack of accountability and transparency from donors towards IPs and LCs, inhibiting IPs and LCs understanding and influence over donor priorities and decisions. Most private foundations, who represent the majority of the *IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge* donors, do not share data on their projects systematically.
- **Flexible and long-term:** Donors have increasingly been providing funding through long-term funding agreements, which provides IP and LC organizations with much-needed predictability and security. Yet, a lack of flexibility to change or adapt priorities within projects restricts IP and LC organizations in addressing diverse community needs, responding to imminent threats, or seizing windows of opportunity.
- **Gender inclusive:** At most, 32 percent of funding included one or more keywords related to gender in the project description, despite the essential role of women in IP and LC forest management and their notable exclusion from many governance structures and forest management decisions.
- **Timely and accessible:** Due to strict eligibility and administrative requirements of bilateral and multilateral donors, IP and LC organizations must overcome considerable barriers to access funding. Funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management has therefore generally relied on traditional ODA funding structures, with national and international organizations acting as intermediaries.

BOX 1: WHAT IS A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE APPROACH?

1. **It is led by IPs and LCs:** Such funding prioritizes initiatives and projects that are led by IPs and LCs themselves, and executed with their Free, Prior and Informed consent (FPIC). For donors and intermediaries, this means including IPs and LCs at every stage of the process, from design of funding strategies to the governance of funding mechanisms.
2. **It is mutually accountable:** Systems of accountability are mutual, where donors are accountable to IP and LC organizations and their communities—with full transparency of completed, active, and planned programming—and IP and LC organizations are accountable to both donors and the communities they represent.
3. **It is flexible and long-term:** Flexible funding enables IP and LC organizations to capitalize on moments of opportunity to secure tenure and to rapidly respond to and mitigate emerging threats to their lands and lives. Long-term and predictable funding builds the capacity of the implementing organizations and enables them to effectively represent their communities, manage funding on their own behalf, and maintain their engagements with communities and government actors.
4. **It is gender-inclusive:** Donors promote a gender-inclusive lens for all funding across the IP and LC tenure and forest management sector, ensuring that the rights of Indigenous and community women are recognized and protected and that they have a voice in forest management decisions.
5. **It is timely and accessible:** Funding is delivered quickly and accessed with few administrative hurdles.

CALLS TO ACTION

1. To ensure funding is IP and LC-led, donors should build strong, at-scale relationships with IP and LC organizations and engage trusted intermediaries with close and long running relationships with these organisations, such as national and local NGOs.
2. To improve their own accountability towards IP and LCs, donors should solicit feedback from IP and LC organizations and align funding strategies with their needs. Private foundation donors should improve their transparency by publicly sharing their funding data to better align with the practice of bilateral and multilateral institutions.
3. To increase flexibility, donors should leverage learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic, where some donors allowed recipients to quickly direct resources toward the most urgent community needs.
4. To improve gender-inclusiveness, donors must incorporate a gender-inclusive lens to existing projects, increase gender-focused programming, and scale up funding for women leaders and their organizations.
5. To improve the accessibility of funding, donors should establish and maintain open communication with IP and LC organizations, work to simplify administrative requirements where they can, and support trusted intermediaries to bridge the gap between donor requirements and IP and LC needs.



Sumatra, Indonesia, RRI Resource Trip, 2022

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INTRODUCTION

During CoP26 in November 2021, leaders from Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and 17 philanthropic foundations made a historic commitment to support efforts to secure, strengthen, and defend Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' (IPs and LCs) rights to their lands and forests.¹ The *IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge* to contribute USD 1.7 billion over the next five years reflects the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises and recognition of the essential role that IPs and LCs play in protecting forests.² Funding to secure and protect IP and LC tenure and forest management is one of the most effective, equitable, and efficient means of protecting, restoring, and sustainably using tropical forestlands and the ecosystem services they provide.³ This emerging consensus is the result of decades of mobilization, research, and advocacy by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and their allies.

Now, donors, intermediary organizations, and IPs and LCs must collectively rise to the challenge to deliver meaningful results that reflect the Pledge's ambition and turn the tide in the fight against biodiversity loss and climate change.

An important part of the pledge is to reshape donors' relationship with IPs and LCs. The Pledge donors recognize this by stating that they "*Commit to promote the effective participation and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making and to include, consult and partner with them in the design and implementation of relevant programmes and finance instruments, recognising the specific interests of women and girls, youth, persons with disabilities, and others often marginalised from decision-making.*"⁴ The Pledge also states that the donors will "[channel] support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including through

capacity building and financial support for group activities, collective governance structures and management systems, and sustainable livelihoods.”⁵

Delivering on these ambitions will require donors to critically assess and adapt their funding practices in a way that is more suitable to IPs, LCs, and their unique realities, making them more “fit for purpose.” This will enable donors to channel more financial support to IPs and LCs in ways that enable them to implement projects in line with community needs and the overall ambitions to protect indispensable carbon storage and biodiversity, while also respecting and promoting local peoples’ rights and ways of life.

To offer advice to donors, this report assesses existing donor practices along different dimensions of “fit for purpose.” We use data on donor disbursements for IP

and LC tenure and forest management between 2011 and 2020 to learn from historical trends and identify opportunities to improve implementation over the next five years. The assessment builds on the 2021 study entitled “Falling Short,”⁶ which for the first time identified the scale of international donor funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management and made recommendations to donors, intermediaries, and governments of tropical forest countries on how to scale up funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management. The report also uncovered that only a small share of overall funding reaches IPs and LCs, and that IP and LC organizations generally found funding arrangements complicated, resource demanding, and difficult to comply with, diverting important resources away from protecting forests and communities from external threats.

BOX 2: KEY FINDINGS IN *FALLING SHORT*

- Between 2011 and 2020, donors disbursed approximately USD 2.7 billion (on average USD 270 million annually) for projects supporting IP and LC tenure and forest management in tropical countries.
- IP and LC tenure and forest management projects receive far less donor funding than other climate and environmental measures, despite the evidence of their cross-cutting effectiveness for preserving forestland—the equivalent of five percent of ODA for general environmental protection and less than the equivalent of one percent of ODA for climate on average.
- Relatively few donors prioritize support to IP and LC tenure and forest management. The United States and Norway have been the largest contributors in absolute terms, followed by other major donors including Germany, the United Kingdom, and Sweden.
- Approximately half of the total funding to IP and LC tenure and forest management was channeled through multilateral institutions and implemented by large international organizations.
- Only 17 percent of projects analyzed in terms of disbursement value included the name of an IP organization in the project description, title, or list of participating organizations. This amounts to an average of USD 46.3 million per year across the tropics.



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Annie Gboyah, Peter K. Ben, and Thomas Y. Kpue of the Jogbahn clan in Grand Bassa County, Liberia

WHAT IS A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE APPROACH?

The following definition of fit for purpose is based on discussions in the Path to Scale network, an informal platform convened by RRI, where leaders from public and private donors, financial mechanisms, multilaterals, intermediaries, and rightsholder organizations discuss approaches to scale up funding for IPs and LCs. We define “fit for purpose” as an approach whereby climate, conservation, and rights funding is channeled in ways that are relevant and appropriate for IPs and LCs, and ensures funding engagements are led by their organizations, flexible and long-term, gender-inclusive, timely and accessible, and mutually accountable.

- **Led by IPs and LCs:** Funding prioritizes initiatives and projects led by IPs and LCs. Indigenous Peoples have a legal right to self-determination, so projects about them must be led by them and executed with their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). For donors and intermediaries, this means

including IPs and LCs at every stage of the process, including in the design of funding strategies and the governance of funding mechanisms.

