

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Rights and Resources Initiative's Strategic Plan III

4 June 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rightshouse was engaged by the Rights and Resources Group (RRG) to conduct a midterm evaluation (MTE) of Rights and Resources Initiative's (RRI) Third Strategic Program (SPIII) covering the period 2018-2022. The purpose of the MTE was to assess progress made towards the realization of SPIII, and to identify factors affecting results. The evaluation assessed eight evaluation questions linked to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability.

Rightshouse applied a mixed methods data collection strategy, including a desk review of relevant documentation, 59 key informant interviews, an online survey with RRI's Partners and Collaborators, observation of several RRI online events, and a meeting with senior RRG staff to discuss findings and preliminary conclusions and recommendations.

Established in 2005, RRI is a global coalition of 21 Partner organizations, 17 fellows and more than 150 national, regional and global-level collaborator organizations. Starting in 2019, RRI has gone through a rethinking process which has led the coalition to refocus itself to be “1. More informed, guided and governed by rights-holder organizations and networks; and 2. More driven by collective action and promoting greater synergies between Coalition members.”

RRG, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., serves as RRI's secretariat and coordination mechanism. Currently RRI implements three regional programs (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) and seven thematic programs. The objective of the SPIII is to “dramatically scale-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women across the developing world and improve their livelihoods.” Securing the rights of these groups is essential to “reducing socioeconomic inequality and achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

There is broad overall agreement amongst RRI's Collaborators and stakeholders that priorities outlined in the SPIII and its related work plans are relevant to address. Some interviewees are concerned, however, that coalition members cannot influence and exercise effective ownership over priorities and strategies. A challenge for the coalition is its dependency on specific donor priorities, which may not be fully understood amongst Partners and Collaborators.

RRI is complementing, adding value to and coordinating with other actors working on issues of land and resource rights. Coalition building is at the heart of RRI's work at national, regional and global levels. The efforts made over the years to create coalitions

of civil society organizations, government authorities, businesses and donors have been considerable. Many of the coalitions established remain relevant and active.

The vast majority of interviewees at both national and global level believe that RRI adds value to the work of their own organizations, but some think that the demands RRI places on Partners and Collaborators exceed the value it adds. Most interviewees see RRI's move towards closer engagement with rightsholder organizations as a necessary change, but a few are concerned that RRI will increasingly duplicate the work carried out by some of its larger partner organizations.

Despite difficulties in making a general assessment of RRI's attainment of results, there are many examples of specific changes to which RRI can make a plausible claim to have contributed. These include an influence on aspects of the global discourse on land and resource rights, changed legislation and other public policies at national level, and successful legal challenges to defend land and resource rights, livelihoods and human rights defenders. As for the specific outcome of leveraging rightsholder's capacity, leadership, and rights to transform social, economic, and environmental agendas to support inclusive and equitable development, and sustainable land and resource governance, RRI has frequently facilitated for rightsholders to defend their rights. Generally, it is difficult to identify a more effective approach for strengthening capacities than to support possibilities of taking practical actions.

While much remains to be done before "Investors and companies at national and international levels adopt and implement international standards and rights-based approaches recognizing customary tenure rights," RRI has taken a number of important actions towards attaining this outcome. Over the years, RRI has managed to influence the practices of companies, which in turn have tried to influence government policies.

A few achievements closely linked to RRI's way of working warrant particular recognition. These include the creation of new opportunities for dialogue on land and resource issues amongst and between actors, which creates new prospects for joint actions and change. It also includes RRI's ability to contribute to new knowledge and influence global thinking and discourses, including on the link between landownership and the climate and biodiversity agenda. Views advocated by RRI for many years are gaining increasing recognition amongst academics, private sector representatives, civil society representatives, donors and governments.

In relation to RRI's ability to follow up its work, the Evaluation Teams notes that the annual activities' strategic relevance, and the overall coherence of the result management of RRI, would benefit from more clearly linking work plan components to SPIII outcomes already during the annual planning process. As recently recognized by RRI, this allows planned activities and outputs at program level to follow the

established management framework and feed into set outcomes in a structured and coherent manner.

There is broad consensus that there has been a need for RRI to increase the attention paid to national and community level initiatives. At the same time, several interviewees have noted that it is at the international level that RRI has reached some of its most significant results and that it is through its global level work, including its high-level analysis and research, and its capacity to link the global and local levels that RRI adds value to what others are doing.

The fact that RRI's annual budget has been shrinking and that during the past two years it has been well below the USD 10 million strived for is a concern. If RRI should maintain and effectively implement the broad range of roles it currently has, it needs to increase its budget.

If RRI should remain a sub-granting organization, the amounts sub-granted have to be on a reasonable scale to ensure cost effectiveness. One alternative would be for RRI to shift from sub-granting to joint implementation of projects with its Collaborators under an arrangement in which RRI covers actual costs. RRI's donors generally have no shortage of channels through which they can provide support to RRI's Collaborators, and many of the Partners and Collaborators already receive support from others. What RRI, but very few others, can contribute, however, is the ability to work on joint project development and, as mentioned, to link projects and organizations to a global level agenda.

There is a need for RRI to ensure an effective planning process that is not overly time-consuming, not too expensive, and does not unnecessarily divert human and financial resources from project implementation. The planning process should also consider the need to limit carbon footprints and ensure that the planning documents produced are living documents that effectively guide the work of the coalition. Interviews indicate that more can be done to ensure effective cooperation and collaboration across the organization and within the Secretariat.

From a sustainability perspective, the biggest challenge for RRI is to attract funding in a difficult donor environment. Another is how to handle the many diverse expectations from coalition members and donors, and to ensure that it does not take on more roles than it can effectively handle. A reasonable level of sustainability otherwise characterized the actual results attained by RRI. Its efforts to facilitate for rightsholders to claim and defend their rights is an effective and sound strategy for raising sustainable capacities. Many interviewees see RRG's ability to look beyond the immediate interests of RRG and the coalition towards the larger issues of land and resource rights as one of its greatest strengths

The report puts forward the following recommendations, which are further elaborated in Section 6, with a purpose to further strengthening RRI's capacity to attain results:

1. RRI should make further efforts to ensure that Partners and Collaborators are well informed of the framework and context within which strategies and priorities are developed.
2. RRG should strengthen internal communication and consultation.
3. RRI should pay increased attention to strategic dialogue with donors at country level.
4. RRI should to a higher extent focus its efforts on where it adds value in relation to others.
5. RRI should rethink its approach to sub-granting.
6. RRI should explore how the annual planning process can be made more effective, efficient and inclusive.
7. RRI should clarify the theory of change and elaborate a related intervention logic that can give guidance during program implementation.
8. RRG should strengthen its capacity for learning.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMNS

AFI	Rainforest Alliance's Accountability Framework Initiative
ALIN	African Land Institutions for Community Rights
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CFLEDD	The Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Development
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CODELT	Council for the Defense of the Environment through Legality and Traceability
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFI	Development Finance Institute
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organization
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FILAC	Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
IPCC	the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MTE	Midterm evaluation
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
RRG	Rights and Resources Group
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
SAGE	Strategic Analysis and Global Engagement
Sida	Swedish Development Cooperation Agency
SPIII	RRI's Third Strategic Program
SPO	Strategic Priority Objectives
SRM	Strategic Response Mechanism
ToR	Terms of References
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

1 INTRODUCTION

Rightshouse was engaged by the Rights and Resources Group (RRG) to conduct a midterm evaluation (MTE) of Rights and Resources Initiative's (RRI) Third Strategic Program (SPIII). This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

1.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress made towards the realization of SPIII and to identify factors affecting results. It should also identify what improvements that can be made and make recommendations for the future. The scope of the evaluation is thus SPIII, which covers the period 2018-2022. Geographically, the MTE has a global focus, but it has paid specific attention to four of RRI's priority countries.

1.2 Objective and evaluation questions

To meet its purpose, the MTE should according to the Terms of References (ToR) apply the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability. During the inception phase, RRI and Rightshouse developed specific evaluation question for each of these evaluation criteria.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

OECD-DAC	Evaluation Question
Relevance	Is RRI and SPIII addressing the most pressing needs for scaling-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women across the developing world and improve their livelihoods?
Coherence	To what extent is RRI and SPIII complementing, adding value to and coordinating with other actors working on issues of land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in rural areas in order to achieve greater impact?
Effectiveness	To what extent is RRI achieving its intended results?
	What are the key factors affecting the degree to which results have been attained?
	To what extent is RRI able to follow up its works and learn from past successes and failures?
Efficiency	Is RRI delivering results in an economic and timely way?
Impact	To what extent has RRI contributed to significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher level effects?
Sustainability	Will the effects and impact of RRI and its SPIII last over time?

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overall approach

Rightshouse has carried out the MTE as a learning focused evaluation aiming at contributing to further strengthening RRI's performance. The evaluation approach has been utilization-focused and participatory, whereby there has been interaction with key evaluation stakeholders, in order to capture their perspectives and experiences. It has also been contextually informed and RRI's progress assessed and recommendations provided given prevailing human rights, conflict, legal and political developments.

Rightshouse has strived to ensure a broad, organization wide, assessment of RRI, but in relation to RRI's regional programmes, specific attention has been paid to the following RRI priority countries: Colombia, India, Indonesia and Liberia. Rightshouse and RRI jointly selected these countries, primarily considering high intensity of RRI's engagement.

Triangulation was key to ensuring reliability and validity of evaluation findings. The Team triangulated among the methods of gathering data, sources and stakeholder perspectives, and across Evaluation Team members.

2.2 Data collection and analysis

Rightshouse applied a mixed methods data collection strategy. A document review formed the start of the data collection process. It was structured around the evaluation questions and aimed at helping Rightshouse answering these questions and framing and focusing key informant interviews. It was primarily based on documents obtained from RRG.

The Evaluation Team selected interviewees purposefully in close consultation with RRG, taking into account the above-mentioned focus countries. It also used a snowballing methodology through which interviewees suggested other interviewees. Amongst those interviewed were RRG staff and board members, and representatives of RRI's Partners, Collaborators, fellows and donors. The team also interviewed other actors familiar with different aspects of RRI's work. Rightshouse interviewed informants on the basis of voluntary participation and confidentiality. All interviews were semi-structured and adapted to the respondent's expected area of experience and knowledge. They aimed at capturing the interviewees' most significant experiences, reflections and ideas. In total, Rightshouse interviewed 59 key informants.

