



RIGHTS AND RESOURCES INITIATIVE | FEBRUARY 2023

Securing Land Tenure for Prosperity of the Planet and Its Peoples

AN IDEA PAPER

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Introduction

The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)'s mission statement is to support Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' struggles against marginalization and for sustainable, self-determined development across the planet.

This translates into support for Indigenous Peoples (IPs), local communities (LCs) and Afro-descendant Peoples (ADPs) in establishing their secure tenure rights over diverse forest and rural landscapes, as well as for the ability to exercise these rights for nature conservation while creating prosperity for their current and future generations. Nature conservation can only be successful when nature-protective management of land and resources generates income and brings prosperity. While achieving food security and healthy nutrition is a minimum condition for prosperity, income generation also needs to respond to many other needs. It requires a sound balance between conservation and production revenues, with tenure security being a pre-requisite for both.

The engagement of IPs, LCs and ADPs is driven by their self-determination and potential as main actors in a multifunctional transformation process. This process must be grafted on climate change mitigation and adaptation, nature and biodiversity conservation, landscape restoration, radical food systems change, empowerment of women and youth, land, and resources conflict management. RRI's approach is to facilitate IPs, LCs, and ADPs in exploring linkages between these different challenges in a synergetic fashion, ultimately resulting in win-win solutions to the overarching problems of climate change, hunger and malnutrition, environmental degradation, and social and political marginalization.

IPs, LCs, and ADPs need to be better connected to global transformation mechanisms to raise their profile as genuine drivers of these processes. RRI profiles itself as a multisector convener and facilitator to bring the seemingly contradictory goals of nature conservation and nature production under a common umbrella and creating mutual benefits for the planet and its peoples. This approach is fully in line with these groups' own strategies for diversifying their livelihood opportunities and exploring and claiming collective access to their customary territories in addition to individually owned lands.

RRI advocates for a "landscapes approach" to achieve this mission. A landscapes approach is a solution to the long-standing conflict between various goals for the world's ecosystems, including conservation and economic production. It transcends ecological and social boundaries that are essential for addressing today's complex intertwined challenges. Many landscapes provide a diverse range of values, goods, and services. The landscape approach acknowledges the various trade-offs among a diverse range of values, goods, and services. It addresses them in a spatially explicit and ecosystem-driven manner that reconciles stakeholders' multiple needs, preferences, and aspirations.

A landscapes approach also brings people together across geographies, sectors, and cultures to collaborate on conserving important ecosystems and the myriad ecological, cultural, and economic benefits they provide.

The need for IPs, LCs, and ADPs to acquire secure tenure over land and resources to achieve conservation and production goals is twofold. **First, these groups need to establish a tenure safety network over their claimed land and resources** to prevent unintended consequences, like spill overs and leakages from other global responses to climate change, environmental rehabilitation, and food systems transformation. Such threats include: massive horizontal land expansion for producing food resulting in deforestation mainly for agribusinesses (an additional 1 billion hectares by 2050); ill-negotiated western offset initiatives causing major power imbalances; land based green transition initiatives (renewable energy, mining) on IP, LC, and ADP land; poorly designed or speculative Nature Based solutions (NBS) such as massive forestation on food producing lands and conservation initiatives that exclude local people.

These threats extend over communal land domains not yet legally recognized as being managed by IPs and LCs, as well as over their lands under a common property regime that continue to be considered as being unencumbered of any rights and free for allocation such as communal forests, pastoral grazing lands and savannahs, wetlands and mangroves, integrated and rotational farming systems land under forest cover.

Second, IPs, LCs, and ADPs want secure tenure as part of a more enabling environment to fully unlock their potential for delivering their own solutions to current systems threats and opportunities. These communities have developed many solutions as global nature conservation stewards, as the world's main food producers, and as guardians of resilient and adaptive indigenous conservation and production systems. They have proven to be the best conservationists of forests at a low cost and hold 80 percent of global biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, albeit with little direct benefits.

