

GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Project Information

Project Title

Heart of Conservation Initiative

Region

Global

GEF Project ID

11761

Country(ies)

Global

Type of Project

FSP

GEF Agency(ies):

WWF-US

GEF Agency Project ID

G0065

Project Executing Entity(s)

WWF-US

Project Executing Type

GEF Agency

GEF Focal Area (s)

Biodiversity

Submission Date

3/13/2026

Type of Trust Fund

GET

Project Duration (Months)

60

GEF Project Grant: (a)

22,535,780.00

GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)

0.00

Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)

2,028,220.00

Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

0.00

Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)

24,564,000.00

Total Co-financing

45,660,208.00

PPG Amount: (e)

400,000.00

PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

36,000.00

Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)

25,000,000.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Wetlands, Biomes, Tropical Rain Forests, Grasslands, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Demonstrate innovative approach, Communications, Stakeholders, Local Communities, Indigenous Peoples, Participation, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Consultation, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Gender Mainstreaming, Awareness Raising, Access to benefits and services, Participation and leadership, Capacity Development, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Access and control over natural resources, Beneficiaries, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Women groups, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Training, Knowledge Exchange, Peer-to-Peer, South-South, Learning, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The Heart of Conservation Initiative (HCI) is a 5-year global project designed to address systemic barriers that limit Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' ability to steward their lands, territories, waters, and biodiversity-rich ecosystems, by strengthening territorial governance and land tenure security. Despite strong evidence that Indigenous Peoples and local communities manage or influence at least 37% of remaining natural lands globally, they receive less than 1% of international climate and biodiversity finance, and face complex donor procedures, limited direct access to funding, and insufficient recognition in decision-making arenas.

Building on the achievements of the GEF-7 Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI), HCI's objective is to increase Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizational capacities and ability to access sustainable finance at scale for territorial stewardship to deliver social, economic, cultural, and Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs). Because HCI recognizes that biodiversity stewardship by Indigenous Peoples and local communities as inseparable from their territorial rights, sustainable economies, food sovereignty, and cultural continuity, the project mainstreams related goals and strategies as self-determined by Indigenous People and local community partners in Component 1. The project is transformative in that it targets structural change in biodiversity finance systems—shifting from centralized, intermediary-driven models toward more inclusive, Indigenous- and community-led financing and governance mechanisms.

This will be achieved through four integrated components: (i) financing and implementing self-determined Indigenous- and community -led sub-projects across Latin America, Africa, and Asia; (ii) institutional, fiduciary, and technical self-strengthening capacities of Indigenous-led Funds and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations; (iii) enhancing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in global biodiversity, climate and related finance processes; and (iv) advancing knowledge, learning, and evidence on rights-based, inclusive conservation.

The project will improve management of approximately 2.1 million hectares of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, restore about 12,200 hectares, increase land-tenure security in the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities across roughly 230,000 ha of landscapes, and directly benefit an estimated 110,000 people. Benefits are also expected to include strengthened culturally-rooted territorial governance systems, enhanced land tenure security, nature-based economies, Indigenous food systems, women's and youth participation, and leadership, and increased resilience to climate and economic shocks.

Project Description Overview

Project Objective

Increase Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizational capacities and ability to access sustainable finance at scale for territorial stewardship to deliver social, economic, cultural, and Global Environmental Benefits.

Project Components

Component 1. Implementation of self-determined Indigenous People and local community led sub-projects

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
18,750,000.00	37,989,761.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1. Stewardship of lands, territories and resources are enhanced and social, economic, cultural and global environmental benefit are delivered through the implementation of a diverse portfolio of on-the-ground Indigenous People and local community-led sub-projects

Outcome 1.2 Indigenous People and local community partner organizations' technical capacities self-strengthened to manage multilateral and other financial resources and deliver GEBs

Output:

Output 1.1.1. Self-determined plans for sub-projects finalized by Indigenous People and local community- partners

Output 1.1.2. Self-determined sub-projects implemented and monitored by Indigenous Peoples and local communities

Output 1.2.1. Self-strengthening plans finalized and implemented based on partners' institutional, technical and operational needs

Component 2. Strategic and technical collective self-strengthening of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,250,000.00	2,532,651.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1. Strategic capacities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations, including Indigenous-led Funds (ILFs), collectively strengthened to directly access multilateral and other finance and deliver GEBs

Output:

Output 2.1.1. Collective strengthening program designed and implemented

Component 3: Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in global biodiversity, climate, finance and related decision-making processes

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
505,169.00	1,023,533.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1. Strengthened Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement in international biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy processes

Outcome 3.2. Strengthened Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' influence through leadership, advocacy and policy engagement

Output:

Output 3.1.1. Strategy co-developed to enhance Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and impact in international processes addressing biodiversity, climate, finance and related policies

Output 3.2.1. Youth Policy Leadership program established

Output 3.2.2. Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' experts and negotiators supported to engage in key global and regional fora that represent new and emerging opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to influence policy

Component 4. Learning, Knowledge management and communications

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
500,000.00	1,013,060.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1. The body of knowledge and practices on Indigenous People- and local community-led stewardship and financing is advanced and informs wider stakeholder practices

Output:

Output 4.1.1. An HCI website hosts the project's knowledge products and materials and is accessible to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Output 4.1.2. Knowledge products co-developed with Indigenous People and local community partners, capturing inclusive best practices, challenges and lessons

Output 4.1.3. Lessons from HCI disseminated as per the knowledge management and communication strategy

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
457,479.00	926,908.00

Outcome:

Outcome 5.1. Accountability, results-based decision-making and adaptive management are enabled thanks to effective and locally- appropriate monitoring and evaluation

Output:

Output 5.1.1. Project monitored regularly at all levels through multi-source data collection that draws upon context specific knowledge systems, innovations and practices

Output 5.1.2. Completion of mid-term and terminal evaluations

Output 5.1.3. Annual reflections and knowledge generation facilitate adaptive management and learning

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1. Implementation of self-determined Indigenous People and local community led sub-projects	18,750,000.00	37,989,761.00
Component 2. Strategic and technical collective self-strengthening of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations	1,250,000.00	2,532,651.00
Component 3: Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in global biodiversity, climate, finance and related decision-making processes	505,169.00	1,023,533.00
Component 4. Learning, Knowledge management and communications	500,000.00	1,013,060.00
M&E	457,479.00	926,908.00
Subtotal	21,462,648.00	43,485,913.00
Project Management Cost	1,073,132.00	2,174,295.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	22,535,780.00	45,660,208.00

Please provide Justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Changes compared to PPG request

Components & Outcomes		Outputs		Explanation
PPG request	CEO ER	PPG request	CEO ER	

C1: On-the-ground Indigenous People and community-led projects deliver GEBs	C1: Implementation of self-determined Indigenous Peoples and local community-led sub-projects			Addition of the notion of self-determination.
Outcome 1.1. A diverse, global portfolio of ICI sub-projects led by Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations supporting Indigenous Peoples- and local communities-led stewardship of territories, lands, waters and resources and delivers global environmental benefits	Outcome 1.1. Stewardship of lands, territories and resources are enhanced and social, economic, cultural and global environmental benefits are delivered through the implementation of a diverse portfolio of on-the-ground Indigenous People- and local community-led sub-projects	Output 1.1.1. Impact and accelerator partners contracted	Removed	Differentiation of partner categories removed based on feedback received at Rome consultation.
		Output 1.1.2. Plans developed and approved for Indigenous People- and local community- led sub-projects	Output 1.1.1. Self-determined plans for sub-projects finalized by Indigenous People and community partners	The addition of "finalized" is to convey the idea that the development of sub-project plans was initiated during the PPG phase; Social, economic and cultural benefits added to capture the broader set of goals that Indigenous Peoples and local communities will advance through HCI alongside biodiversity conservation goals
		Output 1.1.3. Sub-project Plans implemented by Indigenous Peoples and local communities to improve conservation, sustainable use and restoration of natural ecosystems	Output 1.1.2. Self-determined sub-projects implemented and monitored by Indigenous Peoples and local communities	Slight rewording but no changes to the content.
Outcome 1.2 Increased recognition, where relevant, of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' contributions in national plans and strategies (e.g. NBSAPs, NDCs) following FPIC and in locally-appropriate ways	Outcome 1.2 Indigenous People and local community partner organizations' technical capacities strengthened to manage multilateral and other financial resources and deliver GEBs	1.2.1 Support toward self-designation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' contributions to national strategies and plans (e.g. NBSAPs, NDCs), including land and territory designations (e.g., Protected Areas, Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures, Indigenous and Traditional Territories)	Output 1.2.1. Self-strengthening plans finalized and implemented based on partners' institutional, technical and operational needs	The idea of national advocacy was removed as an output of the project and instead is left up to the sub-project partner to engage in advocacy at the level as relevant to their self-determined plans. Instead, Outcome 1.2 focuses on individual self-capacity strengthening (formerly in Component 2) for sub-project partners based on the results of the due diligence process.
C2: Self-Strengthening of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to govern territories, lands, waters and resources	Component 2. Strategic and technical collective self-strengthening of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations			Addition of the notion of strategic strengthening, with "territory, land, water, resource governance" covered by the notion of technical strengthening.
Outcome 2.1 Indigenous People and local community partners have self-	Outcome 2.1. Strategic capacities of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations,	2.1.1 Institutional, technical, and operational strengths assessment of Partners and development or	Removed	Component 2 in the CEO ER focuses on collective strengthening where the PPG