An online survey aiming at capturing RRI Collaborators' and Partners' perceptions relating to the evaluation's relevance and coherence criteria was carried out. Rightshouse sent the survey to 82 people listed by RRI's regional teams as Partners and

Collaborators. The list obtained did not include all of RRI's 150+ Collaborators. Thirty-seven people filled out the survey. Of these, 5 represented RRI Partners and 32 RRI Collaborators. Seventeen respondents stated that their organization worked in Latin America, 12 in Asia, 5 in Africa and one in another region. Twenty-six respondents worked in organizations with ten staff members or less, while 11 worked in organizations with more than 10 staff.

Rightshouse also had the opportunity to observe the following online meetings: (i) a consultation on land and forest rights in India in October 2020; (ii) a November 2021 "Global Strategy Meeting" aiming at identifying "key opportunities in 2021 for the RRI coalition to collaborate to instigate systemic shifts in the international arena to advance the importance and centrality of community land tenure;" (iii) two "Governance Meetings" in January 2021 aiming at discussing and refining RRI's 2021 strategies and identifying opportunities for collaboration; and (iv) "A Discussion on Criminalization of Land and Environmental Rights Defenders in East Africa" in February 2021.

Rightshouse's analysis of collected data was an ongoing activity conducted in parallel with the desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, survey work and observation. The ongoing analysis informed the data collection and helped ensure that it was relevant for addressing the evaluation questions. Content analysis was used to analyze documentation and responses from interviewees. Texts and responses were thus broken down into manageable categories for analysis in relation to the evaluation questions and sub-questions.

RRG provided written comments on a draft version of this report, which were subsequently discussed in a meeting between RRG and Rightshouse. Rightshouse considered all comments received before finalizing the report.

2.3 Limitations and challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic meant Rightshouse could only conduct virtual interviews. In the inception report, Rightshouse noted that ensuring stakeholder availability for interviews and surveys is often a particular challenge for evaluations of network- and coalition-type organizations. Even though the Evaluation Team eventually carried out 59 interviews, the number of people approached for interviews was considerably higher.

In order to ensure a reasonable response rate for the survey, RRI wrote to all respondents prior to Rightshouse disseminating the survey. The email stated that the MTR was a "great tool to showcase RRI's scope and impact" and that RRG hoped to "leverage it to secure funding for RRI for 2022 and beyond." It cannot be excluded that this affected peoples' answers.

3 EVALUATED INTERVENTION

Established in 2005, RRI is a global coalition of 21 Partner organizations, 17 fellows with relevant expertise and commitment to the objectives of RRI, and over 150 national, regional and global-level collaborator organizations that to varying degrees take part in the planning and implementation of RRI-sanctioned activities and strategies.

Starting in 2019, RRI has gone through a rethinking process which has led the coalition to refocused itself to be “1. More informed, guided and governed by right-holder organizations and networks; and 2. More driven by collective action and promoting greater synergies between Coalition members.”¹

RRI is coordinated by the Rights and Resources Group (RRG), a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., that serves as RRI’s secretariat. RRG is governed by a Board of Directors, which further provides oversight for the functioning and governance of RRI. The Secretariat provides strategic recommendations and administrative support to the Board and to RRI, and focuses on delivery of RRI’s mission by, among other things, promoting synergies between different actors and producing evidence-based analysis to enhance advocacy. The Secretariat has 34 employees.

The objective of RRI’s current strategic program is to “dramatically scale-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women across the developing world and improve their livelihoods.” Securing the rights of these groups is according to SPIII essential to “reducing socioeconomic inequality and achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

SPIII contains three specific outcomes:

1. “Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women leverage their capacity, leadership, and rights to transform social, economic, and environmental agendas in support of inclusive and equitable development, sustainable land and resource governance, and accelerated climate actions.”
2. “Governments’ scale-up the legal recognition and enforcement of land and resource rights for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women in those communities, as enabling conditions for democratic engagement, inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.”

¹ RRI, *Strategic Priorities and Work Plans 2021*

3. “Investors and companies at national and international levels adopt international standards and rights- based approaches recognizing customary tenure rights, and work with governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women’s groups to (i) resolve land tenure disputes and conflicts; (ii) reduce deforestation and land degradation pressures; and, (iii) support community enterprises and locally determined business and conservation models that enhance livelihoods and sustainability outcomes.”

To attain its objective and outcomes, the RRI applies four strategies presented in its Theory of Change. “The legal recognition and enforcement of rural land and resource rights, including the freedom to exercise and benefit from those rights, can be secured, strengthened and expanded through the synergistic combination of **evidence** (strategic analyses and tenure data), **capacity** (practical tools, solutions, and lessons learned), **interaction** (to raise awareness and create strategic partnerships across key constituencies), **and advocacy** (evidence-based engagement); which enables actors at multiple scales to create and take advantage of windows of opportunity to influence the policies, laws, and markets that affect the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women.”

The Theory of Change also includes a so-called Action Framework structured around four thematic areas: 1. Gender Justice; 2. Private Sector Engagement. 3. Realizing Rights; and 4. Rights and Climate.

4 FINDINGS

The section presents the evaluations findings relating to the evaluation criteria and the specific evaluation questions.

4.1 Relevance

Under the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, the relevance criterion concerns “The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries’, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.”²

4.1.1 Is RRI and SPIII addressing the most pressing needs for scaling-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women across the developing world and improve their livelihoods?

Amongst survey respondents and those interviewed by Rightshouse, there is broad agreement that RRI is focusing on issues of central importance for rightsholders. In the survey submitted to RRI Partners and Collaborators, no less than 86 percent agreed with the statement “RRI is addressing the most pressing needs for scaling-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants.” The remaining respondents answered that they “somewhat agreed” with the statement. No survey respondents or interviewees have explicitly disagreed with RRI’s priorities set out in the Strategic Program and in annual work plans, but a minority would like to see RRI expand its focus to other targets groups and other rights issues.

The relevance of RRI’s priorities is closely linked to the relevance of the strategies it applies. According to SPIII, RRI applies a “synergistic combination of evidence (strategic analyses and tenure data), capacity (practical tools, solutions, and lessons learned), interaction (to raise awareness and create strategic partnerships across key constituencies), and advocacy (evidence-based engagement) ...” Together these strategies make up a comprehensive approach towards attaining objectives and no interviewees regard these strategies as irrelevant.

² OECD/DAC Network on Evaluation Criteria. 2019. *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use.*

In interviews, RRG staff often stressed that the coalition's priorities are not set by the RRG, but by the rightsholders themselves. Considering the size and diversity of the groups RRI strives to represent, this is obviously a simplification of reality. Nevertheless, the RRI coalition clearly manages to engage a significant number of organizations and most Collaborators and others interviewed by the Evaluation Team believe that the consultative processes aiming at identifying joint priorities and strategies is effective at the regional and national levels.

This finding is also supported by Rightshouse's survey of Partners and Collaborators, in which 76 percent of the respondents answered they agreed with the following statement: "As an organization collaborating with the RRI Coalition, we can effectively influence the RRI Coalition's strategy at national and regional level."

Partners and Collaborators express more concern about how well the consultative process functions at the global level. In the survey, 57 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement "As an organization collaborating with the RRI coalition, we can effectively influence the RRI coalition's strategy at the global level." The somewhat lower level of influence the respondents perceive that they have on RRI's global level approach should be seen in light of the fact that many of them have not participated in the Global Strategy Meeting and the Governance Meeting. It nevertheless appears from interviews, as well as the Evaluation Team's own observations, that the global consultations are a sound opportunity for RRG to inform Partners and selected Collaborators and stakeholders of its plans, and to obtain feedback on these plans.

Some interviewees argue, however, that the global level consultations, and RRI's extensive planning process generally, serve more to provide legitimacy for RRG's priorities than to genuinely ensure that it is the coalition and its Partners and Collaborators that set the agenda. A few organizations have in recent times chosen to leave or scale down their cooperation with the coalition for reasons partly relating to the issues of ownership and due to a feeling that the RRI consultations are of limited value for Partners and Collaborators and not proportionate to the fairly substantive input of time they require.

A challenge for RRI is that its ability to amend its priorities and strategies is tied to proposals that aim to align RRI priorities with donor interests, and ultimately to RRG's agreements with donors, which are often linked to multi-year plans which cannot be easily changed. It appears from interviews that all Collaborators and Partners are not fully aware of this reality and of the content of these agreements and the Strategic Program. A more significant challenge is according to some interviewees, including RRG staff, that plans and activities change too often and are added to sometimes without sufficient consultation and due consideration as to the effects of these changes.

Overall, the data collected suggests that RRI addresses essential issues for scaling-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local

communities, and women across the developing world and improve their livelihoods. Its Partners and Collaborators generally perceive that they are able to influence both priorities and strategic approaches, in particular at national and regional levels. This does not mean, however, that all Partners feel a level of ownership over priorities and strategies which are ultimately dependent RRG's agreements with its donors and the priority the Secretariat gives to windows of opportunity and flexibility.

4.2 Coherence

Coherence concerns the compatibility of the evaluated intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

4.2.1 To what extent is RRI and SPIII complementing, adding value to and coordinating with other actors working on issues of land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in rural areas in order to achieve greater impact?

Even though many organizations during the past decade have paid increasing attention to the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women within these groups, RRI has according to most interviewees a unique role in that it focuses exclusively on these issues and does so in a sustained and strategic manner rather than through a case-by-case approach. Collaborators are also of the view that the RRG staff's contextual and thematic knowledge and strategic advice are valuable and increases their own effectiveness.

Amongst survey respondents, 84 percent agreed with the statement, "RRI is effectively complementing the work of our organization on land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants." Another indication of RRI's added value is that 78 percent of the survey respondents answered that their collaboration with RRI was "very important" in comparison with the cooperation they have with other coalitions to which they belong.

Besides itself being a coalition with fellows, Partners and Collaborators, coordination and coalition building is at the heart of RRI's existence. RRI strives to facilitate interactions, discussions and joint actions between governments, multilateral institutions, civil society, private sector actors and individuals at national, regional and global levels. It achieves this through financial and technical support to existing coalitions and coalitions set up on the initiative, or the support, of RRI, as well as around specific projects and RRI's annual strategic planning processes at national, regional and international levels. Some interviewees have described RRI as a provider of safe spaces for a range of actors to discuss and share ideas and experiences.