IPs, LCs, and ADPs produce up to 70 percent of the world's food with lower climate change and environmental impact than agribusinesses, but many remain under the poverty threshold. They are the de facto owners and managers of massive carbon stocks in forested and non-forested ecosystems, but markets fail to fairly reward this. This is all achieved with these communities having legal rights over only 20 percent of their land and receiving only 17 percent of global climate finance for self-determined investment and nature conservation. Clarifying their rights and establishing solid tenure security and capital to invest in exercising those rights are a must.

Impact statement

The projected long-term impact of RRI's engagement in this arena is fourfold. First, RRI supports creating an enabling environment for IPs, LCs, and ADPs to contribute substantially to meeting SDGs by 2030. Table 1 (see page 10) provides an overview to root these groups' contributions under RRI's

[new Strategic Program](#) for 2023-2027 and toward global sustainable development goals (SDGs) with specific targets to be met by 2030.

These contributions are selected based on RRI's ambitions to work on: land tenure and governance for nature conservation (SDG15) and production (SDG1 and SDG2); gender equity (SDG5); climate change mitigation and adaptation (SDG13); and effective, inclusive, and accountable local institutional development (SDG16).

Several of these indicators can be maintained while others can be better adapted to respond to RRI's mission. The coalition will produce a simple baseline for the retained targets. Reporting against SDG targets can make RRI eligible for responding to calls for these goals' reporting by the end of its Strategic Program in 2027.

Secondly, the program aims for IPs, LCs, and ADPs to act as major actors for countries to meet global convention and agreements targets under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by 2030. The impact on meeting UNFCCC targets can be measured by country's specific introduction of secure IP, LC, and ADP land tenure in NDCs by 2030 as a condition to meet other climate change targets. The CBD target for achieving the protection and conservation of at least 30 percent of the planet by 2030 coincides with the [Campaign for Nature target](#). RRI's impact here is to contribute toward recognition of community land and forest tenure rights over the identified land areas to complement the current area under protection and conservation. This coincides with adapted SDG indicators 13.b and 13.2.

Third are the program's ambitions for IPs, LCs, and ADPs to become a driving force for countries to comply with international conventions including UNDRIP and UNDRIP. This impact is qualitatively measured against reform measures adopted by countries to meet land and forest rights-based agreements under these conventions.

Fourthly, the program targets countries responding to a demand for establishing a solid policy environment and implementing such policies in line with global guidelines for good practice (VGGT, Right to Food).

Long term outcomes (2030) and medium-term outputs (2027)

RRI's engagement aims to realize following long term outcomes (2030) and medium-term outputs (2027) as per its Strategic Program.

Outcome 1- Path to Scale: IP, LC, ADP, and women's tenure rights over land and forests scaled up with 400 million hectares, leading to tangible livelihood benefits for all rightsholders.

- 1.1. Scaling-up efforts to secure communal land management territories and common property.
- 1.2. Scaling-up efforts to secure women's rights on community land and forests.

- 1.3. Frontline rights defenders well equipped (with capacity building) and protected to create and respond to demand for securing and exercising tenure rights, including local grievance mechanisms
- 1.4. Supporting local and landscape land use planning.
- 1.5. Building economic cases for establishing innovative IP, LC, and ADP driven nature conservation and production enterprises, such as Indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCAs), payment for ecosystems services (PES), forest and farm producer organizations, community women's gardens, and food sovereignty initiatives.

Outcome 2 – Path to Reform: Governments and their constituents achieve rights-based land and forest policy reform with capacity building to implement these policies in selected countries.

- Screening country specific reform opportunities and challenges to produce country roadmaps and an updated opportunity framework; conducting political economy analysis for specific capacity building programs, and identifying game changing opportunities.
- Supporting IP, LC, and ADP land and forest tenure reform.
- Modernizing IP, LC, and ADP governance institutions.
- Enabling and reforming business environments for community-led enterprise and initiatives.

