



ICI Inclusive
Conservation
Initiative

The Inclusive Conservation Initiative

The Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI) is designed to support the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) in stewarding lands, waters and natural resources. By combining substantial investments in specific locations with support to magnify local results through global capacity building, policy influence and demonstration of large-scale impacts, ICI will catalyze the transformational changes needed to secure and enhance support for the contributions of IPLCs to biodiversity and other global environmental benefits (GEBs).

Indigenous and Local Leadership Protecting Nature

The lands and territories owned or managed by Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) around the world play a critical role in conserving biodiversity and contributing global environmental benefits.

Indeed, research shows that when IPLC rights are recognized and IPLC leadership is respected, deforestation and biodiversity loss rates fall, and ecosystem services improve.

Despite significant increases in climate finance over the past few years, resources dedicated to natural climate solutions, specifically to initiatives governed and implemented by IPLCs, remain low. ICI is designed to change this – promoting a conservation paradigm that recognizes and supports the integral role of IPLCs in the conservation of biodiversity.

The data is clear – Indigenous peoples and local communities steward our land and seascapes

While making up just 5% of the world's population, Indigenous peoples own or manage at least 25% of the world's land surface, including approximately 40% of terrestrial protected areas and 37% of ecologically intact landscapes. Together, they steward an estimated 80% of biodiversity on Earth.

At least 36% of global land areas that have been established as Key Biodiversity Areas are managed by IPLCs – of which 91% is considered to be in good or fair ecological condition. Forests managed by IPLCs are critical for global climate mitigation, as they contain at least 24% of the total carbon stored above-ground in tropical forests. In the marine realm, 12% of the most biodiverse marine areas in the world and 20% of coral reefs are under IPLC management.

A Transformative Vision of Inclusive Conservation

The Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI) is designed to enhance Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' (IPLC) efforts to steward lands, waters and natural resources. By combining substantial investments in specific locations with support to magnify local results through global capacity building, policy influence and demonstration of large-scale impacts, ICI will catalyze the transformational changes needed to secure and enhance support for the contributions of IPLCs to biodiversity and other global environmental benefits (GEBs).

Though IPLCs are often better able to contribute to knowledge on local biodiversity and environmental changes than scientists, existing initiatives that assist IPLCs tend to be small and of limited scope. Medium and full-sized investments in IPLC-led projects that would deliver GEBs at a scale commensurate with the amount of land under IPLC management have remained out of reach for IPLC organizations; the bulk of GEF engagement with Indigenous conservation has been through the Small Grants Programme administered by the United Nations Development Programme, which provides grants up to USD 50,000. ICI therefore works to support IPLC access to the larger volumes of resources required for larger-scale biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.

Concurrently, in many parts of the world, national, regional and global decision-making processes continue to lack sufficient pathways for full and effective participation of IPLCs. IPLCs face social, political, cultural, language and financial obstacles to participation in decision-making spaces at these multiple levels. Consequently, decisions on policies, laws, strategies and programs that affect and are affected by IPLCs do not take into consideration IPLC perspectives and do not reflect their needs or priorities. This severely undermines IPLC ability to shape and execute conservation and natural resource management. Within this context, ICI also supports IPLC leadership and institutions in relevant policy arenas.