In Indonesia, RRI has for many years supported the so-called NGO Coalition on Tenure Justice. Interviewees have argued that the added value of the coalition is best illustrated by the fact that the members have requested its continued existence. Even though there are several other coalitions of civil society organizations (CSO) focusing on similar issues, interviewees describe the coalition as an important platform for actors that in different ways are concerned with tenure rights to share ideas and discuss challenges. The coalition has also contributed by coordinating the actions of its members (even though the coalition rarely presents itself as a coalition in relation to the outside world) through peer-training and exchanges.

In Indonesia and most other countries, a high level of inclusiveness has characterized the RRI supported coalitions. The costs associated with the global and regional level consultations, however, have in the past created clear limitations in terms of participation. In 2020 and 2021, the consultations have because of the Covid-19 pandemic been held online. This has dramatically reduced the costs of the global strategic planning process and created opportunities to make it more participatory and inclusive. At the same time, several interviewees believe that the online nature of the consultation has reduced their value. One reason for this is that many of the most important interactions are of an informal nature and take place in-between the formal sessions.

At the global level, RRI has been instrumental in the establishment and continued operations of several bodies with a focus on land and resource issues. These include the Interlaken Group, an informal network of leaders from companies and investors, development finance institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, dedicated to expanding and harnessing private sector action towards securing community land rights. The network which first met in 2013, is co-chaired by RRI and the International Finance Corporation. Country-level Interlaken Group workshops are reported to have instigated new network connections between communities, companies, DFIs, and policy makers, and mobilized these stakeholder groups to work collectively to advance tenure reforms.

Another example is MegaFlorestais, a network of public forest agency leaders from the most forested countries in the world³, committed to strengthening forest governance, tenure reform, and leadership. RRI supports the network, which receives additional

³ Countries are Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, DR Congo, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sweden and the USA, collectively representing over 50 percent of the world's forests. Additional countries which have taken part in network activities include Australia, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Gabon, Guatemala, Kenya, Korea, Lao PDR, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Senegal, and South Sudan.

contributions from its members, US Forest Service and the European Forestry Institute. In 2014, RRI incubated the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility (Tenure Facility), which has since gradually transitioned to become an independent financial mechanism. In order to secure the rights of Indigenous People and local communities to their lands and forests, the Tenure Facility provides grants to implement tenure rights.

The establishment of the Tenure Facility is an example of RRI's ability, noted by several interviewees, to engage donors in a strategic dialogue. This dialogue has not primarily promoted the work of RRI but served to increase the knowledge and interests of donors on land and resource rights and to mobilize resources to the field. Interviewees credit the success in engaging donors to the current RRI Coordinator, and some regard the ability to maintain this capacity as one of the biggest challenges related to a planned leadership transition at RRG. It appears, however, that the ability to engage donors primarily related to a global or headquarters level. A few interviewees have suggested that RRI could play a more active role in gathering and keeping donors in its focus countries informed of development on land and resource rights.

There is some tension between RRG's focus on promoting land and resource rights generally, on the one hand, and its focus on strengthening RRG, the RRI coalition, and the coalition's members on the other. A few interviewees are concerned that the future of RRG and the coalition may have been affected by RRG's strong focus on the establishment and strengthening of other actors working towards the same overall objective. Most interviewees see, however, this ability to look beyond the immediate interests of RRG and the coalition towards the larger issues of land and resource rights as one of RRG's greatest strengths.

It has been suggested that a more democratically structured coalition could serve to ensure greater ownership and relevance. At the same time, some argue that a democratically structured coalition in which coalition members have a more direct control of the Secretariat, i.e., RRG, may be more likely to serve primarily the interests of the individual member organizations and less likely to contribute to some of RRI's main achievements, such as the creation of the Tenure Facility. It may not maintain the feature of a coalition that focuses more on what is needed to address its objectives than on meeting the needs of its members, and Partners especially.

The vast majority of those consulted in connection with this evaluation see RRG's move towards enhanced involvement of rightsholder organizations in the governance structures of RRI and RRG as important. A few concerns or reservations have, however, been raised. One interviewee noted that many rights holder organizations already have a very tall agenda and that RRG's new approach may mean more and new responsibilities for them, and that they need further resources to handle these. Another

concern is that the new move creates overlaps with Partners and other actors organizing rightsholder organizations.

As can be expected, there is amongst RRI's members firm support for RRI's role as a provider of financial support. Some of the larger and more well-established coalition members are, however, receiving funds directly from the same donors as RRI, potentially creating a situation of competition rather than cooperation. There are also situations in which RRI and its partner organizations may sub-grant to the same organizations.

Some interviewees would like to see RRI focusing on supporting existing organizations serving as umbrellas for local rightsholder organizations, rather than itself working directly with local rightsholder organizations. These interviewees believe that the current arrangement may contribute to unnecessary overlaps, and that RRI could be more effective if it focused its limited resources on strengthening existing umbrella organizations.

Finally, it should be mentioned that RRI in its efforts to coordinate with other organizations and actors play an active role in a range of other partnerships than those referred to above. RRI is regularly producing research outputs, developing guidelines and conducting advocacy campaigns in close collaboration with others. Starting in 2019, RRI developed, for instance, in cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples Majors Group (IPMG) for Sustainable Development and the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) the *Land Rights Standard - Principles for best practice for recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples', Local Communities' and Afro-Descendants' land and resource rights in landscape restoration, management, conservation, climate action, and development projects and programs*. Even though the Land Rights Standard will not be launched until the end of 2021, several conservation organizations have expressed their commitment to the principles.

In summary, key informant interviews and survey responses suggest RRI maintains a unique role and adds value through its long-term and exclusive focus on the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants. Few organizations have a stronger focus on trying to make use of the added value of coordination and cooperation. RRI's increased focus on engaging rights holder organizations is by some perceived as coming with a risk of duplicating efforts of other organizations bringing together and supporting rightsholders, especially at the regional level. At the same time, this move is seen as essential amongst the vast majority of those consulted by Rightshouse.

4.3 Effectiveness

Under the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, effectiveness concerns the extent to which an intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results. This section also discusses the key factors behind attainment or non-attainment of results.

4.3.1 To what extent is RRI achieving its intended results?

Rightshouse has focused on assessing attainment of RRI's expected outcomes as presented in SPIII. These results are, as mentioned, relating to three distinct actors: (i) rightsholders, (ii) governments, and (iii) investors and companies.

Past assessments have noted a number of challenges relating to RRI's reporting of results, including the anecdotal nature of the results reported and, until 2020, an unclear relationship between reported results and SPIII outcomes. RRI's results reporting is also scant on details on how RRI's support or actions contributed to reported results. Interviewees have further noted that the line between what RRI is achieving and what RRI Partners and Collaborators are accomplishing without the support of RRI is sometimes blurred. Weaknesses in RRI's own results reporting and an overlapping nature of its outcomes creates challenges for anyone striving to understand to what extent RRI is making progress towards achieving intended results.

Notwithstanding these challenges, a review of RRI's progress reports, additional documentation and key informant interviews provide a picture of important contributions being made to the three outcomes, even though less attention so far appears to have been paid to Outcome 3 and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between results pertaining to Outcome 1 and Outcome 2.

Outcome 1: *Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women leverage their capacity, leadership, and rights to transform social, economic, and environmental agendas in support of inclusive and equitable development, sustainable land and resource governance, and accelerated climate action.*

Reports and interviews show RRI has initiated, facilitated, financed, and provided input to several activities and events which have contributed towards mobilization for inclusive and equitable development, sustainable land and resource governance, and accelerated climate action amongst targeted rights-holders around world.

In Liberia, a decade-long effort led by civil society groups supported by RRI ultimately contributed to the passing of the Land Rights Bill, including gender provisions and protections for marginalized youth, which was signed into law in September 2018. In India, legal and political advocacy work contributed in 2018 to a stay in a Supreme Court case that could reportedly have evicted 10 million forest dwellers. The Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Development (CFLEDD) in DRC contributed to the enactment of a provincial decree, recognizing women's right to own

land. This was reportedly a result of CFLEDD's advocacy and campaigning, supported by RRI since 2016. Further, support to CFLEDD contributed to incorporation of provisions on women's land tenure security in the new draft of DRC's land policy document, to be validated by the Government in early 2021.

In Indonesia, RRI has, as mentioned, facilitated the work of a national Tenure Coalition that serves as a forum for exchange of ideas and experiences and occasionally engages with the Indonesian government and other actors on land and forest rights issues. The coalition has reportedly contributed to stalling a Land Law that posed significant risks to indigenous and community land rights. In Colombia, in defense of the Barú community, RRI supported successful legal action against the National Land Agency to restore the titling ended by the Agency in April 2019.

Amongst RRI's contributions to global level results is that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report on Land and Climate Change in 2019 recognized indigenous and community land rights as a priority climate change solution, citing the RRI report *Who Owns the World's Land?* from 2015 and the 2018 report *At a Crossroads*.

In collaboration with indigenous and local communities around the world, the RRI coalition developed a response to the IPCC report which was endorsed by organizations from 42 countries. The response, which received widespread media and stakeholder attention, welcomed that IPCC recognized that "a large and growing body of scientific literature demonstrates our critical role as guardians of the world's lands and forests."⁴ Evidence of RRI's contribution to the growing recognition of the relationship between land and forest rights and climate is also the recent FAO and FILAC report "Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples," which refers to data collected and presented by RRI.

RRI's research and analysis has also helped to inform other actors concerned with indigenous and community land rights. Amongst these is the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to a healthy environment. In a communication with RRI in December 2020, he stated, referring to RRI's work on water tenure that "Your submission and recent report represent some of the most high-quality research that I came across in reviewing literally hundreds of reports, submissions and other documents."⁵

⁴ AFPAT et al., *A statement on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land from Indigenous Peoples and local communities from 42 countries spanning 76% of the world's tropical forests*; <https://ipccresponse.org/home-en>

⁵ Email from David Boyd, Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, to Andy White, coordinator of RRI on 6 December 2020.

To sum-up, RRI can show that its work with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendants has contributed towards securing land and resource rights. There is less tangible evidence showing that the ability of these groups to leverage their capacity, leadership, and rights to transform social, economic, and environmental agendas have been strengthened in a sustained way because of the support of RRI. However, it is hard to imagine a more effective way of strengthening capacities to defend rights than to facilitate rightsholders' practical actions of doing so, which in essence is what RRI has done.