- **Mutually accountable:** Systems of accountability should work both ways, rather than just upward accountability from IPs and LCs, intermediary funds, and NGOs to donors. Donors should be accountable to Indigenous and community organizations and communities, which includes full transparency of completed, active, and planned programming. Transparency promotes mutual accountability and gives stakeholders the agency to inform donor strategy based on their needs, empowering communities and improving funding efficiency. IP and LC organizations are also accountable to the communities they represent, and donors’ accountability requirements should respect and accommodate this.
- **Flexible and long-term:** Flexible funding enables Indigenous and community organizations to

capitalize quickly on brief moments of opportunity and accompany their communities through the process of securing, protecting, and enjoying tenure. It also supports their self-determined priorities by empowering them to effectively represent their communities and manage funding on their own behalf. In addition to providing thematic flexibility, long-term, predictable funding enables implementing organizations to maintain their engagements with communities and government actors. Long-term funding relationships allow IP and LC organizations to capitalize on strategic wins while also enabling multi-year activities and funding streams required for transformational change.

- **Gender-inclusive:** Providing equitable support to IP and LC tenure and forest management requires an intersectional approach. Indigenous women have been instrumental stewards of their communities' forestlands for generations, but national

laws often fail to protect the rights afforded to IP and LC women under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Ensuring that the rights of Indigenous and local community women are protected and that they have a voice in forest management decisions will require a significant increase in funding towards Indigenous and community women's groups and a gender-inclusive lens for all funding across the IP and LC tenure and forest management space.

- **Timely and accessible:** Funding is delivered quickly and accessed with few administrative hurdles. Accessibility should be built into funding agreements to enable IP and LC organizations to capitalize on brief moments of opportunity to secure tenure and to rapidly respond to emerging threats to their lands and lives.



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Sumatra, Indonesia, RRI Resource Trip, 2022

HOW “FIT FOR PURPOSE” HAS FUNDING FOR IP AND LC TENURE AND FOREST MANAGEMENT BEEN?

Looking back at the funding allocated to this sector from 2011–2020, we will examine the extent to which the funding ecosystem has been “fit for purpose” along the identified dimensions. We provide additional commentary where data gaps and areas for improvement in understanding exist. The subsequent analysis is based on the dataset produced for “Falling Short,” which spans from 2011–2020, and other supplementary data provided via the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

IP- AND LC-LED

Recognition of the benefits of local leadership and implementation is increasing within the donor community. Making more funding available to IPs and LCs and their organizations is an important part of this recognition. In 2016, bilateral donors and a group of major development and humanitarian organizations

committed to channeling at least 25 percent of their funding to local organizations by 2020.⁷ USAID recently renewed its commitment to achieve the 25 percent target in the next four years, additionally ensuring that 50 percent of its programming will be “led or driven by local communities.”⁸ The *IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge* made at CoP26 also recognizes the need to channel more funding to IPs and LCs.

As disaggregated budgets and detailed project leads are often not reported systematically by donors, we are only able to estimate a potential upper bound on the proportion of IP and LC tenure and forest management projects that were led by IP organizations (IPOs). Our analysis suggests that this proportion was at most 17 percent from 2011–2020.

To obtain this estimate, we used a text-parsing algorithm to identify project descriptions, participating organizations and titles that mention specific known

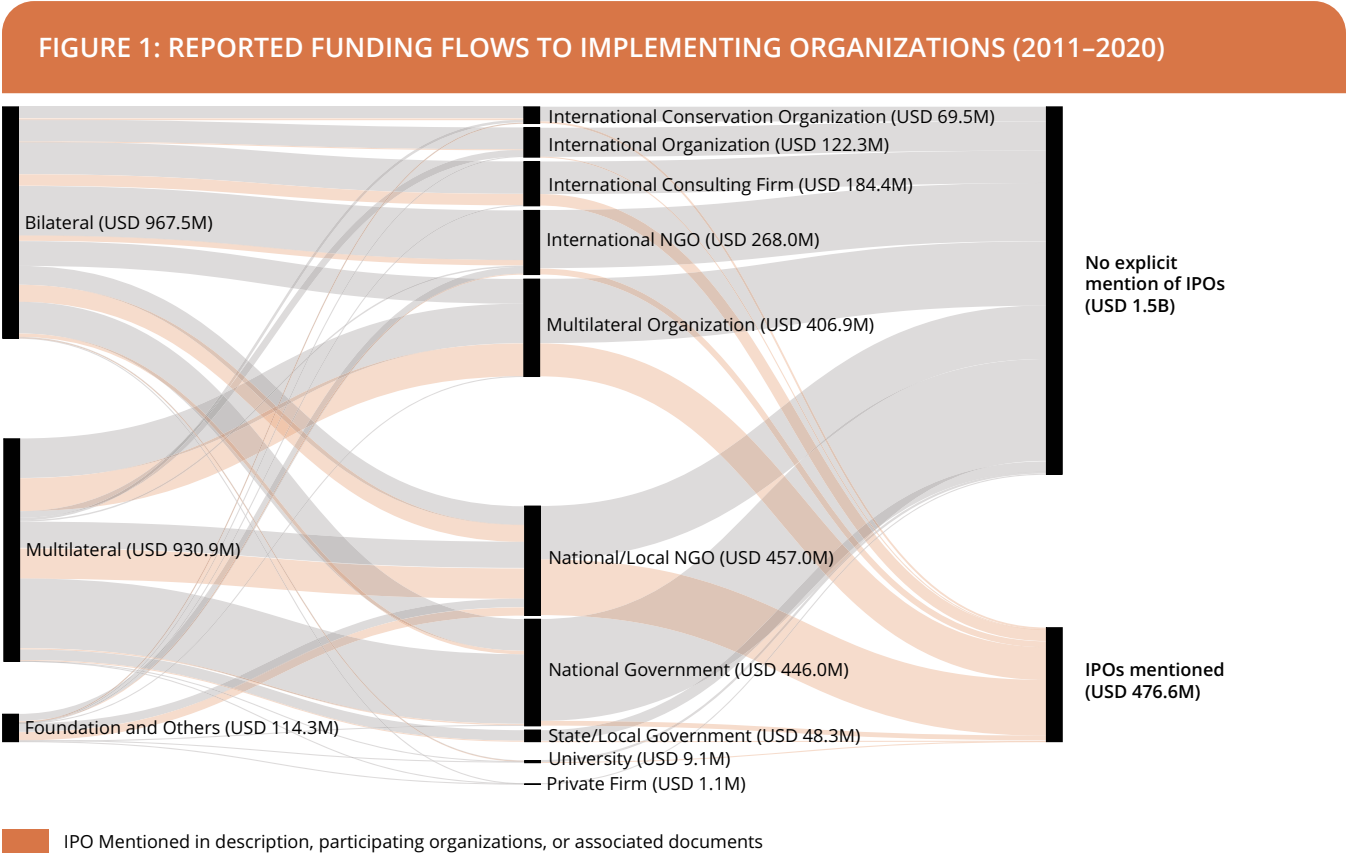
IPOs (rightmost column Figure 1). The list of IPOs to search for was built using internal databases and experts from RRI, RFN, and other organizations. To get a sense of which types of actors are funding and implementing IP-led initiatives, we classified donors (leftmost column Figure 1) and implementing organizations (middle column Figure 1). The upper bound based on text parsing is an indicative benchmark of the share of funding that reaches the ground.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of funding that explicitly names an IPO channeled from donors to implementing organizations and beneficiaries on the ground. Projects that specifically named an IPO received only 17 percent of the overall funding (\$46.3 million annually across the tropics). This figure is likely an overestimate of actual IP involvement, as transaction costs and other project implementation costs with non-IP intermediary actors are also reported as part of this funding.

It should be noted, however, that the share of funding channeled through other types of implementing organizations, or for projects that do not directly mention an IPO, does not necessarily preclude funding from ultimately reaching IPs or LCs.

A detailed description of funding flows by implementing type and reporting organization is outlined in Table 1.