strengthened to steward territories, lands, waters and resources, and scale support to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations	including Indigenous-led Funds (ILFs), collectively strengthened to directly access multilateral and other finance and deliver GEBs	update of institutional strategic development plans		request had both individual and collective strengthening. Individual self-strengthening is now included as outcome 1.2. Collective strengthening program will be informed by an analysis of C1 partners' updated self-strengthening priorities and other Eols to identify shared needs.
		2.1.2 Identification of and support to existing Indigenous Peoples and local communities strengthening resources and mechanisms 2.1.3 Implement self-strengthening plans to support institutional, technical and/or operational capabilities (indicatively, as needed): leadership, governance, fundraising and financial sustainability, organizational strategy, project management, grantmaking, cultural due diligence, local to national legal empowerment (land and tenure rights, selection of appropriate conservation pathways), communications, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)		
Outcome: 2.2 Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations and networks self-strengthened		2.2.1 Collective strength building learning exchanges between Indigenous Peoples and local community project partners, including GEF-7 ICI executing agencies, and external organizations delivered	Output 2.1.1. Collective strengthening program designed and implemented	
C3: Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and recognition at global and large-scale decision-making levels	Component 3: Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in global biodiversity, climate, finance and related decision-making processes			Slight rewording to emphasize the focus on biodiversity and climate and related finance fora, and change from recognition to influence
Outcome 3.1 Increased representation and influence of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at national to global level decision making processes, with focus on where there is less representation, e.g.	Outcome 3.1. Strategic foundations for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement in international biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy processes established	3.1.1 Strategy developed to increase Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in global level and within large-scale decision-making processes, based on a gap analysis	Output 3.1.1. Strategy developed to enhance Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and participation in international processes addressing biodiversity-related funding and financing	Component 3 has been divided into two outcomes to reflect the preparatory work to do for increased representation and influence vs. implementation of this work.
		3.1.2 ICI Policy Leadership program (with a focus on women and youth) established		

Rio Conventions subsidiary and technical bodies and other fora (e.g. World Economic Forum)				
	Outcome 3.2. Strengthened Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' influence through leadership, advocacy and policy engagement		Output 3.2.1. Youth Policy Leadership program established Output 3.2.2. Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' delegates supported to engage in key global and regional fora	
C4: Experience and lessons learned to enhance broader Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' initiatives	Component 4. Learning, Knowledge management and communications			Reformulated for greater focus on knowledge management and communications as critical mechanisms to share lessons.
Outcome 4.1 Body of knowledge and practice on Indigenous-Peoples and local community-led stewardship is advanced	Outcome 4.1. The body of knowledge and practices on Indigenous People- and local community-led stewardship and financing is advanced and informs wider practices	4.1.1 ICI Knowledge Platform(s) Identified 4.1.2 ICI Knowledge Products developed with Indigenous People and local community partner organizations 4.1.3 Proven, replicable models for advancing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance and stewardship, strength-building, sustainable finance and increased participation of women and youth disseminated	Output 4.1.1. An HCI website hosts the project's knowledge products and materials and is accessible to Indigenous Peoples and local communities Output 4.1.2. Knowledge products co-developed with Indigenous People' and local community partners, capture inclusive best practices, challenges, and lessons Output 4.1.3. Lessons from HCI disseminated as per the knowledge management and communication strategy	Outcomes 4.1. and 4.2. of the PPG request were merged into one outcome which combines knowledge management and communication. Outcome 4.1 also now incorporates Indigenous Peoples- and local communities-led financing rather than just stewardship.
Outcome 4.2 Increased awareness of key project findings and lessons by broader Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' and allied organizations	Merged with outcome 4.1	4.2.1 Effective Communications Strategy developed and delivered to disseminate project lessons to target audiences 4.2.2 Dialogues with key project stakeholders	Merged with outputs under outcome 4.1 Merged with outputs under outcome 4.1	
C5: Monitoring and Evaluation				
Outcome 5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation plan finalized with data	Outcome 5.1. Accountability, results-based decision-making and adaptive	5.1.1 Project monitored regularly at all levels through multi-source knowledge collection (for annual work	Output 5.1.1. Project monitored regularly at all levels through multi-source data collection	Outcome wording was refined to focus on implementation rather than design of the M&E plan