Outcome 2: *Governments scale up the legal recognition and enforcement of land and resource rights for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women in those communities, as enabling conditions for democratic engagement, inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.*

The RRI coalition's interaction with national governments in target countries and regions is reported to have contributed to greater political space, official governmental engagement with coalition members, and legal enforcement of land and resource rights for target groups. Interviewees indicate that collaboration with RRI and with the different stakeholder groups RRI supports gives a level of extra legitimacy and strength when interacting with national governments.

Several of the achievements mentioned under Outcome 1 could as well be presented as results attained under this Outcome. This includes the mentioned legal reforms in Liberia and DRC. Amongst the RRI's additional achievements are a regional governmental exchange in Africa. In May 2019, participants in a regional gathering instigated by RRI launched the intergovernmental "African Land Institutions Network for Community Rights" (ALIN) to scale implementation of indigenous and community land rights. Participants from 13 African governments form the network, that was assembled during the Regional Workshop of African Land Institutions for Securing Community Land Rights, instigated and co-organized by RRI. ALIN is envisioned by RRI to play a key role in fostering dialogue and providing political support for the implementation of laws recognizing indigenous and community land rights in the region.

In India, RRI members worked with other civil society organizations to highlight the impact of Covid-19 related lockdown restrictions on collection of non-timber Forest Products (NTFP). The restrictions, which affected the livelihood of tens of millions of tribal and forest dweller women, were eventually lifted. The RRI supported CSO Oil Palm Working Group in Liberia influenced national FPIC guidelines and, upon official invitation by the government, contributed to the official action plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

In Peru and Colombia, RRI inputs to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) process (within the Paris Agreement) promoted a rights-based and gender approach

for implementation in renewed plans. RRI further mobilized a regional process for filling a gap in the criteria for self-identification and identification of Local Communities, reportedly a critical step to strengthen participation of local communities, Afro-descendants, and women in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Lastly, in the DRC, RRI's efforts have, according to reports, led to a unanimous Parliament approval of a new bill on protection and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Also in DRC, in 2020, support to the long-time RRI Collaborator CODELT to work with the DRC Ministry of Environment resulted in the completion of an Operational Guide for the Elaboration of Simple Management Plans, which has subsequently been adopted by the Government. The previously stalled process of developing an Operational Guide affected the implementation of the country national strategy of community forestry, and possibilities of effectively realizing granted community forest concessions.

According to RRI, the Operational Guide has paved the way for a Tenure Facility project launched in DRC in September 2020, which aims at securing 300,000 hectares of community forestlands by 2023. RRI reports that the support to the establishment and work of the Tenure Facility has enabled communities to advance rights recognition of several million hectares of land in the RRI priority countries of Colombia, Peru, Indonesia, and India (contributing to Outcome 1).

MegaFlorestais have not met during the past two years because of the political developments in Brazil (venue for the annual meeting) in 2019 and Covid-19 in 2020. Despite these developments, it appears that the network members continue to be committed to its existence and mission. In 2021 a webinar series is organized. Two webinars took place in March and April, and two more are expected before the network can go back to its regular annual meeting schedule in 2022. According to RRI's 2019 Annual Report, RRI supported work in Peru, including networking through MegaFlorestais, contributed to Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra stating that his government's goal was to title all communities in Peru by 2021.

In 2020, RRI released the Opportunity Framework analysis which assesses conditions to scale up land rights in 29 low- and middle-income countries, prioritizing countries that are members of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The purpose of the report is to facilitate greater investment by governments, and development, climate, and conservation organizations in projects to recognize formally the land and forest rights of local communities, Afro-descendants, and Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, RRI's regional programs expect to use the analysis to evaluate further opportunities for reforms at the country level. RRI's new Path to Scale initiative—a collaborative initiative and common investment framework to scale-up global efforts to recognize

land and recourse rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendants—builds on the findings of the Opportunity Framework analysis.

Further, the Path to Scale has led to the formation of an informal network of donors and financial mechanisms, committing to securing community land rights, agreeing to: (i) Encourage greater ambition and collective targets; (ii) Candidly share information, monitor and coordinate action; and (iii) Collaborate on new tools and initiatives supporting this agenda as they see fit. Since October 2020, the network has met seven times, bringing together FCDO, Sida, GIZ, BMZ, GAC, USAID, the Ford Foundation, the World Bank, the FCPF, the Forest and Farm Facility, the Tenure Facility and the Quadrature Climate Foundation.

While there has been increased legal recognition and enforcement of land and resource rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, to assess the importance of RRI's contribution to national and global policy changes, as well as enforcement actions, is difficult. Such changes usually come about following a complicated set of interactions that are difficult to track and document. What can be shown is that RRI in many cases has been involved in pushing for observed changes. RRI has also made progress on laying the foundation for potential reforms during the coming years.

Outcome 3: *Investors and companies at national and international levels adopt international standards and rights-based approaches recognizing customary tenure rights, and work with governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural women's groups to (i) resolve land tenure disputes and conflicts; (ii) reduce deforestation and land degradation pressures; and, (iii) support community enterprises and locally determined business and conservation models that enhance livelihoods and sustainability outcomes.*

RRI envisions that supporting the development and adoption of alternative economic approaches among communities and contributing to a sense of urgency of change within companies is needed for a comprehensive shift in private sector sustainability. RRI has reportedly created avenues and spaces for multi-stakeholder interaction and dialogue with the private sector. It has also made some contribution to constructing and leveraging rights-based private sector engagement and the subsequent community monitoring of such.

Through coalition members, local communities have been empowered to monitor and document violations and conflicts with companies over land rights. Additionally, the political capital of private sector actors has been used to influence governments, resulting in concrete opportunities for reportedly “unlikely allies” to work together.

During 2020, RRG partnered with Rainforest Alliance's Accountability Framework Initiative (AFi), and Interlaken Group-participant ASM Law Firm in Indonesia. The purpose of the partnership is to translate the AFi principles and the Interlaken Group guidance on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of

Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) framework into grass-roots indicators to empower communities to monitor and report on local supply chain land right issues.

The country-level platforms in Malawi, Liberia, Cameroon, Kenya, Indonesia, Laos, and Colombia are identified by RRI as entry points to facilitate implementation of best practices on community land rights in upstream supply chains. RRI reports it has engaged globally, and at the national level in Malawi, Liberia, Kenya, Indonesia, Laos, DRC, India and Peru, to leverage private sector actors to support secure community land tenure. This through facilitating implementation of corporate commitments to respect local land rights, creating spaces for progressive private sector actors to voice the importance of land rights to country governments, and by identifying, documenting, and sharing emerging cases of inclusive land use and sourcing models resting on secure local rights and inclusion of local peoples.

At the global level, the RRI-initiated and supported Interlaken Group is, as mentioned above, working with multiple actors through dialogue in order to leverage greater recognition and higher standards of company compliance of land and resource rights. The Interlaken Group develops private sector guidance and other tools to facilitate corporate and investor adoption and implementation of best practice on land tenure. Most recently, the Interlaken Group has worked on developing new corporate guidance describing principles and indicators for companies to integrate community-based data into supply chain monitoring, reporting, and verification frameworks. It envisions this endeavor to link and promote ongoing grassroots monitoring of supply chain impacts with policy commitments made by global companies and investors. In 2019, the Interlaken Group updated its supply chain guidance paper *Respecting Land and Forest Rights: A Guide for Companies* to include gender sensitive approaches and the acknowledgements of gendered issues within private sector land tenure recognition.

In summary, RRI has implemented several important activities towards attaining the outcome and is generally well positioned to make significant progress during the coming years. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected planned activities and outputs towards this outcome.

4.3.2 Women's rights, empowerment and gender relations

All SPIII outcomes highlight the role and situation of women. RRI also stresses that gender justice is a theme that runs through all work at all levels of the coalition and that it pays special attention to internal gender dynamics within its target communities. To ensure full integration of Gender Justice into RRI's strategies, RRG has created a Gender Justice Focal Points group. It aims at prompting commitment and coordination within and between programs, and at leveraging RRI's capacity to strengthen gender justice in strategic planning processes and development of proposals.

In 2018, after a two-year process, including three regional conferences and one global meeting, RRI produced a new Gender Justice Strategy which aims to “scale up global efforts to secure rural and indigenous women’s tenure rights, voice, and leadership within community land and forests.” RRI’s Gender Justice Advisory Group, created in 2018 and made up of RRI coalition members from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, has a mandate to monitor implementation of the strategy.

Over the past three years, RRI has contributed to several important results, including through support to coalition members’ efforts to strengthen of women’s rights in various legal instruments, including in Nepal, Liberia and DRC. In relation to companies and investors RRI has advocated for gender-inclusive operating models, and in 2019 the Interlaken Group revised its Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) to include gender sensitive approaches and integrating and highlighting women’s rights and gender issues. At the global level, RRI has also contributed to increased awareness raising and knowledge on issues of women’s rights to land and natural resources, including through reports such as *Whose Water?* and briefs such as *Strengthening Indigenous and Rural Women’s Rights to Govern Community Lands: Ten Factors Contributing to Successful Initiatives*. Based on these research outputs, RRI and its members have spread knowledge and carried out advocacy efforts both through the media and at national, regional and global events and stakeholder forums.

4.3.3 What are the key factors affecting the degree to which results have been attained?

From the data collected, a number of factors stand out as particularly important for RRI’s attainment of results. Several of these factors are interlinked.

Many interviewees believe that RRI’s capacity to apply a holistic approach, see the big picture and maintain a focus on finding solutions to large-scale problems is one of its major strengths. In an overall context that many would describe as bleak, RRI has identified opportunities that many organizations are prepared to gather around. The most recent large scale global initiative of this nature is the Path to Scale.

Survey respondents and key informant believe that research and analysis is a central feature of RRI. Several interviewees have noted that it is the quality of RRI’s research and analysis that has given RRI much of its credibility and identity, and that this work has been essential for attracting the interest of both donors and partners.

An important aspect of RRI’s analysis and research is that it strives to draw on the realities and experiences of rightsholders and that RRI can use information and experiences gathered by its global network of Collaborators. The effectiveness and legitimacy of RRI as an advocacy organization depends on its advocacy being evidence based and that it truly represents the views and experiences of a global coalition of rightsholders. Several interviewees have underlined that the link between SAGE and

RRI's regional work has been strengthened in recent years. This has contributed to ensuring more effective use of regional data for research outputs, but also to strengthening relevance of research outputs for Partners and Collaborators in the regions.