The plurality of funding that mentioned an IPO flowed through national or local NGOs, from financial mechanisms/intermediaries (e.g., GEF Small Grants Program, Amazon Fund). Although projects implemented by national or local NGOs constitute a small share of overall disbursements, a disproportionately high share of these projects include the mention of an IPO, approximately 51 percent of all national or local NGO implemented disbursements from 2011 to 2020,



Note: Represents all disbursements from 2011–2020 that report the implementing organization. Twenty-seven percent of all projects that did not report an implementing organization are excluded from this figure. Funding flows shaded orange indicate projects that mentioned IPOs, which does not necessarily imply that the IPO received 100 percent of the funding directly. International NGOs are based in the global North while national/local NGOs are based in the global South.

TABLE 1: SHARE OF FUNDING THAT MENTIONS AN IPO BY DONOR AND REPORTED IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION TYPE

| Implementing Organization (Total) | Bilateral Donor | Multilateral Donor | Foundation and Others | Overall Share |
|---|---|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| | Percentage of Funding Mentioning an IPO | | | Mentioning an IPO |
| National/Local NGO (\$457M) | 48 | 54 | 49 | 51 |
| Multilateral Organization (\$407M) | 0 | 45* | n.d. | 34 |
| International Consulting Firm (\$184M) | 26 | n.d. | 0 | 26 |
| International NGO (\$268M) | 10 | 0 | 6 | 9 |
| National Government (\$446M) | 10 | 2 | n.d. | 4 |
| International Conservation Org. (\$70M) | 14 | 0 | 9 | 11 |
| State/Local Government (\$48M) | n.d. | 9 | n.d. | 9 |
| International Organization (\$122M) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 |
| Overall share mentioning an IPO | 14 | 20 | 24 | 17 |

Note: Rows are sorted by total direct value disbursed that names an IPO. No data (n.d.) does not mean that this cross-section does not exist, but rather that donors have not reported information (e.g., between bilateral donors and state or local governments).

*The Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program is responsible for 80 percent of this cross-section.

suggesting that these organizations can be an effective channel to reach IP and LC organizations.

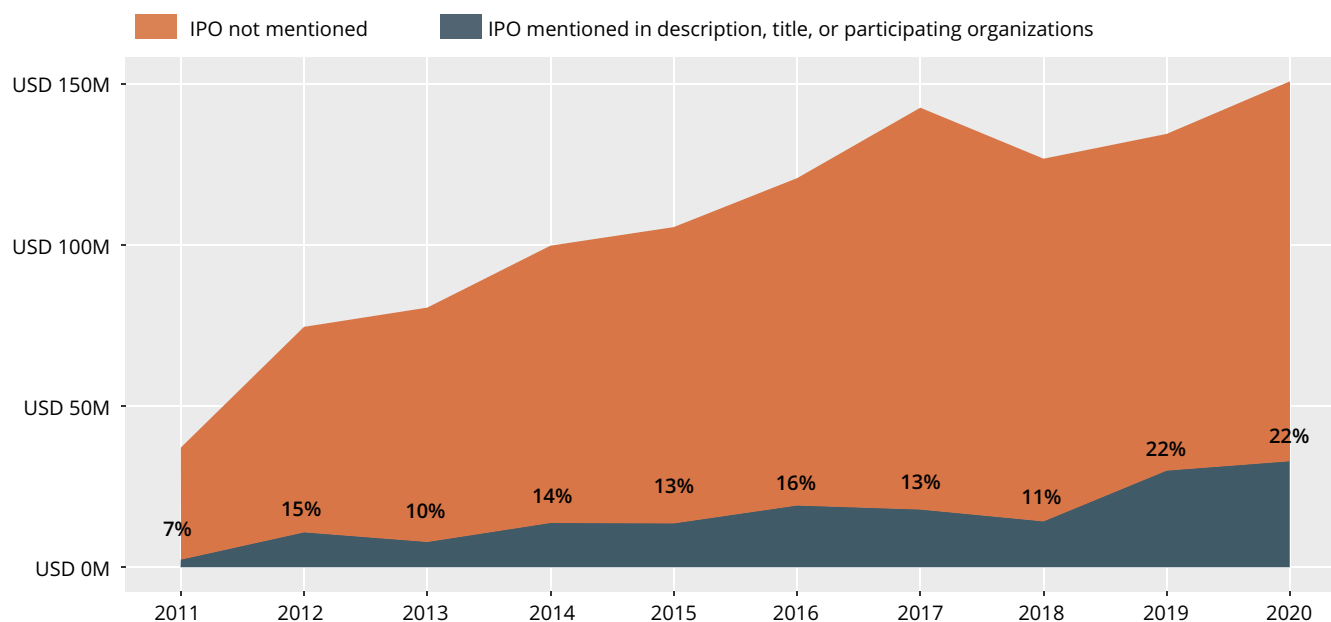
There are few discernable trends in disbursements that mention an IPO. One that stands out, however, is that bilateral disbursements that mention an IPO have increased over this period in absolute and relative terms—from 7 percent (less than USD 3 million per year) in 2011 to 22 percent (more than USD 33 million per year) of all disbursements to IP and LC tenure and forest management in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 2). This trend still reflects that IPOs do not have direct relationships with bilateral donors at the scale of other organizations (e.g., international conservation organizations, consulting organizations). For all bilateral projects that mention an IPO, a small subset are actually implemented by these organizations—just four of the top twenty, with none from Africa.

Across the board, there is little evidence that donors are engaging IPOs systematically. IPOs were often included as stakeholders within projects or listed as potential “beneficiaries” but were rarely named

in project documentation as leaders or partners. A key step towards scaling up direct partnerships with IP and LC organizations will be building capacity to manage an increase in funding. While IPs and LCs are effective land stewards and forest managers, many local organizations lack the technical capacity to absorb large grants and comply with donor requirements. Increased capacity in IP and LC organizations is also important in order to effectively represent the communities towards a range of different actors and maintain their own accountability towards their constituent communities.

Overall, the sector has consistently relied on international NGOs, UN agencies, multilaterals, and consultancies to implement projects. The data presented here suggest that national and local NGOs tend to partner with IP and LC organizations more frequently than other types of implementing actors. If bilateral donors can scale up disbursements in line with their 2016 pledge (or beyond)—from 13 percent (2011–2020) to the 25 percent target to national and local NGOs—historical data indicate that a large share will directly include IP and LC organizations.

FIGURE 2: BILATERAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR PROJECTS THAT MENTION AN IP ORGANIZATION (2011–2020)



MUTUALLY ACCOUNTABLE

While donors and intermediary organizations require transparency and accountability on behalf of grant recipients, those same donors and intermediary organizations usually stop short of providing the same level of transparency and accountability themselves. Two-way accountability throughout the funding process would help ensure equitable and efficient deployment of funding. IP and LC leaders and their allies do not always have a clear vision of i) what kinds of activities donors and intermediary institutions fund; ii) who they fund; iii) where the activities they fund are; and iv) the volume of funding disbursed. The quality of data that donors share also varies considerably depending on the donor type. In signing the *IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge's* ambition to “promote the effective participation and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making,” donors are effectively also committing to improve their transparency and accountability toward IPs and LCs.

In general, a concerted effort by bilateral and multilateral donors has increased the transparency of international aid funding in recent years. Publish What

You Fund’s 2020 Aid Transparency Index (ATI 2020) classified the reporting of over 50 percent of donors as “good” or “very good,” an improvement since the last report in 2018.⁹ ATI 2020 identifies reporting performance data as a key area for improvement in international aid, as project outcomes and impact evaluations are rarely published. Publicly reporting outcomes would allow for better learning and lesson-sharing among donors and greater transparency into donor-funded projects for IP and LC organizations, intermediaries, and national and local NGOs.