Outcome 3 – Path to Finance: Public and private spending for implementing path to scale and path to reform is increased to US\$10 billion.

- Creation and operationalization of the [CLARIFI](#) funding mechanism.
- IP, LC, and ADP land rights embedded in international financing instruments (UNFCCC-NDCs; Paris climate law article 6.8; GCF; REDD+ and others).
- Strategic engagement with major donors and funding preparation exercises at country level.
- Leveraging political windows through a strategic response mechanism to advance reform and protect rights defenders.
- Channeling IP, LC, and ADP development/investment portfolios to relevant private and public partners (local governments and elected bodies; NGOs, private sector).

Outcome 4 – Path to Partnership Mobilization: Stakeholder networks' attitudes, skills, efforts, and business models changed to advance IP, LC, ADP and women land rights and income generating initiatives under global agendas and mechanisms.

- Strengthening IP, LC, and ADP women's tenure, participation and roles in governance.
- Building the next generation of Indigenous and community youth leadership.
- Corporate actors adopt rights-based approaches and standards in their business models
- Mobilizing climate and conservation sectors.
- Building IP, LC, and ADP organizations' global collective action; connecting with the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP); facilitating north south knowledge exchange and capacity for engagement.

- Academic alliances between universities to explore nexuses of science and traditional knowledge and science and politics to advance advocacy and legal reforms.

Outcome 5 – Path to Coordination: RRI coalition agency consolidated to coordinate and advance global efforts on community land and forest rights recognition.

- Updating a global hub for tracking and monitoring expanded and datasets.
- Country specific land governance observatories established and/or supported, including those monitoring private sector compliance, public sector delivery, policy development, and grievance mechanisms.
- Developing a simple baseline to assess progress to meet impact targets.
- Coordination between donors and stakeholders to foster collective action through the [Path to Scale](#) donor group.

Strategy statement

RRI's strategy hinges on a synergistic interaction between the following core values:

- **Evidence**

RRI **assesses and monitors** progress on the recognition and realization of community land and resource rights. It establishes global databases on IP, LC, and ADP land rights recognition; legal frameworks that enable securing of these rights; land owned and claimed by IP, LC, and ADP women; carbon storage on community lands; high value biodiversity areas occupied by IPs, LCs, and ADPs; and capacities of public sector and civil society organization to deliver services for securing land and forest rights.

This impressive capacity for data collection is supported by in-country coalition partners and collaborators, and an extensive network of key informants. Database are used to monitor progress on global tenure targets. The combination of qualitative and quantitative tracking leads to **analysis and framing** to measure and instigate progress. RRI's [opportunity framework](#), for instance, informs possibilities to scale up and/or reform collective tenure and land/forest governance interventions at different scales in specific countries. RRI's data, analysis, and framing are used by donors and many fellow organizations to support their strategic interventions.

- **Advocacy**

Evidence and analysis are used by RRI itself and other organizations (at no cost) to **inform and influence** governments on needs and opportunities for scaling up IP, LC, and ADP tenure implementation programs and tenure reform efforts. Advocacy is also used to flag emerging threats of rolling back progressive reform and funding initiatives to prevent this. As a result of its subnational landscape approach, RRI explores working with subnational governments and policy

decision such as subnational parliaments. This is in line with the 2021 Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate's call for policy action with subnational structures.

RRI's advocacy efforts result in more structural **engagement** with national forestry agencies across the world (Megaforestais), with the UNFCCC (regular involvement in the global forums' side events) and other global initiatives like Just Rural Transition. RRI's evidence base and advocacy also contributed to the 2021 Glasgow pledge of US\$1.7 billion made by donors for Indigenous Peoples' empowerment, especially for the strengthening their rights as forest guardians.