Interviewees have described RRI as a 'neutral' actor, well placed to facilitate dialogue and exchange of experiences between different actors. They have also said that RRI at national and regional levels often contributes with different perspectives, innovative ideas and valuable examples of how similar issues have been addressed in other parts of the world.

Several of the Collaborators express that RRI's role as a provider of financial support is one of its most important roles. RRI's uses three main channels for this support: (i) Sub-grants connected to the annual plan; (ii) Sub-grants under the Strategic Response Mechanism (SRM); and (iii) Consultancy contracts. As for the sub-grants, these can either be channeled to individual organizations or to coalitions/designated bodies responsible for supporting relevant and effective initiatives in need of support. According to interviews, one of RRI's strengths is that its support is designed to support and back up priorities set by the recipients. In other words, the support ensures, in line with the aims of the aid-effectiveness agenda, local ownership and respect for local priorities.

Interviewees have stressed the particular effectiveness of the SRM, which is envisioned to complement the annually planned activities by providing funding in response to specific challenges, allowing RRI to use windows of opportunities in the regions and priority countries.⁶ In 2018, 2019 and 2020, SRM payments amounted to USD 439,000, 425,000 and 786,000 respectively.

The SRM is welcomed by many interviewees for its flexibility, rapidness, targeted approach, and collaborative processes. RRI staff have often worked in close cooperation with its Collaborators and Partners on everything from project design to follow-up and reporting. An indication of the significance of the SRM projects is that they are highly prevalent in RRI's results reporting.

⁶ SRM proposals are evaluated and approved, depending on their size, by the RRI Coordinator, the Executive Committee of the Board or the full Board. For projects to qualify as an SRM the proposed activities must meet all five of the following criteria: 1) exploit a political window of opportunity; 2) support a critical moment in a social mobilization process; 3) exploit higher-risk opportunities and potentially expand RRI relationships; 4) be a new or newly expanded activity; and 5) be dependent on incremental funding/connectivity at the right strategic moment to produce outcomes.

In 2020, RRG set up and implemented a special Covid-19 Response Programme. As the RRI 2020 Annual Report highlighted, the SRM played a role in keeping some coalition members afloat during the pandemic, and according to interviews prevented instances of backlash and pushbacks of indigenous and community land and resource rights.

Amongst the organizations benefitting from the SRM are many grantees that RRI has supported more than once. Interviewees raised concern about the SRM mechanism creating expectations at national level for continued funding. Additionally, some interviewees find that Partners and Collaborators lack influence over, and insights into, the decision-making process behind the SRM contributions. Finally, some informants express concern that the process from applying for an SRM to the time when RRI disburses funds has become longer and that the process has become overly cumbersome. In some cases, organizations have chosen to not follow through with applications as they have found the administrative requirements too demanding.

In terms of challenges affecting RRI's ability to attain results, the reduced financial resources are the most obvious. During the period 2015-2019, the reduction affected in particular the regional programs and RRI's capacity to sub-grant funds to its partners. There is little doubt that Partners and Collaborators can effectively absorb much larger amounts of funding and that there are many more initiatives worthy of support. Between 2015 and 2019, the SAGE program saw more limited budget reductions. However, in 2020, the SAGE budget was reduced, from USD 2.1 million in 2019 to 1.8 million in 2020. These cuts have impacted on available resources to engage consultants to help RRI attain its research outputs.

Many interviewees have also questioned whether RRI's extensive annual planning process adds sufficient value. While everyone agrees that a level of joint planning is essential for keeping an effective coalition together, the time RRG staff, Partners and Collaborators spend on this process is extensive and some believe that it takes away time they could better spend on activity implementation. Interviewees have also argued that the actual planning documents, the annual Strategic Priorities and Work Plans, are overly detailed and extensive and therefore not effective living documents.

As an actor focusing on promoting and facilitating interaction and cooperation between organizations and institutions, RRI has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. It cancelled or rearranged many of its planned activities for 2020. At the same time, the Secretariat and the coalition maintained their interaction with other organizations and institutions around the globe and national, regional and global level consultative meetings were carried out online.

At the Secretariat level, the pandemic appears to have negatively affected communication and coordination between different segments of the organization, and many staff members perceive they are not properly consulted on, and informed about,

the strategic direction of the organization. However, a tendency to work in silos existed also before the pandemic and interviewees have noted that coordination between SAGE and the regional teams has in fact been strengthened during the past year.

4.3.4 To what extent is RRI able to follow up its work and learn from past successes and failures?

RRI's planning, monitoring, and evaluation system is extensive. It includes several complimentary tools and methods. RRI staff conducts annual self-evaluations, and a tool is used to document progress in relation to annual work plans and outcomes. To validate the self-evaluation reports, and test whether key programmatic assumptions remain relevant, an independent monitor has carried out an annual assessment. RRI also organizes meetings with Collaborators and Partners at national, regional and global levels during which its performance is reflected on and strategies for the future discussed.

Nevertheless, external observers have expressed concerns about the effectiveness of RRI's system for monitoring and evaluation. They have noted that the results reported by RRI often are of an anecdotal nature and that there are no measurement methodologies set out for the indicators in the SPIII. The Organizational Review conducted in 2019 by FCG Sweden further points towards several overlapping layers of objectives in the strategic documents, as a result of the annual planning process and detached output reporting in relation to the SPIII outcomes. As highlighted in the Review, this creates alignment and reporting challenges that hampers the organization's strategic monitoring and learning. Difficulties in following the link and logic between planning and reporting has also affected RRI's communication and dialogue with external stakeholders and donors.

At the onset of the SPIII five-year period, activity and programmatic reporting followed the annual Strategic Priority Objectives (SPO) set out in the annual work plans rather than the SPIII outcomes. In response to RRI's 2019 annual narrative report, the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) noted, for instance, that reporting on progress in relation to the main objective and the three outcomes of the Strategic Plan was a requirement under the agreement between Sida and RRI. In response to Sida's comments, RRI produced a special document showing the relationship between reported results and the outcomes in SPIII. In its annual narrative report for 2020, RRI amended its reporting structure to ensure reporting against its outcomes.

RRI works in a rapidly changing external environment in which a high degree of flexibility is required. While there is a level of acceptance of this within the organization, some staff members believe that changes in priorities and work plans need to be better explained and grounded. As RRI develops its plans and priorities in close consultation

with staff, Partners and Collaborators, a certain level of formality and consultation should be expected before it amends these plans and priorities.

When asked about RRI's major achievements or most important results, many staff members emphasize RRI activities or strategies rather than results. They may, for instance, refer to RRI's convening powers, rather than about the actual results that this convening power and other RRI activities and strategies have contributed to. Enhancing staff members' capacity to reflect independently on attainment of results may be important when trying to analyze the effectiveness of the work carried out, strengthening results reporting and promoting the work of RRI.

4.4 Efficiency

Efficiency concerns the extent to which an intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

4.4.1 Is RRI delivering results in an economic and timely way?

This section assesses whether RRI has delivered results in a timely and cost-efficient way by looking at whether the organization has been on budget; activities have been delivered as originally scheduled; management costs are reasonable, activities cost-effective and RRI able to adjust its ways of working to accommodate changes in the external environment.

RRI's revenue and expenditures were reduced by 60 percent between 2015 and 2020, when actual expenditures went from USD 15.2 million to 6.1 million. Except for 2020, when RRI could not implement some of its more costly activities, the organization has during the period under review, i.e., 2018-2020, used the funds available for its operations.

The extent to which RRI's reduced budget has affected its operation differs from program to program. As shown in Table 2, it is the Regional program and the Coalition and communications program that have been most severely affected. Funding for these programmes were reduced with 60 percent and 52 percent respectively between 2015 and 2020.

Table 2: Expenses per programme 2015-2020 (Thousand USD)

Program	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	Tendency 2015-2020
Coalition and communications	1,114	1,222	1,419	1,939	1,526	2,303	-52%
Regional	2,002	1,465	1,559	3,356	4,493	5,010	-60%
SAGE	1,848	2,103	3,300	2,043	1,830	2,224	-17%
Tenure Facility	31	1,758	3,916	3,995	3,428	3,684	-99%
Management and general	975	908	1,004	1,231	1,753	1,951	-50%
Fundraising	92	51	194	83	44	28	+229%
Total expenses	6,063	7,507	11,393	12,647	13,074	15,200	-60%

RRI's administration costs – expressed as management and general expenses and fundraising expenses – decreased, from about USD 2 million in 2015 to less than USD 1 million in 2020, as shown in Table 2. As a share of total expenses, the administration costs varied during the period between 10 percent and the 16 percent it reached in 2020.

A review of RRI's functional expenses also gives an overview of the extent to which the coalition's operations have been affected by the changed funding situation. Table 2 shows how RRI's functional expenses (including the Tenure Facility) changed between 2015 and 2019.⁷

Table 3: Functional expenses 2015-2019 (Thousand USD)

Expenses	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	Tendency 2015-2019
Salaries and related expenses	3,496	3,688	3,489	3,940	3,808	-8%
Consultants	838	2,182	2,810	2,337	2,312	-64%
Publications and other media	220	434	426	395	483	-54%
Office expenses	204	122	272	245	229	10%
Occupancy	225	221	280	369	303	-26%
Staff travel	352	339	365	361	337	+4%
Participant travel	294	292	252	244	302	-3%

⁷ As the functional expenses in 2020 were heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, the table focuses on the period 2015-2019.

Conference	147	255	401	334	514	-71%
Depreciation and amortization	104	130	89	91	100	+4%
Miscellaneous	75	163	125	173	151	-50%
Grants	1,551	3,566	4,138	4,587	6,662	-77%
Total	7,507	11,393	12,647	13,075	15,200	-51%

Staff costs ranged from USD 3.5 million to 3.9 million during the 2015-2019 period. They were 8 percent lower in 2015 than in 2019, but their share of RRI's total budget increased from 25 percent in 2015 to 47 percent in 2019. The increase is significant and largely an effect of the radically decreased sub-granting, which in turn partly related to the formal separation of the Tenure Facility from RRG. However, it says little about value for money if one primarily regards RRI as an actor that facilitates cooperation and dialogue, provides technical advice, conducts research and analytical work, and has its own staff members as its most valuable resource.