As many donors have now pledged to scale up funding towards IP and LC tenure and forest management, new donors in this field—many of which are private foundations—should also strive to meet best practices for data sharing. Of the 17 private foundation signatories to the CoP26 Pledge, none report projects directly to IATI nor systematically host budget information about the discrete components of projects. Currently, grant data are published on independent databases for each foundation, often in different formats with limited interoperability (see Table 2). Over the coming

TABLE 2: VARIATIONS IN DATA QUALITY BETWEEN REPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

| | Bilateral and multilateral donors reporting to IATI | Non-IATI reporting multilaterals, intermediaries/funds | Private foundations and NGOs |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Geography | When consistently reporting at the country level, some organizations do not correctly classify location which requires extraction via text parsing. Some reporting organizations report project locations at the coordinate level and infrequently provide more spatially explicit boundaries of work (e.g., spatial data on project activities). | Consistently reporting at a country level. Requires extraction at a database level (e.g., GEF and GCF each require a different script to extract data as their databases are unique). | The geographic scope of projects is frequently not specified or requires additional data manipulation. |
| Project reporting quality | Some reporting organizations require cross-referencing against country-specific micro-data (e.g., Norad) or coordination with reporting agencies to clarify gaps or inconsistencies. | Not fully automated, several distinct reporting organization-level databases require scraping, and lack of interoperability of data is a challenge. | |
| Transaction resolution | Individual disbursements are reported with date and currency. | Varies between reporting organization (e.g., GCF and Amazon Fund report at a transaction level, while FIP and GEF do not). | Types of transactions are typically not clarified. Financial data rarely specify currency or disaggregate projects at a transaction level thus reducing the accuracy of efforts to homogenize data over time. |
| Links to other financial flows | Applicable only for some donors and/or intermediary combinations (e.g., Norad and Amazon Fund). | No linked transaction data within databases and requires manual effort to interpret and identify links where possible (e.g., FCPF). | Data are not linked to other financial flows. If multiple donors are funding related projects, these interactions are rarely specified. |

Note: Observations on data quality reporting were collected during the review of publicly available data while compiling the “Falling Short” database and follow-up research for this brief.

years, private foundation donors should aim to meet or exceed the reporting standards of bilateral and multilateral institutions. Ideally, donors would coordinate to ensure data interoperability by publishing data to a standardized, public database like IATI.

In some geographic contexts, reporting specific types of projects or organizations could create risk for partners and beneficiaries due to political sensitivities. Donors should work with IP and LC organizations to minimize these risks and improve trust by reporting redacted information or instead directly communicate strategies to stakeholders.

In addition to maintaining data transparency, mutual accountability should include actively soliciting feedback from IP and LC organizations to align donor strategies with their needs. A key element is improving transparency and incorporating IP and LC inputs into calls for funding proposals. In a survey of CSOs in Africa, respondents identified invitation-only “Requests-for-Proposals” (RFPs) as a major barrier to accessing funds.¹⁰ Mutual accountability should include consultation with potential smaller-scale IP and LC organizations, CSO, and NGO partners such that the terms of RFPs are tailored to their needs and capacities for monitoring and reporting.

BOX 3: HOW DO WE TAG DISBURSEMENTS BY THEME?

Disbursement data is captured through several sources, with the bulk originating in donor-reported information to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Although IATI data are captured at the activity level, we refer to IP and LC tenure and forest management activities as projects throughout to align with broader ODA financing. Some 'activities' may embed multiple projects or workstreams. Where possible, we have expanded this dataset to include donors and intermediaries that do not report to IATI by scraping public databases (e.g., the Amazon Fund, private foundations, Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund) and aligning reported data to IATI's schema.

We differentiate disbursement data from commitments based on IATI definitions. Disbursements are "[o]utgoing funds that are placed at the disposal of a recipient government or organization, or funds transferred between two separately reported activities." Commitments are a "firm, written obligation from a donor or provider to provide a specified amount of funds, under particular terms and conditions, for specific purposes, for the benefit of the recipient."

Each project description, title, and associated documents (for non-IATI activities that lack an explicit description) is parsed to search for associated keywords under a set of themes. If a keyword is identified for a given activity, we flag that activity as potentially relevant funding for a given theme. Activities typically include 2–5 themes (65 percent of all disbursements). For example, a project description stating that an activity worked to increase 'territorial access' would be captured under the 'territorial' theme.

We define 'IP and LC tenure and forest management' as any activity that takes place in a tropical forested country, includes associated keywords under the 'forest' theme (e.g., community forestry, silviculture, agroforestry, non-timber forest products), and the associated keywords with IP and LC territorial management (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, local communities, tenure, land governance, FPIC, land rights). Each term contains multiple derivatives and spellings. To identify activities reported in other languages, we used the Google Translate API and existing multilingual resources.

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

Given the gaps in publicly available data on funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management, there are some limitations on the extent to which the data presented here are representative of the sector.

- The dataset only contains activities that are reported to IATI and a subset of publicly available grant data from private foundations. As such, the figures presented here may somewhat underestimate the total funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management and are skewed towards donor organizations that report publicly.
- Some relevant activities may not be captured by our text-parsing methodology, particularly if reported descriptions are sparse.
- Most activities lack transaction-level budget information, which limits our ability to infer responsiveness and flexibility to issues on the ground. The indicators and anecdotal evidence in this report may not be perfect proxies for missing data.

FLEXIBLE AND LONG-TERM

IP and LC organizations continue to call for increased flexibility by donors to meet communities' diverse needs, as well as long-term funding that allows for planning, predictability, and security. The process of territorial recognition is complex, requiring extended periods of study, fieldwork, and production of technical documents. Community-led production and conservation efforts typically take multiple years to advance and demonstrate tangible results. Promoting, establishing, and protecting IP and LC institutions, governance systems, knowledge, and cultural values is a gradual process that should be a long-term goal.

Flexibility within the frame of long-term projects allows IP and LC organizations to tailor their assistance to the unique needs of specific communities in ways that strengthen community sovereignty and self-determination. Funding that is less constrained by donor priorities allows IP and LC organizations to direct resources and activities according to their aspirations, which is essential for their self-determination. Flexible funding also enables organizations to respond to threats to individuals and communities that can emerge quickly, and to seize and expand opportunities that arise to secure tenure and improve enabling environments.

In response to the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic posed to implementing organizations, some donors have demonstrated that increasing the flexibility of funding arrangements is indeed possible. For example, Norad issued a temporary COVID-19 exemption in 2020, which allowed civil society partners to reallocate funds up to 20 percent per budget line, adjust implementation timelines, and augment the scope of projects without written approval.¹¹ These temporary exemptions were later extended through December 2022.¹²

Another way to ensure funding is sufficiently flexible and long-term is through projects staged over more than three years. Active, ongoing relationships between donors and IP and LC organizations are key to enabling faster response times and opportunities for more flexible funding. Examining disbursement data from 2011–2018 for all IP and LC tenure and forest management, we found that the share of projects with grant periods of 3–5 years has increased

over time (see Figure 3). The second largest share of disbursements was captured by projects with transactions occurring over less than one year.

This trend is even more pronounced among projects that explicitly mention an IP organization, which could reflect an alignment by donors and intermediaries in their understanding that IP and LC organizations require stable and predictable funding to be effective and strategic in their operations.