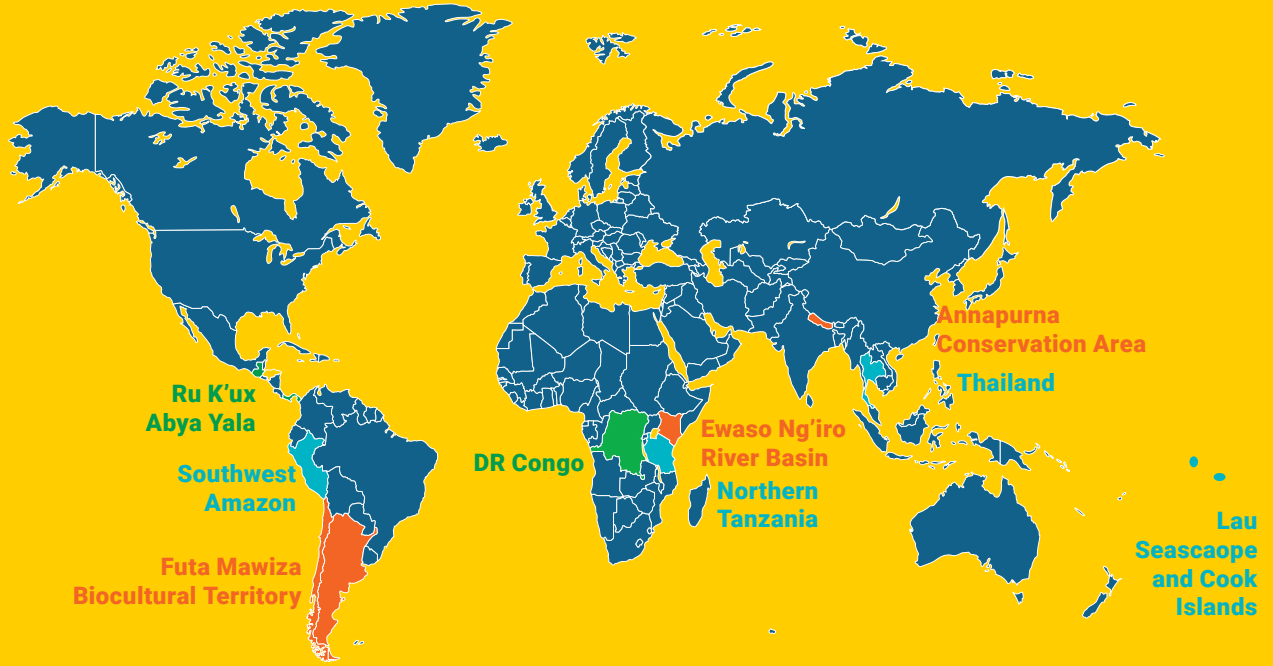
How the project works

ICI has four primary global project components. Cross-cutting work – for example on gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation – also supports ICI in taking a comprehensive approach to ensuring and measuring inclusivity and conservation results alike.

- **Enhancing IPLC-led environmental results:** Investing directly in nine IPLC-led initiatives that deliver Global Biodiversity Benefits
- **Strengthening institutional capacities:** Supporting IPLCs to strengthen and scale impact towards improved management of lands, territories, waters and natural resources and increased access to public and long-term sustainable financing mechanisms
- **Increasing international policy influence:** Building a pathway from local action to global impact through targeted IPLC engagement in international environmental policy and relevant international platforms
- **Amplifying knowledge to action:** Expanding support and advancing the field of IPLC-led conservation by generating and disseminating ICI learning and results



Map of subproject geography locations



Taking action across the globe

Over 400 expressions of interests were submitted under ICI, with nine subprojects identified – they include large areas of tropical forest as well as mountain and temperate forest, drylands and grasslands, and coastal and marine ecosystems.

These areas relate to 7 Global Biodiversity Hotspots and 1 High Biodiversity Wilderness Area; 35 Important Bird Areas; 29 Key Biodiversity Areas; and 4 World Heritage Sites and 5 Biosphere Reserves.

Under ICI, there are nine initiatives in 12 countries. Collectively, they are home to more than 3 million people from 40 indigenous groups in 12 countries. Depending on the subproject, economic activities of people in the subproject areas include farming, agroforestry and livestock; fishing and hunting; ecotourism and livelihoods based on non-timber forest products.

Together, IPLCs will enhance their stewardship of at least 7.5 million hectares of landscapes, seascapes and/or territories with high biodiversity and irreplaceable ecosystems.

Implementing agencies

Conservation International

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Executing agencies

Asia and Pacific

House of Ariki – Cooks Island

The Bose Vanua o Lau – Fiji

The Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment (IPF) – Thailand

Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) – Nepal

Central America

Sotz'il – Guatemala

South America

FENAMAD – Peru

Fundacion Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN) – Argentina

Observatorio Ciudadano – Chile

Sub-Saharan Africa

Association Nationale d'Appui et de Promotion des Aires du Patrimoine Autochtone et Communautaire en République démocratique du Congo (ANAPAC) – DRC

The Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) – Kenya

Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT) – Tanzania



Project background

In 2019, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) decided to pilot a new initiative for increased direct financing to Indigenous and local community organizations to conserve biodiversity, deliver multiple global environmental benefits and support related cultural and economic development initiatives. A part of the GEF-7 Programming Directions Strategy's Biodiversity focal area, ICI is built upon the principle that inclusive conservation requires that Indigenous and local communities are the main authors and implementers. At the same time, the project does not aim to define the concept of inclusive conservation and recognizes that this is also determined by Indigenous peoples and local communities.



About the GEF

The Global Environment Facility is the world's largest funder of biodiversity protection, nature restoration, pollution reduction, and climate change response in developing countries. It finances international environmental conventions and country-driven initiatives that generate global benefits. The GEF partnership connects 184 member governments with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and the private sector, and works closely with other environmental financiers for efficiency and impact. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$22 billion in grants and blended finance and mobilized another \$120 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 national and regional projects, plus 27,000 community-led initiatives through its Small Grants Programme.

Governance structure

ICI's Project Management Unit includes Conservation International's Center for Communities and Conservation and IUCN's Human Rights in Conservation Team. Composed of senior IPLC representatives nominated by IPLC executing agencies, a global Steering Committee will lead the governance of the project, with the support of the GEF Secretariat. ICI will also be guided by an Advisory Committee to promote synergies with other complementary projects and facilitate exchanges with IPLCs and IPLC organizations from around the world.



ICI



More information:

<https://www.inclusiveconservationinitiative.org/>
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