Regarding RRG's compensation to individual staff members, the 2019 Norad organizational review found that it was competitive in comparison with other donor-funded non-for-profit organizations in the US. It also noted that benefits, including health insurance and pensions, are generous. Salary levels of senior staff members are, however, high in comparison with those of civil society organizations in most other parts of the world, including Europe (from where RRI raises most of its funds).

As a global coalition, RRI spent during the period 2015 to 2019 between 7 and 11 percent of its annual budget on travel and meetings.⁸ While the travel costs were more or less the same in 2015 and 2019, the costs for conferences were reduced by 71 percent during the same period. The travel and meeting costs were drastically reduced in 2020 as an effect of the pandemic.

Some stakeholders have raised concerns about the coalition's dependence on physical meetings at national, regional and global level and about the costs and carbon footprints associated with the required travel. They have suggested that the modus operandi of the coalition has to be revised to be sustainable and efficient. Some interviewees have pointed to certain advantages of having to move meetings online, including that it has been possible to be more inclusive, to reach out to new groups and to a higher degree engage individuals, in particular women, that for family and other reasons have difficulties traveling and being away from their homes. Others have mentioned, as noted above, that the chief value of physical meetings is the informal and bilateral

⁸ This figure does not include meeting and travel costs covered by grants provided to partners and collaborators.

discussions between participants, and that an online event can never substitute such interactions. RRI has adopted “green travel guidelines” aiming at reducing staff travel and reducing the environmental impact of travel.

4.5 Impact

Impact concerns the extent to which an intervention has “generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.”⁹

4.5.1 To what extent has RRI contributed to significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher level effects?

The outcomes in the SPIII are on a high strategic, systemic level. The discussion on attainment of outcomes under the section on Effectiveness above is therefore also a reflection on the extent to which RRI is on the path to contributing to impact level changes.

In this section, Rightshouse interprets the Impact level largely to reflect changes and reforms relating to the discourse, increased operational space, and global recognition of relevance and political will towards the overall goal formulation stated in the SPIII, i.e. “dramatically increase the ability of rural communities across the developing world to sustainably use, manage, and protect their lands and resources, advance their wellbeing and ambitions, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and nationally determined contributions to climate change adaptation and mitigation under the Paris Agreement.”¹⁰

As noted earlier regarding the results achieved in relation to the SPIII outcomes, it is generally not possible to directly attribute and connect RRI outputs and outcomes to larger influences on impact level for the scaling up of global recognition of land and resource rights for indigenous populations, local communities and Afro-descendants, and women within these groups. Also, given the character and complexity of the coalition’s work, direct impacts are hard to ascribe RRI where the activities of several other stakeholder’s operations are occurring in tandem with the coalition’s. However,

⁹ OECD, Evaluation Criteria, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

¹⁰ This interpretation largely mirrors what is communicated through the RRI website, under the section “Our Impact”.

it is safe to assume that some of RRI's reported results are important contributions to the overall global progress on community land and forest tenure and governance.

First, as already stated in this report, that RRI has been instrumental in the establishment of bodies such as the Interlaken Group, the Tenure Facility and MegaFlorestais is evidence of the coalition's strong focus on global coordination and collaboration. This further provides evidence of RRI's general contribution to creating new avenues for change and opportunities to facilitate stringent dialogue aligned with the SPIII objective, where these spaces further could signify a leveraging and carving out of new political space.

As the RRI-published and acknowledged publication "At a Crossroads: Trends in Recognition of Community-Based Forest Tenure from 2002-2017" points toward, there has been significant progress on governments' recognition of indigenous populations, local communities and Afro-descendants collective tenure rights across developing countries, a state of play which RRI certainly have made contributions towards.

The Tenure Facility has proven to be an actor of influence and change, independently and sometimes in synergy with RRI, further contributing to strengthening tenure rights and positioning land and resource rights recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities on the global development agenda. According to some informants, this would not be possible without RRI's and others' capacity development support to rights-holders and their communities and organizations, as well as the work made to ensure increased government recognition of land and resource rights.

Second, there is anecdotal evidence pointing towards RRI influencing the discourse on Indigenous Peoples', local communities', and Afro-descendants' land and recourse rights and community forest tenure in relation to climate change mitigation and conservation efforts globally. The research and knowledge produced by RRI is often referred to by others, and by interviewees mentioned as a first stop for scholars and practitioners involved in indigenous and local community land and resource rights. RRI's activities also enable communities to network across regions, amplify their campaigns and advocacy through research, and leverage global platforms for solidarity.

The coalition has, according to the Independent Mid-Term Evaluation conducted in January 2019¹¹, further made important contributions to support community rights through its research, advocacy, and convening activities at country level, leading to improved practices in global conservation and policy initiatives such as the REDD+.

¹¹ Global Goals Consulting; Promoting forest tenure and governance reforms as pre-requisites to effective implementation of REDD+, January 2019

Moreover, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, the 2019 IPCC Special Report on Land and Climate Change, citing RRI evidence, recognized indigenous and community land rights as a priority towards climate change mitigation and solution, pushing RRI's global influence on the discourse.

These examples signify RRI's contribution towards the growing global recognition that indigenous populations, local communities and Afro-descendants lands, territories, and resources are managed more effectively by communities themselves than by external actors. Hence, RRI has contributed towards these communities receiving stronger recognition for their expertise in building local economies and livelihoods through community-based governance.

Last, there are strong indications that RRI's interaction and dialogues with international organizations and major donors have contributed to increasing their interests in projects recognizing indigenous and community land rights and in encouraging governments to adopt policies and strategies that acknowledges and safeguards indigenous, community and Afro-descendants land and resource rights. On a grand scale it appears the thematic focus and views of RRI are reaching greater recognition and commitment from private, state and international actors.

4.6 Sustainability

Sustainability concerns the extent to which the net benefits of an intervention continue or are likely to continue.

4.6.1 Will the effects and impact of RRI and its SPIII last over time?

As noted under the section on effectiveness, RRI has under the duration of SPIII contributed to several public policy related results, as well as a multitude of results that are not policy related but nevertheless impact on many peoples' livelihoods. At the global level it seems there is a growing consensus on the need for greater recognition of Indigenous Peoples', local communities' and Afro-descendants' land and resource rights and the importance these rights have from the perspectives of climate change and biodiversity. The sustainability of the results attained at this level thus appears to be increasing.

Policy related changes are otherwise sensitive to fluctuating political power structures and interests, but an even bigger challenge from a sustainability perspective is that there is often a wide gulf between the adoption of laws and other public policies and their actual implementation. The local level non-policy related results reported by RRI vary in nature. To draw general conclusions on the sustainability of these results is difficult,

as it depends on the nature of the specific achievement and the overall context in which they are attained.

Many of the changes RRI has attained need to be built on and accompanied by further reforms if impact should be achieved and sustained. This may be true particularly for public policy reforms, including adoption of laws. These often need to be followed by regulations that guide implementation and by social accountability actions that help ensure that they are adhered to in practice. The continued existence of an effective RRI coalition capable of following up on the gains made and supporting those who push for their implementation is therefore of importance from a sustainability perspective.

Of significance from this perspective is, however, also that RRI is a coalition of existing organizations. While the support provided by RRI is important for many of the organizations, the individual organizations existed before they received support from RRI and will likely continue operating also if RRI's support ends. Whether the RRI supported coalitions at national level, such as the Tenure Coalition in Indonesia and thematic working groups in Liberia, would continue to exist and produce results also without the technical and financial backing of RRI is more uncertain. Even though RRI's financial support to the coalitions is limited, they are currently economically entirely or heavily dependent on RRI. At the same time, it is not unreasonable to expect that the national coalitions, if necessary, can find alternative sources of funding, including through contributions from the coalition members themselves.

As RRI itself is not a coalition financially supported by its members, the future of RRI depends on its capacity to raise funds from other actors. The SPIII states that “Expertly managed diversified funding streams will be key to sustained progress toward RRI's mission” and notes the need for the coalition to be “proactive and innovative in expanding its donor base”. During the current strategy period, RRI has strived for an annual budget of roughly USD 10 million.

As shown in Table 2, RRI's revenue has been shrinking over the past few years. In 2019 and 2020, it did not reach the USD 10 million goal. One important factor behind RRI's reduced budget is the Tenure Facility's transition to becoming an independent organization.

As RRI has relied on the support of a few large donors, and so far not engaged in fundraising from individuals and corporations, it is sensitive to changing donor capacities and priorities. At the same time, RRI's sustainability has benefitted from a high degree of core funding—support that is not earmarked for specific interventions but can be used as RRI deems most effective within the limits of its Strategic Plan. Contrary to ambitions expressed in the global aid-effectiveness agenda, the trend amongst many donors has for some time, however, been a move away from core funding. For RRI, this may affect both its effectiveness and its sustainability.

The current RRI coalition model with its annual planning cycle and bottom-up ambitions depends on a high degree of flexible funding that can be used to implement the activities and attain the goals currently being regarded as most relevant by the coalition. An insistence amongst donors to earmark their financial support to specific outcomes, projects, or activities is in effect undermining a genuine bottom-up planning process.

Donor requirements are also creating specific challenges for an organization like RRI that sub-grants fairly small amounts globally to many organizations which have limited financial management capacity and experience of handling grants from international actors. To live up to the follow-up demands of back-donors such as Norad and Sida is a challenge for any organization sub-granting small amounts. The back-donors typically have similar requirements on follow up of sub-grants regardless of the size of the support provided. This includes requirements for an unbroken chain of audits, which means that professional audits are required also for small grants. Although most development actors recognize the importance of providing limited grants to small organizations, the costs and administrative burden in administering such grants often undermines their effectiveness.

Besides the fact that donor requirements may undermine the effectiveness, ownership and sustainability of the support provided by RRI, the reduction in the organization's overall budget has affected its capacity to channel support to its members around the world. As shown in Table 4, the amounts sub-granted decreased, from 6.7 million in 2015 to 3.6 million in 2018, 1.6 million in 2019 and 1.3 million in 2020. Despite this dramatic reduction, RRI has stated its continued commitment to support the national level work of its members, noting in the 2019 annual report that “Subgrants and agreements, combined with technical assistance from regional staff, continue to make-up the largest expense, signaling the continued strengthening of the field and a focus on national-level activities.”¹² It can also be noted that prior to 2020, a large share of RRI’s total sub-grants pertained to the Tenure Facility.¹³ Excluding the amounts relating to the Facility, the funds sub-granted actually increased between 2019 and 2020.