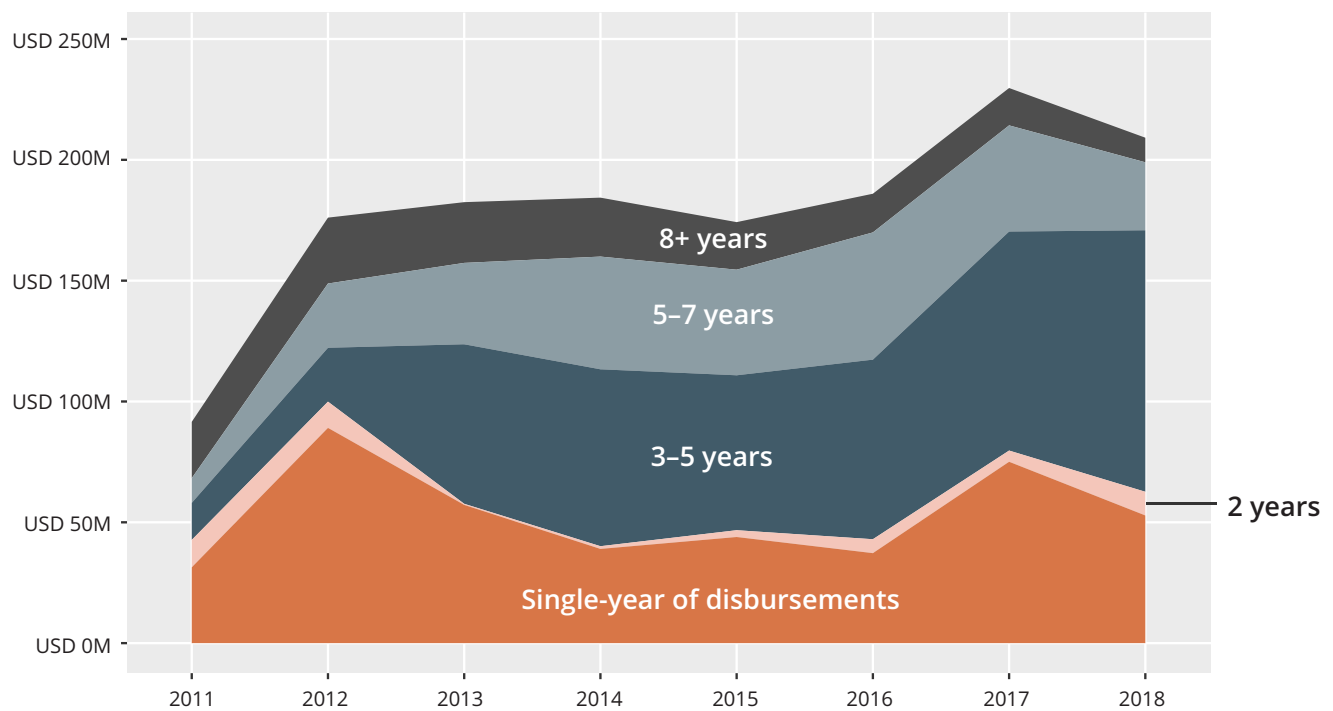
For projects that mention an IP organization, there is a clear trend in longer-term programming in terms of the absolute value disbursed, and in the number of projects funded by donors (see Figure 4). From 2011 to 2018, there were also shifts in the number of donors providing multi-year programming (3+ years of disbursements), from just three in 2011 (United States, Norway, and Sweden) to 13 donors by 2018. This shift is driven primarily by donors that have prior programming in the IP and LC tenure and forest management space that are increasingly funding multi-year programming rather than shifts in the composition via new donors. Disbursements for multi-year programming from 2011 to 2018 were driven by the United States (30 percent), Norway (23 percent), the Amazon Fund (13 percent), and Sweden (7 percent).

Overall, the data suggest that the duration of projects in the sector has been increasingly fit for purpose over the past decade. The response from some donors across the spectrum in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was also to increase the flexibility of funding uses, enabling actors on the ground to channel resources toward what communities most urgently needed.¹³ In many ways, the COVID-19 crisis provided a template for how funding could be more fit for purpose to secure IP and LC tenure—empowering partners to quickly adapt and respond to threats and widen windows of opportunity.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE

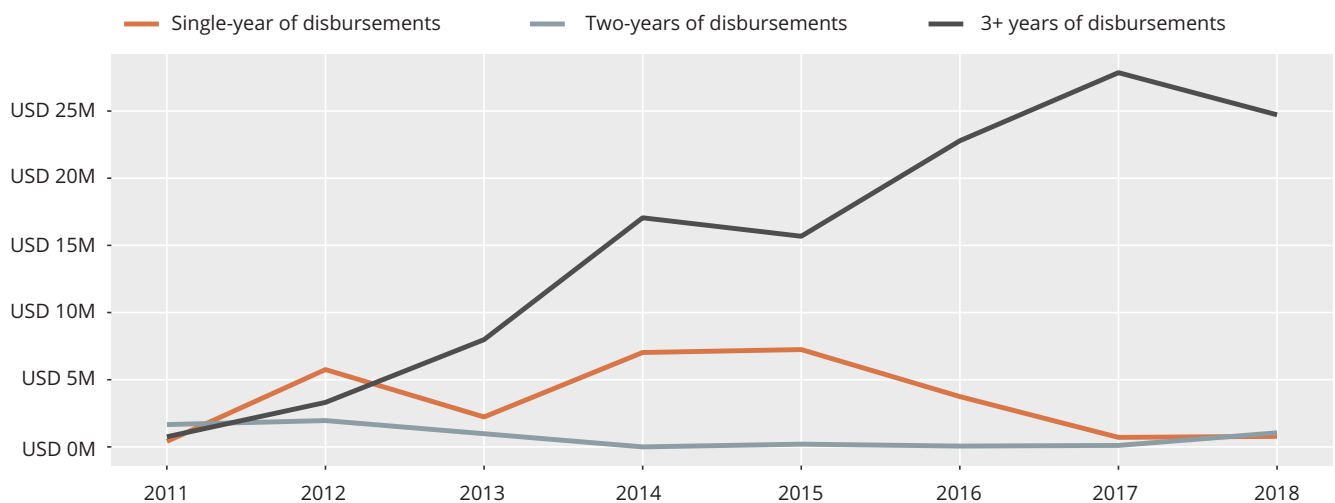
In establishing project priorities, donors should take an intersectional and holistic approach to tenure and forest

FIGURE 3: DISBURSEMENTS BY PROJECT DURATION (2011–2018)



Note: The figure excludes FIP and GEF as they do not consistently report disaggregated disbursements. Years of disbursement are calculated as the duration from most recent to earliest disbursement (e.g., if a project had disbursements from 2015 to 2018, it would have four years of disbursement). Historical data from 2019–2020 includes ongoing projects given reporting timelines and is thus excluded from this chart.

FIGURE 4: DISBURSEMENTS BY PROJECT DURATION MENTIONING IP ORGANIZATIONS (2011–2018)



Note: The figure excludes FIP and GEF as they do not consistently report disaggregated disbursements. Historical data from 2019–2020 includes ongoing projects given reporting timelines and is thus excluded from this chart.

management. One such issue that requires dedicated, cross-cutting, and multi-level support is gender inclusiveness. Women have essential roles in forest management, food security, cultural preservation, and livelihoods in many Indigenous and local communities but are often excluded from decision-making processes.

The legal frameworks comprising and most closely regulating community-based tenure regimes (CBTRs)¹⁴ tend to provide weaker statutory protections for IP and LC women than national constitutions or international agreements such as CEDAW. A 2017 RRI study of 30 low- and middle-income countries found that out of 80 CBTRs, adequately gender-sensitive provisions were identified for only 3 percent with respect to women’s community-level voting rights, 5 percent with respect to women’s community-level leadership, 10 percent concerning women’s community-level inheritance rights, 18 percent with respect to dispute resolution, and 29 percent for community membership. The study also found that CBTRs that afford communities with full ownership of forests tended to have stronger legal protections for women.¹⁵ The recognition of community women’s rights in national forest, land, and territorial rights laws often also serves as a critical source of legal protection for their rights to use and participate in the governance of other community resources, such as freshwater.¹⁶

Despite the clear need to reinforce IP and LC women’s rights to land, natural resources, and self-determination, women’s organizations working on these issues have been severely underfunded. Between 2010 and

2013, Indigenous women’s groups received an estimated 0.7 percent of human rights funding worldwide, less than one third of the proportion of the global population who identify as Indigenous women.¹⁷ While the OECD found that USD 10 billion were contributed towards gender justice in 2016, only 8 percent of this funding reached CSOs fighting for women’s rights in the global South.¹⁸

We find a similar trend in IP and LC tenure and forest management programming over the past decade. Disbursement data indicate that at most 32 percent of funding included one or more keywords related to gender in the project description. We differentiate between ‘root’ key words and ‘specific’ gender-inclusive keywords in our model (Table 3 and Figure 5) to highlight that although a significant share of all projects include an element of gender mainstreaming, nearly half (14 percent of all disbursements) do not describe these activities in terms that would indicate that this programming is inclusive or that gender-related issues are a priority (e.g., a single mention of ‘women’ vs. ‘gender inclusive’ or ‘women’s rights’).