- **Partnerships**

RRI is a recognized force to create safe spaces and opportunities for **convening** stakeholders – private, public, and communities – to negotiate, agree and implement rights-based solutions with mutual benefits. Examples of RRI-facilitated networks include the Interlaken Group, the Path to Scale donor group, and the Gender Justice Advisory Group. RRI consolidates and extends its existing platforms if required, such as the Interlaken Group expanding its engagement at country level. It also **engages** with existing initiatives and partnerships, such as with the Local Communities and Indigenous People Platform (LCIPP); the Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance (CLARA); and Just Rural Transition (JRT).

RRI also collaborates with existing Communities of Practice such as the Farm and Forest Facility and others to promote agroforestry, agroecology, and food sovereignty. Its Strategic Program facilitates **leveraging** global partnerships for action at the country level with in-country joint stakeholders.

- **Innovation**

RRI **creates** institutions, initiatives, and tools that respond to gaps in the ecosystem of existing efforts to scale up the recognition IP, LC, and ADP rights and reform to enable this. Successful examples of these institutions include the Tenure Facility, Megaforestais, the Land Rights Now campaign, Landmark, and the [Path to Scale](#) donor group. Its latest initiatives include CLARIFI, which is currently being operationalized in collaboration with the Campaign for Nature. CLARIFI's design and implementation is guided by an Advisory Council of Indigenous and community rightsholders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Such new initiatives build on RRI's core values of evidence generation and country opportunity framing, multi-level advocacy, partnership engagement, and on-the-ground capacity building of rightsholders.

- **Multi-level engagement**

RRI is unique in **linking** multilevel action domains with each other. Its coalition collaborators are frontline rights defenders and implementors, well informed on specific local level needs and obstacles. Its bottom up "[Blue Skies](#)" listening exercise in held in 2022 brought together a solid set of longer term grassroots needs that are integrated into its country, regional and global level planning. Its global initiatives such as the opportunity framework are based on country specific tracking and

analysis. This allows RRI's globally focused initiatives such as CLARIFI to be tailored to specific local needs. Pivotal in bottom-up planning is the **coordination** of action in RRI's regional interventions. These are compiled in an inclusive and participatory fashion by country delegations. RRI's new Strategic Program scales up in-country engagement to support local organizations through regional interventions.

RRG plays a further role of **coordinating** local and regional activity for its annual programs. Its coordinating mechanism, Rights and Resources Group, is equipped with staff to support regional and country planning through specific funding programs such as the Bezos Earth Fund, which focuses on the Congo Basin and the Tropical Andes. The delivery of these programs is facilitated by RRI's grassroots work in those regions.

- **Capacity building**

Capacity building and education are an integral part of RRI's overall strategy and mainstreamed throughout its Strategic Program. It pays particular attention to local level public land and forest administrations; current collaborators and potential candidates to extend this network; local IP, LC and ADP land and forest management institutions including their leadership and emerging youth and women leadership. RRI also explores opportunities to create **jobs** for community youth as part of its strategy to modernize community management institutions, including as para-surveyors, paralegals, and local land clerks.

Finally, RRI's Strategic Program engages in thematic **education** on rights-based land and forest management approaches for local politicians and parliamentary members, local judiciary, national and local conservation organizations, and food systems actors. Its strategy explores an internal "training of trainers" approach, where partners with international expertise engage with established and recognized regional collaborators in a series of training workshops to prepare them as trainers for country-level collaborators' organizations.

TABLE 1: Selected SDG Targets and Indicators as They Relate to RRI's Strategic Program

SDG	Target	Indicator
SDG1	1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	1.4.2: Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure
SDG2	2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status
	2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture
SDG5	5a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure 5.a.2 Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control
SDG13	13a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible	13.a.1 adapted; US\$ 10 billion resource mobilization for IPLC land rights recognition under divers mechanisms
	13b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	13.b.1 adapted # countries with land rights in NDCs
	13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	13.2.1 adapted # countries with land rights in NDCs and NAP
SDG15	15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	15.1.1 adapted forest area owned/managed by IPLC increased with 400million hectares by 2030
	15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management
SDG16	16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	16.6.2 adapted Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of service delivery by IPLC land and forest management institutions
	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group