Table 4: Amounts sub-granted 2015-2020

Sub-grants (million USD)	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	Tendency 2015-2020
Grants	1.3	1.6	3.6	4.1	4.6	6.7	-81%

¹² Rights and Resources Initiative. *Annual Narrative Report 2019*.

¹³ Of the amounts sub-granted, 41 percent were given to the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility in 2015, 28 percent in 2016, 48 percent in 2017, 52 percent in 2018, 40 percent in 2019 and 2 percent in 2020.

RRI's sub-granting capacity is, according to interviews, directly linked both to its ability to ensure a strong and active coalition and to the sustainability of some of the coalition's smaller organizations with limited access other sources of funding. While many of RRI's collaborators recognize that the coalition can add value in several ways, survey respondents and many of those interviewed in connection with this evaluation see, as mentioned, RRI's role as a sub-granting organization as one of its most important roles. The Independent Monitoring Report from March 2019 drew a similar conclusion, stating that "RRI does not consider itself a funding or grant-making institution; still, for several of its collaborating partners it represents a significant source of income..."¹⁴

According to several interviewees, a challenge for RRI is that the coalition and some of the coalition members compete for the limited amounts of funding available for the issues on which they focus. Several of RRI's donors are also, directly or through other channels, providing support to some of RRI's Partners and Collaborators. RRI has, as a matter of policy, consciously tried to avoid competing with partner organizations and Collaborators, and its intention of being a USD 10 million actor is, according to interviews, a consequence of this policy. Another effect of this policy is that RRI has not been fundraising in its priority countries. There are, however, efforts underway to change this. Many bilateral donors are disbursing the lion share of its civil society support at country level through country level strategies.

That RRI does not have an easily described and common *modus operandi* in the different countries it operates is a challenge. Different contexts obviously require different approaches to ensure effectiveness, but from a fundraising and sustainability perspective it is problematic that many stakeholders, including Collaborators and Partners, do not have an overview of RRI's way of working. Few outsiders question the relevance of what RRI is trying to achieve, but to communicate effectively how RRI is working at regional and national levels, and how it contributes to results at these levels, is a bigger challenge.

Finally, it should be mentioned that interviewees have stressed the central role the RRG President has had in raising funds for the coalition, and several interviewees have expressed a concern that this capacity might be difficult to replace even though fund raising will be a key role of a new RRG President. RRG has also increased the attention it pays to fundraising and has adopted new fundraising policies at both Board and Secretariat level. Recently, RRI also established and filled a new donor relations manager position.

¹⁴ Patrick Tiefenbacher and Alexander Graf. 2019. *Rights and Resources Initiative: Independent Monitoring Report 2018*. Global Goals Consulting

Overall, many of the results attained are characterized by a reasonable level of sustainability. The policy related results achieved are often a necessary foundation for further changes, but the possibilities for RRI to influence their sustainability is limited. If attained policy related results should lead to real impact for rightsholders, a necessary condition is often that RRI and other concerned actors have sufficient resources to push for and help ensure effective implementation.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Relevance

Despite some interviewees' concerns about the extent to which coalition members effectively influence and own RRI's priorities and strategies, the data collected by the Evaluation Team indicate that there is broad overall agreement amongst RRI's members and stakeholders that priorities outlined in the SPIII and work plans are relevant for RRI to address. A challenge for the coalition and its possibilities of ensuring priority and strategy ownership amongst its members is its dependence on donor priorities and the fact that many donors may increasingly want to earmark their funding for specific projects or activities. It appears that this dependency may not be fully understood amongst Partners and Collaborators.

5.2 Coherence

Rightshouse found that RRI is complementing, adding value to and coordinating with other actors working on issues of land and resource rights of rightsholders. Coalition building is at the heart of RRI's work at national, regional and global levels. The efforts made over the years to create coalitions of CSOs, government authorities, businesses and donors have been considerable, and many of the coalitions established remain relevant and active. The vast majority of interviewees at both national and global level believe that RRI adds value to the work their own organizations are doing, although some interviewees are of the view that the demands RRI places on Partners and Collaborators exceed the value RRI adds. Most interviewees see RRI's move towards closer engagement with rightsholder organizations as a necessary change, but some are concerned RRI will increasingly duplicate the work already done by some of its larger partner organizations.

5.3 Effectiveness and impact

To assess the degree to which RRI has contributed to attainment of its three outcomes is difficult for several reasons. First, the number of rightsholders, civil society organizations, governments and businesses around the world that RRI is striving to influence is extensive. Second, when changes can be identified, the nature of these changes are typically such that they have come about as a result of a complex set of interactions between many actors. Third, even when it is possible to link a particular change to the efforts of a member of the RRI coalition, it is difficult to determine the extent to which RRI has contributed to the achievements of this member. Finally, RRI

generally lacks relevant tools and methods to monitor its work and has not systematically followed up indicators developed to assess progress.

Despite these difficulties in assessing RRI's contributions to results, there are many examples of specific changes to which RRI can make a plausible claim to have contributed. These include an influence on aspects of the global discourse on land and resource rights, changed legislation and other public policies at national level, successful legal challenges to defend land and resource rights and livelihoods. As for the specific outcome of leveraging rightsholder's capacity, leadership, and rights to transform social, economic, and environmental agendas to support inclusive and equitable development, sustainable land and resource governance, RRI has on numerous occasions facilitated for rightsholder to defend their rights, and it is difficult to imagine a more effective approach for strengthening capacities than to support their possibilities of taking practical actions.

While much remains to be done before "Investors and companies at national and international levels adopt and implement international standards and rights-based approaches recognizing customary tenure rights" as RRI is striving to achieve under SPIII, RRI has taken several important actions towards attaining this outcome and has over the years influenced the practices of a number of companies, which in turn have tried to influence government policies.

As RRI's has framed its SPIII outcomes as high-level goals, they are hard to distinguish from the impact level.¹⁵ Nevertheless, a few achievements closely linked to RRI's way of working warrant particular recognition. These include how RRI has created new opportunities for dialogue on land and resource issues amongst and between different groups of actors, which creates new prospects for joint actions and change. It also includes RRI's ability to contribute to new knowledge on land and resource rights and influence global thinking and discourse on these issues, including on the link between landownership and the climate and biodiversity agenda. Overall, views advocated by RRI for many years appear to be gaining increasing recognition amongst academics, private sector representatives, civil society representatives, donors and governments.

In relation to RRI's ability to follow up its work, the Evaluation Teams notes that the annual activities' strategic relevance, and the overall coherence of the result management of RRI, would benefit from linking work plan components to overall objectives in a strategic plan already in the planning phase. This would allow planned activities and outputs at program level to follow the established management

¹⁵ In development evaluations, impact normally concerns high level social, environmental and economic effects that are longer term or broader in scope than those captured under the effectiveness criterion.

framework and feed into set outcomes in a structured and coherent manner. As also has been identified in recent reviews and assessments¹⁶ the theory of change and intervention logic is not structured in a way that enable performance monitoring and learning. The three outcomes in the SPIII framework are overlapping and appears not to be used as an analytical framework to assess program progress. The basic components that should help RRI to guide program implementation is hence not in place.

5.4 Efficiency

RRI's reporting on results is to a high extent featuring results achieved at community and national level, often as an effect of support provided through the SRM. Many of those interviewed in connection with this evaluation have also stressed the relevance and effectiveness of the support provided to members working at community level, and in particular of the SRM. There also appears to be broad consensus that there has been a need to increase the attention paid to national and community level initiatives, and the Board has increased the SRM budget in 2021. At the same time, several interviewees have noted that it is at the international level RRI has reached some of its most significant results and that it is through its global level work, including its high level analysis and research, and its capacity to link the global and local levels that RRI adds value to what others are doing.

That RRI's annual budget has been shrinking over the past few years and that it during the past two years has been well below the USD 10 million strived for is a concern. It is an issue, however, that RRI is well aware of and that both its board and its secretariat are engaged in addressing. If RRI should maintain and effectively implement the broad range of roles it currently has, Rightshouse believes that the organization needs a larger annual budget. In particular, to be an organization that globally sub-grants funds from bilateral donors to many small organizations with limited financial management capacity is demanding and requires a fairly complex institutional set-up. To ensure cost-effectiveness, the amounts sub-granted have to be of a reasonable scale.

An alternative to significantly increasing its budget would be for RRI to focus its sub-granting on funds that are not raised from bilateral donors and not attached with the same onerous follow-up requirements as bilateral donors typically have. Another alternative would be to shift from sub-granting to joint implementation of collaborative projects with its Partners and Collaborators under an arrangement in which RRI covers

¹⁶ E.g Global Goals Consulting; Promoting forest tenure and governance reforms as pre-requisites to effective implementation of REDD+, January 2019 and Alffram, H & Mod er P, *Organizational Review of Rights and Resources Initiative*, FCG Sweden, 2019

actual costs. A third alternative would be for RRI to channel funds to a few well-established organizations, perhaps at regional level, that already have adequate financial management and follow-up systems in place, that in turn sub-grants to local level Collaborators. A fourth alternative for RRI would of course be to end its sub-granting role and instead exclusively focus on the many other roles it maintains.

RRI's donors generally have no shortage of channels through which they can provide support to RRI's Partners and Collaborators, and many of them already receive support from other donors or sub-granting organizations. As some of these organizations are specialized in sub-granting funds, they also have well-developed systems for follow up of grants and sometimes for strengthening the capacity of partner organizations to manage and report on grants. What RRI, but very few others, can contribute, however, is the ability to work on joint project development and to link projects and organizations to a global level agenda.

Efforts have been made to overcome tendencies amongst the different teams in RRG to work in silos. Interviews indicate, however, that more can be done to ensure effective cooperation and collaboration across the organization. One aspect of this is the need to improve effective communication between the teams as well as between senior management and other staff.

There is at the same time a need for RRI to ensure an effective planning process that is not overly time-consuming, not too expensive, and does not unnecessarily divert human and financial resources from project implementation. The planning process should also consider the need to limit carbon footprints and ensure that the planning documents produced are living documents that effectively guide the work of the Coalition.

5.5 Sustainability

From a sustainability perspective, the biggest challenge for RRI is to be able to attract funding in a difficult donor environment. Another is how to handle a multitude of expectations from coalition members and donors, and to ensure that it does not take on more roles than it can effectively handle.