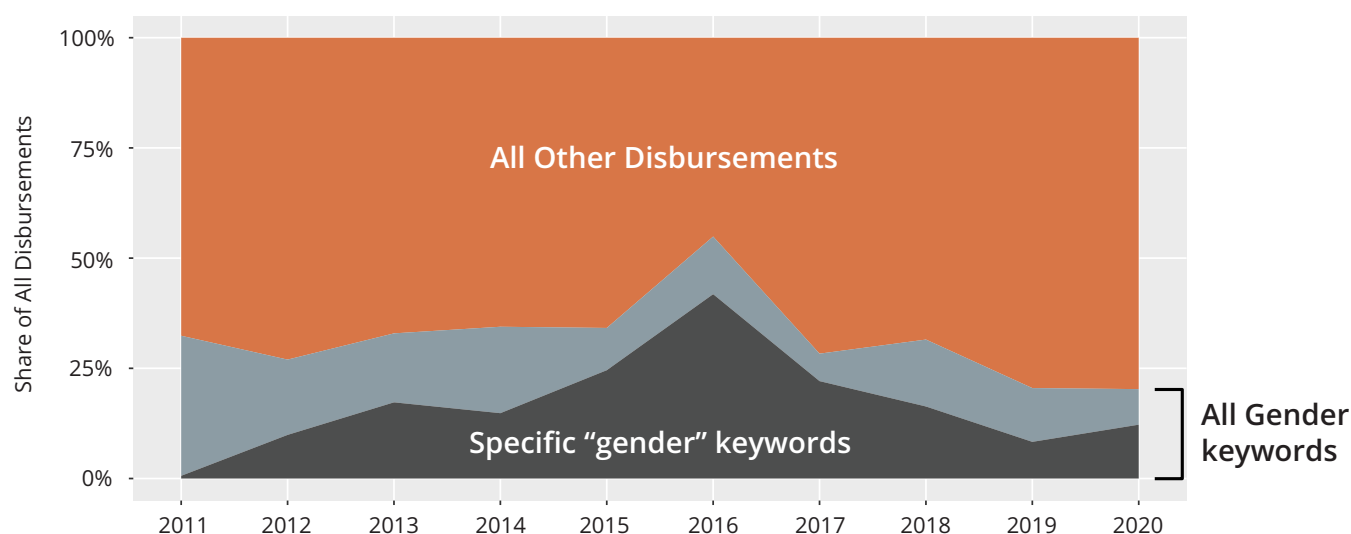
This proportion remained relatively constant over the study period, as demonstrated in Figure 5. From 2011 to 2020, 41 percent of donors considered within this analysis (28 out of 69 donors) did not fund any projects that explicitly referenced gender. However, given a lack of discrete budget information, the actual proportion of funding focused on gender-based rights is difficult to estimate; the values presented here are likely overestimates based on the broad scope of our

TABLE 3: DISAGGREGATED SHARE OF GENDER-INCLUSIVE DISBURSEMENTS

| Category | Total Disbursement Value (USD) | Percentage of All Disbursements |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gender Justice | 16 million | <1 |
| Rights-focused | 5 million | <1 |
| Gender-based Approaches | 273 million | 10 |
| Equality-focused | 225 million | 9 |
| Women’s Governance | 13 million | <1 |
| Only ‘root’ Keywords | 366 million | 14 |

Note: All categories are inclusive (e.g., there is some overlap between the Gender Justice and Women’s Governance categories), except for the ‘only root keywords’ category, which is exclusive of all other projects.

FIGURE 5: DISBURSEMENTS INCLUDING GENDER-RELATED KEYWORDS (2011–2020)



Note: Only the direct share of total disbursements is shown. All gender-related keywords are broad in scope, so this is likely an upper bound (e.g., including “women” as a root search term). The spike in 2016 is due to the GEF’s Amazon Sustainable Landscapes program, which did not provide updated transaction data similar to IATI (thereby inflating the 2016 contribution, as a one-time transaction).

keyword search and the reality that gender-focused programming is typically one component of many within project budgets.

TIMELY AND ACCESSIBLE

To capture the accessibility of donor funding in the past decade, we draw from a 2020 survey¹⁹ of representatives from donors, intermediaries, and IP and LC organizations, as well as other publicly available literature and proxy indicators from IATI.

From survey responses and literature reviews, there are apparent differences in the approaches used by bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, and private foundations. Bilateral donors and multilateral institutions were identified as having more rigid rules and requirements. IP and LC organizations frequently cited these rules as a barrier to their ability to access funding and comply with reporting requirements (e.g., financial, monitoring, and evaluation) after funding was disbursed. Some donor requirements for monitoring, reporting, and tracking funds can shape project

implementers’ strategic decisions, including where to focus their operations and who to work with. A recent survey by Maliasili and Synchronicity Earth found that 52 percent of African CSOs cited inaccessible proposal and reporting requirements as a major barrier to applying for and receiving funding.²⁰

In many cases, donor rules limit the opportunity to grant directly, or at all, to IPs and LCs that are not legally recognized or incorporated as organizations. IPs and LCs around the world face substantial barriers to having their legal identity recognized by governments and often do not have corresponding formal identity documentation.²¹ This lack of recognition often prevents them from accessing a range of rights and services, including but not limited to banking and employment. Even with documentation, banking services are rarely extended to remote communities.

In these situations, donors should work with IPs, LCs, and their allies to ensure that they have adequate pass-through mechanisms that can substitute for IPs’ and LCs’ lack of legal personhood. One way to achieve this is by partnering with institutions that

can act as a fiscal sponsor and/or accept fiduciary responsibilities on behalf of an IP or LC organization. A successful example is the structure of the World Bank's Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) within its Forest Investment Program (FIP). Under this structure, National Executing Agencies (NEAs; often Indigenous NGOs) take on fiduciary responsibility for the grants received through FIP while the IP or LC leaders on the ground remain the principal partners with the World Bank.²² Depending on the context and technical capacity of local IP or LC organizations, the NEA can also provide technical support or serve in a purely fiduciary capacity.

Some respondents from NGOs that serve as intermediaries between bilateral or multilateral donors and IP and LC organizations say they are making project-level and organizational changes to be more responsive to the needs and realities of their IP and LC partners. These changes aim to enable IP and LC organizations to access resources from a broader set of donors while mitigating some of the administrative burdens and challenges associated with bilateral donors. Changes in operating requirements include technical assistance and financial management support to IP and LC project partners and more context-specific monitoring and evaluation to enable genuine learning rather than pure data collection.

As a proxy indicator for the timeliness of donor funding, we calculated the duration between a project's first commitment and first disbursement. The reported median interval between commitment

and disbursement for IP and LC tenure and forest management projects was 115 days for 2011–2020. This median aligns closely with that of non-IP and LC tenure and forest management ODA projects (i.e., all broader ODA funding for health, climate, livelihoods).²³

Although there is a perception that financing for IP and LC tenure and forest management projects are more complex and significantly encumbered by donor requirements, available data highlights that historical disbursement timelines are comparable to broader ODA. The unremarkable data reported by bilateral and multilateral donors reflects that the past decade of donor funding to IP and LC tenure and forest management has primarily utilized traditional ODA channels. These channels have thus replicated existing funding structures that are not fully conducive to the logistical challenges and rapidly evolving threats faced by IPs and LCs and other actors in the sector.

As donors intend to meaningfully scale up financing to IPs and LCs, particularly through increased direct financing to IP and LC organizations, some will need to systematically redefine how they engage with IPs and LCs more broadly. Actors in the 'business' of IP and LC tenure and forest management should work to elevate IPs and LCs as partners rather than as beneficiaries, improve feedback loops between donors and communities, expand community-driven development or co-creation of projects, and build stronger intermediaries to bridge the gap between donors and communities.

BOX 4: THE EVIDENCE BASE CONNECTING IPs AND LCs TO CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY SOLUTIONS

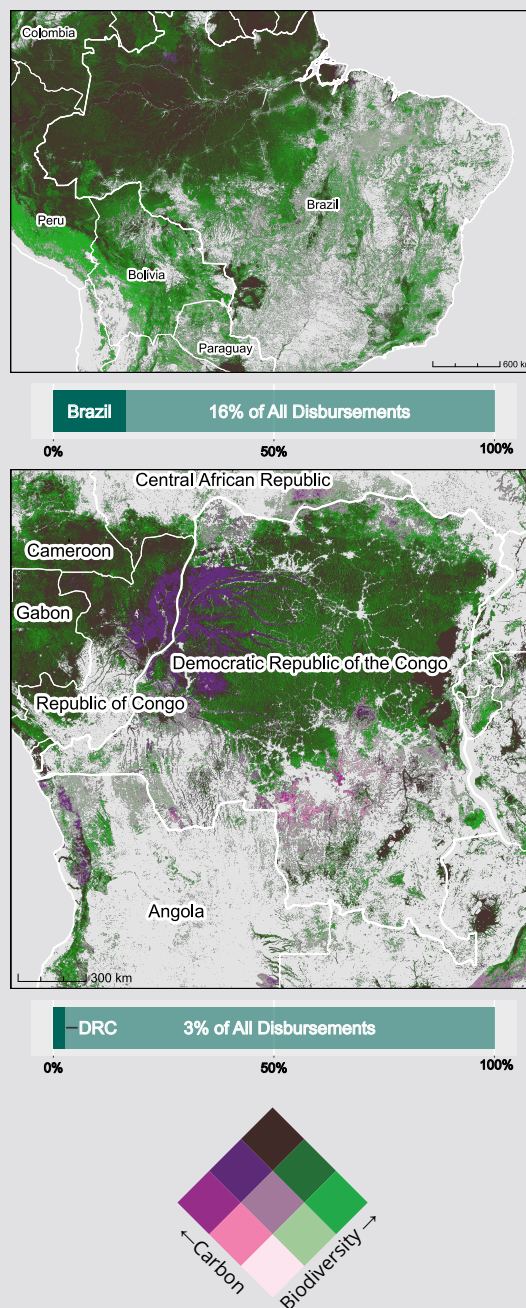
The rights of IPs and LCs are inextricably linked to the preservation of key ecosystems and carbon stores. Research has demonstrated that IPs and LCs are vital stewards of over half of the world's land area—with claims to many of the last intact forest landscapes home to keystone species, rich, connected ecosystems, and vital carbon stores.²⁴

At least 36 percent of Key Biodiversity Areas globally are found on IP and LC lands,²⁵ along with at least 25 percent of the above-ground carbon storage in tropical forests.²⁶ In fighting climate change and the loss of biodiversity, protecting these landscapes is essential. The loss of this “irrecoverable carbon,” or the 139 billion metric tons (Gt C) of carbon stored in these ecosystems that cannot be restored by 2050, will place the 1.5- and 2-degree Celsius targets out of reach due to reduced sequestration and emissions from land conversion and deforestation. Over one-third of these irrecoverable carbon stores are found in Indigenous and local community lands, compared to just 23 percent in protected areas. As highlighted in research by Conservation International in 2021, the tropics and the Indigenous and community lands therein—notably the Amazon Basin, the Congo Basin, and insular Southeast Asia—are not only vital stores of irrecoverable carbon but also serve as key habitats for threatened species or “irreplaceable biodiversity.”²⁷

And yet, IPs and LCs in these geographies receive only a fraction of the funding that other nature-based solutions receive. The World Resources Institute estimates that between USD 3.8 billion and USD 8.7 billion of public international funding was deployed globally for nature-based solutions in 2018, while just over USD 242 million was disbursed that year for IP and LC tenure and forest management.²⁸

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), disbursements targeted specifically to IP and LC tenure and forest management from 2011–2020 totaled USD 71.5 million, compared to the USD 171.2 million disbursed to the DRC National Fund by the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) from 2016–2020, representing a five-fold discrepancy in annual terms. Renewed donor interest of CAFI as a funding mechanism—indicated by the CoP26 Letter of Intent for an additional USD 500 million in support from 2021 to 2031—presents an opportunity

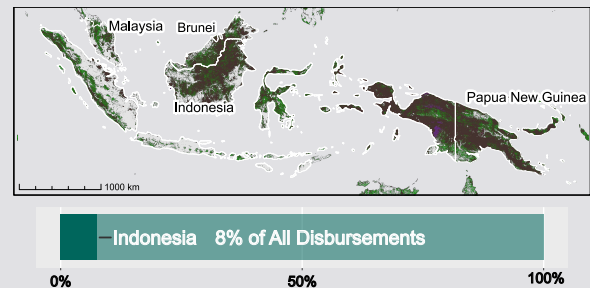
FIGURE 6 IRRECOVERABLE CARBON AND IRREPLACEABLE BIODIVERSITY IN KEY GEOGRAPHIES FOR IP AND LC TENURE AND FOREST MANAGEMENT FUNDING



for participating bilateral, multilateral, and international NGOs to target more funding towards IPs and LCs, recognizing their role in protecting carbon and biodiversity in the DRC and other Central African countries.

Approximately 22 percent of the Brazilian Amazon is Indigenous territory, covering over 1.1 million square kilometers.²⁹ While 2020 saw the highest deforestation rate in Brazil's history, deforestation rates were up to three times lower in Indigenous territories.³⁰ Many of these territories have developed Plans for Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Lands (PGTAs), which provide a platform for Indigenous groups to discuss goals, actions, and activities for territorial management, and a mechanism through which donors can channel support. Budgets developed for five PGTAs covering 150,000 square kilometers of forestland estimate that implementation requires only a USD 1 million investment per year to enhance territorial protection and an additional USD 12 million for investments in livelihoods.³¹ All told, this amounts to just USD 1.15 per hectare of secure territory with investments in education, health, and food production.

Indonesia's remaining rainforests face imminent deforestation threats from rising palm oil prices and sustained timber demand. While government recognition of community lands in Indonesia is currently low, over 130,000 square kilometers of forest have been mapped and claimed, readying them for recognition under Indonesia's Social Forestry Program. The program is underfunded so titling is occurring at a slow pace, but the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of Nusantara (AMAN) has set a target of recognizing 400,000 square kilometers of Indigenous forests. Scaling-up investments will be required to support Indigenous and local communities with mapping, policy advocacy, and livelihood needs.³²





CONCLUSION

What is needed to make funding for IPs and LCs more “fit for purpose”?

Looking at historical data on IP and LC tenure and forest management funding can help us draw insights and lessons on what should be priority areas for improvement when implementing the *IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge*. By seeking to ensure that funding is IP- and LC-led, mutually accountable, flexible and long-term, gender inclusive, and timely and accessible, funders of the pledge from CoP26 and other donors who support IPs and LCs will increase their ability to deliver on their promises to these communities and meet climate and biodiversity goals.