The actual results attained by RRI are otherwise characterized by a sound level of sustainability. The policy level changes attained can of course be revised, but in most cases, there are no immediate reasons to believe that they will be repealed. A bigger challenge is to ensure effective implementation of the adopted policies. Other types of results, such as the creation of new avenues for dialogue, are in some cases likely to remain also without the support. In other cases, their dependence on continued RRI support is high. RRI's efforts to facilitate for rightsholders to claim and defend their rights is an effective and sound strategy for raising sustainable capacities.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. RRI should ensure that Partners and Collaborators are well informed of the framework and context within which strategies and priorities are developed

RRI should make further efforts to ensure that the members of the coalition are well informed of the relationship between the Strategic Program, annual work plans, and donor agreements.

2. RRG should strengthen internal communication and consultation

RRG should continue efforts aiming at improving internal communication and ensuring that staff members are properly consulted on, and informed about, the strategic direction and project priorities of the organization, considering RRI's overall operational framework under which Partners and Collaborators, as well as donors, influence the organizations' agenda and priorities.

3. RRI should strengthen its strategic dialogue with donors at country level

For the benefits of its Partners and Collaborators, RRI should continue its efforts to more actively engage donor agencies in a strategic dialogue at country level to increase their knowledge about land and resource rights for Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants and about the need to channel support to groups working to realize these rights.

4. RRI should to a higher extent focus its efforts on where it adds value in relation to others

When setting its priorities and designing its programmes, RRI should consider that it in comparison with other organizations primarily adds value through its ability to legitimately claim to represent many rightsholder around the globe, link rightsholders with the global level discourses and decision-making processes, conduct high-quality research and analysis, and provide creative large-scale solutions to complex problems. RRI's should also consider that its donors typically have many channels through which they can provide financial support to RRI's Partners and Collaborators.

5. RRI should rethink its approach to sub-granting

RRI should consider the following approaches to sub-granting in order of priority:

(i) RRI should shift from sub-granting to funding of collaborative projects

RRI should consider moving from sub-granting to funding of collaborative projects with Partners and Collaborators. These projects should be jointly planned, implemented and followed-up and RRI should cover actual costs rather than channel funds to Partners and Collaborators.

(ii) If RRI decides to continue sub-granting, it should focus its grants on civil society coalitions/umbrella organizations

In order to avoid “competing with” or duplicating the efforts of its own Partners and Collaborators, RRI should consider focusing its sub-granting on coalitions of civil society organizations/umbrella organizations to which its collaborators belong.

(iii) If RRI decides to maintain a broad sub-granting focus, a larger sub-granting budget is required

If RRI continues to be a coalition with a broad sub-granting focus, and in particular an organization that sub-grants to organizations with limited capacity to manage and report on grants, RRI should further strengthen its own capacity for both follow-up of grants and capacity development of partners. This requires in turn a substantially larger sub-granting budget if effectiveness and efficiency should be ensured.

6. RRI should explore how the annual planning process can be made more effective, efficient and inclusive

RRI should review how to it can increase the effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness of its annual planning process. This review should look at the possibility of creating longer planning cycles, moving more of the planning cycles online, ensure a higher degree of inclusiveness and create a more transparent system for which organizations that are invited.

7. RRI should clarify the theory of change and elaborate a related intervention logic that can give guidance during program implementation.

In the next Strategic Plan, there is a need to clarify the theory of change and ensure that an intervention logic and program outcomes are in place that enable results-based monitoring and learning. This should include an elaborated analytical framework that gives guidance during program implementation and relevant tools and methods for assessing program progress.

8. RRG should strengthen its capacity for learning

RRG should better encourage and facilitate staff members’ capacity to reflect independently and jointly on attainment of results, which is essential for analyzing the effectiveness of the work carried out, learning, strengthening results reporting and promoting the work of RRI.

ANNEX I: KEY INFORMANTS

NAME	POSITION	INSTITUTION
Adrienne Stork	Senior Program Manager	Rainforest Alliance
Alain Frechette	Director, Strategic Analysis and Global Engagement	RRG
Alan Landis	Chief Operating Officer	RRG
Alejandra Zamora	Peru Facilitator	RRG
Andiko Mancayo	Lawyer	AsM Law Office
Andrew Davis		Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación sobre Desarrollo y Media Ambiente
Andy White	Coordinator, Rights and Resources Initiative	RRG
Anne-Sophie Gindroz	Southeast Asia Regional Facilitator	RRG
Antoine Kalinganire	Senior Tree Scientist	ICRAF
Asep Yunan Firdaus	Executive Director	Epistema
Bryson Ogden	Associate Director, Strategic Analysis and Global Engagement	RRG
Camilo Nino	Coordinator	Indigenous Technical Secretariat of the National Commission on Indigenous Territories
Carole Carlson	Director, Finance & Administration	RRG
Chloe Ginsburg	Senior Tenure Analyst	RRG
Claire Biason-Lohier	Director, Coalition and Strategic Networks	RRG
Cristi Nozawa	Executive Director	Samdhana
Dinar Kos	Programme Manager	AKAR Foundation
Eric Teller	Senior Associate, Coalition and Strategic Networks	RRG
Gam Awungshi Shimray	Secretary-General	Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact
Giri Rao	Executive Director	Vasundhara
Hans Gregersen	Fellow	RRI
Jane Carter	Senior Advisor	Helvetas
Johana Herrera	Professor and Coordinator	Javeriana University and Observatorio de Territorios Etnicos y Campesinos
Jose Santos	Executive Director	Proceso de Comunidades Negras

Joseph Bono	Manager, Coalition Governance and International Engagement Coordination	RRG
Juan Carlos Jintiach	Advisor	Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indigenas de la Cuenca Amazonica (COICA)
Julian Atkinson	Senior Program Coordination Officer	RECOFTC
Kendi Borona	Africa Program Facilitator	RRG
Kevin Currey	Programme Officer	Ford Foundation
Kundan Kumar	Director, Asia Program	RRG
Laura Fortin	Donor Relations Manager	RRG
Luke Allen	Officer, Strategic Communications	RRG
Madeleine Jönsson	Program Responsible Specialist	Sida
Madiha Qureshi	Senior Manager, Strategic Communications	RRG
Manuel Martinez		Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación sobre Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente
Mardha Tillah	Director	Indonesian Institute for Forest and Environment
Matthew Gonzale	Grants Administrator	RRG
Mayra Johana Tenjo	Colombia Facilitator	RRG
Mina Beyan	Programs Director	Social Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development
Moses Barssay Kollie		Rights and Rice Foundation
Nighisty Ghezze	Director/Board Member	International Foundation for Science/RRG
Omaira Bolaños	Director, Latin America & Gender Justice Programs	RRG
Peggy Smith	Board member	RRG
Peter Oesterling	Senior Associate, Latin America Program	RRG
Rachel MacFarland	Operations Manager	RRG
Robin Barr	Head of USA and Canada	Earthworm Foundation
Sandra León Bolourian	Senior Manager, Programs & Strategic Response Mechanism	RRG
Shambhu Prasad Dangal	Country Director	RECOFTC, Nepal
Shankar Gopalakrishnan	Member	RRI Advisory Committee India and NGO Campaign for Survival and Dignity
Shannon Johnson	Associate, Africa Program	RRG

Simon Counsell		Formerly with Rainforest Foundation UK
Simon Whitehouse	Senior Financial Officer	World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
Stephanie Keene	Senior Tenure Analyst, Strategic Analysis and Global Engagement	RRG
Susan Kandel	Executive Director	Programa Salvadoreño de Investigación sobre Desarrollo y Medio Ambiente
Tajamul Haque	Member	RRI Advisory Committee India
Tapani Oksanen	Chair of the Board	RRG
Tom Worsdell		AIPP/RRG
Torstein Taksdal Skjeseth	Senior Adviser	Norad
Tushar Dash	Independent Researcher	

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ANNEX III: ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

Answer alternatives	Number of respondents			
Q1: Is your organization a RRI partner* or collaborator? (*Current RRI Partners: AIPP, AMAN, AMPB, CED, CIFOR, Civic Response, COICA, FECOFUN, Forest Trends, HELVETAS, IFFA, IFRI, ISA, Landesa, Prisma, RECOFTC, REFACOF, ICRAF)				
Partner	5			
Collaborator	32			
Q2: How many staff members are there in your organization?				
0	2			
1-10	24			
11-50	8			
More than 50	3			
Q3: In which region is your organization working?				
Africa	5			
Asia	12			
Latin America	17			
Other region	1			
More than one region				
Q4: Do you agree with the following statement? "RRI is addressing the most pressing needs for scaling-up the recognition of the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants."				
Agree	32			
Somewhat agree	5			
Somewhat disagree				
Disagree				
Q5: Do you agree with the following statement? "RRI is effectively complementing the work of our organization on land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants."				
Agree	31			
Somewhat agree	5			
Somewhat disagree				
Not Applicable	1			
Q6: How important are the following of RRI's roles?				
Facilitate collective action of civil society organizations and rightsholder organizations on	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important

the issue of land and forest rights		1	5	31
Provide financial support to its Partners and Collaborators	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
	1	1	4	31
Provide advice and technical assistance to its Partners and Collaborators	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
	1	1	14	21
Convene Partners and Collaborators	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
		2	15	20
Conduct research and analysis for land and forest rights at national and global levels	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
			3	34
Advocacy at the global level	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
			14	23
Advocacy at the regional level	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
		1	14	22
Advocacy at the national level	Not at all important	Not so important	Somewhat important	Very important
	1	3	13	20
Q7: Do you agree with the following statement? "As an organization collaborating with the RRI Coalition, we can effectively influence the RRI Coalition's strategy at national and regional level."				
Agree	28			
Somewhat agree	9			
Somewhat disagree				
Disagree				
Not applicable				
Q8: Do you agree with the following statement? "As an organization collaborating with the RRI Coalition, we can effectively influence the RRI Coalition's strategy at the global level."				

Agree	21
Somewhat agree	14
Somewhat disagree	
Disagree	
Not applicable	2
Q9: In comparison with other networks that your organization is a member of, how important is your collaboration with the RRI Coalition?	
Very important	29
Somewhat important	7
Not so important	1
Not at all important	
Not applicable	
Q10: How can RRI become more effective in supporting greater rights recognition nationally, regionally or globally?	
28 respondents provided suggestions	
Q11: Do you have any additional comments?	
12 respondents submitted comments	