Based on the assessment, we have identified the following conclusions and recommendations:

IP- AND LC-LED

Only 17 percent of funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management mentioned an IP organization,

suggesting a low level of IP and LC leadership over funding decisions. To ensure funding is community-led, donors should build strong, at-scale relationships with IP and LC organizations and engage trusted intermediaries that frequently partner with IP and LC organizations.

- Of the USD 270 million invested annually in IP and LC tenure and forest management between 2011-2020, only 17 percent went to activities that specifically named an IPO in the project description. This figure likely overestimates the actual share that reaches IPs and LCs as project implementation costs with intermediaries are also part of this funding.

Additionally, the funding has predominantly gone to or through international NGOs, UN agencies, and multilaterals. This analysis has suggested that national and

local NGOs partner with IP organizations more frequently and channel a higher proportion funding to them than other implementing organizations.

This means a small proportion of IP and LC tenure and forest management funding is under the leadership of Indigenous and community organizations, indicated by the low share of funding that includes IPO organizations in the project description.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Donors should support IPs and LCs and their organizations as implementers, leaders and partners—not merely beneficiaries. This includes supporting their capacity building as a consistent objective.
- Donors should channel more funding through intermediaries who have close relationships with IPs and LCs, if funding cannot be granted directly. This analysis suggests that national and local NGOs are partnering with IPOs to a larger degree than international actors.

MUTUALLY ACCOUNTABLE

Donors need to improve their accountability towards IPs and LCs by being more open about their priorities and funding decisions. To improve accountability, donors should solicit feedback from IP and LC organizations and align funding strategies with their needs. In light of the *IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge* made at CoP26 in Glasgow, there is a need to improve the transparency of funding decisions, in particular from private foundations.

- IP and LC leaders and their allies do not always have a clear vision of i) what kinds of activities donors and intermediary institutions fund; ii) who they fund; iii) where the activities they fund are; and iv) the volume of funding available and/or dispersed.
- None of the 17 private foundation that signed the CoP26 Pledge report their funding directly to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) or share transaction-level budget information.

There is a lack of accountability from donors towards IPs and LCs, inhibiting their understanding and

influence over donor priorities and decision. IP and LC leaders and their allies do not always have a clear vision into donor priorities and opportunities to obtain funding due to a lack of transparency. The RFP model often poses a barrier to accessing funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Donors should actively solicit feedback from IP and LC organizations to align funding strategies with their needs. This includes improving transparency and incorporating their inputs into calls for funding. Furthermore, mutual accountability should include consultations with potential smaller-scale IP and LC organizations, CSOs and NGOs such that the terms of RFPs are tailored to their needs and capacities for monitoring and reporting.
- Private foundations should aim to meet or exceed the transparency of bilateral and multilateral institutions, preferably by publishing data on their funding to a standardized, public database like IATI.

FLEXIBLE AND LONG-TERM

Donors have increasingly granted funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management through projects that extend beyond three years. Despite this increase in long-term funding, IP and LC organizations continue to be constrained by a lack of flexibility within projects that limit their ability to responsively address issues and seize opportunities that would improve outcomes in communities, thus inhibiting the sovereignty and self-determination of IPs and LCs.

- Grant periods of 3–5 years have increased over time for IP and LC tenure and forest management funding, particularly for projects that mention an IP or LC organization, which could reflect an alignment by donors and intermediaries in their understanding that IP and LC organizations require stable and predictable funding to be effective and strategic in their operations.
- Some donors and project implementers redirected funding within existing long-term projects to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. This suggests that more flexibility within long-term projects is possible.

Despite an increase in long-term funding for IP and LC tenure and forest management over the past decade, this lack of flexibility within projects inhibits IP and LC organizations from responding to urgent community needs or seizing opportunities that could improve outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Look for ways to increase flexibility within their funding, by either increasing core support or allow for more flexibility of priorities within long-term funding agreements. The increased flexibility some donors extended to implementers to respond to the COVID-19 crisis could serve as a template.
- Continue to expand the share of IP and LC tenure and forest management that is granted to long-term projects.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE

At most 32 percent of IP and LC tenure and forest management funding included gender-related keywords, despite the essential role of women in IP and LC forest management and their notable exclusion from many governance structures and forest management decisions. To address this gap, donors must incorporate a gender-inclusive lens to existing projects, increase gender-focused programming, and scale up funding for women organizations and leaders.

- Disbursement data over the past decade indicate that at most 32 percent of funding included keywords related to gender in the project description.
- CBTRs tend to provide weaker legal protections for women than national constitutions or CEDAW. To address these critical gaps, gender-sensitive reforms should be prioritized across sectors.

The traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous women is essential to the stewardship of tropical forestland in many communities. Gender equity remains underprioritized in IP and LC tenure and forest management funding, despite women often being excluded from governance structures and forest management decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Incorporate a gender-inclusive lens within broader IP and LC tenure and forest management projects and scale up funding towards programming that strengthens women's tenure, governance, and livelihood rights within their communities.
- Allocate more funding directly to IP and LC women's organization funds and engage IP and LC women directly through bottom-up climate finance.
- Expand funding for cross-sectional legislative reform and policy reform to align legal frameworks with CEDAW and other international guidance, such as the VGGT and SDGs, and support the implementation of existing gender-sensitive programs.

TIMELY AND ACCESSIBLE

IP and LC organizations must overcome considerable administrative barriers to access funding due to strict eligibility and compliance requirements of bilateral and multilateral donors. Donors can improve accessibility by maintaining open communication with IP and LC organizations and channel support through trusted intermediaries to bridge the gap between donor requirements and the needs of IPs and LCs.

- IP and LC organizations frequently cited administrative requirements as a barrier to their ability to access funding and comply with reporting requirements after funding was disbursed. Bilateral donors and multilateral institutions were identified as having more strict and rigid rules and requirements.
- IP and LC organizations that are eligible to receive funding often report that long and detailed application processes are extremely costly in terms of time requirements for submission preparation and technically challenging for some actors.

These administrative rules, eligibility requirements, and a lack of co-creation opportunities place a disproportionate burden on IP and LC organizations, creating barriers to accessing funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that there are adequate pass-through mechanisms in place where that can substitute for IPs' and LCs' lack of legal personhood. Funders' policies should allow partner institutions to act as a fiscal sponsor and/or accept fiduciary responsibilities for IP and LC organizations.
- Revise accessibility criteria and administrative requirements with a view to simplify and remove barriers for direct funding where possible.
- Build strong relationships with these communities' trusted intermediaries or specialized funding mechanisms where direct funding is not an option at scale.

ENDNOTES

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2. While Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPs and LCs) often share similar struggles and can be strategic allies, it is important to recognize that their rights are distinct. Indigenous Peoples are recognized under international law as holding customary rights to lands, territories and resources under the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). While "local communities" are not formally defined under international law, their rights are also affirmed by ILO Convention No. 169 (applicable to "tribal peoples") and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. This term is commonly employed to refer to groups that traditionally hold and use lands and resources collectively under customary and/or statutory tenure but do not self-identify as Indigenous. See The Land Rights Standard and associated endnotes for further discussion of these terms. RRI advocates for the land and resource tenure rights of all types of communities that exercise community-based tenure, and the women within those communities, regardless of whether they self-identify as Indigenous or whether they are legally acknowledged by the national government of the country where they reside. See: Rights and Resources Initiative. 2021. The Land Rights Standard: Principles for recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples', local communities', and Afro-descendant Peoples' land and resource rights in Climate, Conservation, and Development Actions and Investments. Washington, DC: Rights and Resources Initiative. Available at: <https://rightsandresources.org/land-rights-standard/>.
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