collection, reflection and reporting on time to aid in results-based decision-making and adaptive management	management are enabled thanks to effective and locally appropriate monitoring and evaluation	plans, results framework, project progress reports, core indicators)	that draws upon context-specific knowledge systems, innovations and practices	which was done during PPG phase. In addition. Output 5.1.1. was slightly reworded to avoid listing M&E activities and to reflect culturally appropriate methods.
		5.1.2 Completion of MTE and Terminal Evaluation	Output 5.1.2. Completion of mid-term and terminal evaluations	No content changes
			Output 5.1.3. Annual reflections and knowledge generation facilitate adaptive management and learning	A third output was added to ensure that M&E feeds collective learning and adaptive management of the project

Budget revision between components: Budget per component has been adjusted to reflect the changes mentioned above regarding project activities. The revised budget is as follows:

Budget for component 1: USD 18.75M

Budget for component 2: USD 1.25M

Budget for component 3: USD 0.505M

Budget for component 4: USD 0.5M

Budget for component 5 (M&E): USD 0.45M

Problem statement

The state of global biodiversity and the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation

Biodiversity, upon which humanity depends, has been declining at alarming rates. According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment (2022), around 75% of terrestrial and 66% of marine environments have been significantly altered by human activities, leading to widespread ecosystem degradation. Since 1970, the abundance of native species in most major ecosystems has fallen by at least 20%. Wetlands have experienced the steepest decline, with 85% lost since 1700. Forest ecosystems have seen extensive conversion: over 290 million hectares of natural forest globally were lost between 1990 and 2015 due to agriculture, logging, and infrastructure expansion. Species-level declines are equally concerning, with an estimated 1 million species of animals and plants currently threatened with extinction. Over 40% of amphibians, 33% of reef-forming corals, one third of marine mammals and over 40% of invertebrate pollinators (including bees and butterflies) are at risk[1]. The major drivers of biodiversity loss are: (i) land and sea-use change, (ii) direct exploitation of organisms, (iii) climate change, (iv) pollution and (v) invasive alien species.

Despite this bleak picture, IPBES is hopeful that nature can be conserved, restored and used sustainably. It points to the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in that regard[2]. Indeed, there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are effective stewards of nature[3],[4],[5] including maintaining intact forests [6], terrestrial mammal habitats[7], vertebrate diversity, and often with better outcomes than protected areas[8]. Their application of Indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices, as determined through their systems of governance and stewardship, is critical to conserving biodiversity. Indeed, in 2018, Indigenous Peoples and local communities managed or legally held land intersected with at least 37% of remaining natural lands worldwide[9]¹.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities are critical to halting biodiversity loss throughout the world. Their role in conservation was recognized in international law as early as 1992; Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) states that “each contracting party shall (...) respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application” and Article 10c calls on Parties to “Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements”. In addition, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) directly embeds Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ rights, knowledge, innovations and practices, recognizing them as vital to halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. The KMGBF explicitly acknowledges Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Goal C and eight targets (1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 19, 21, and 22), affirming their rights, traditional knowledge, and contributions to conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity. Target 1 promotes spatial planning that respects Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ rights and knowledge systems, while Target 3 emphasizes equitable governance of conserved areas—including recognition of Indigenous and traditional territories as pathways toward the “30x30” goal. Targets 5 and 9 safeguard customary sustainable use of wild species, and Target 13 calls for fair benefit-sharing from genetic resources linked to traditional knowledge. Moreover, Target 19 underscores direct financial access for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, Target 21 protects traditional knowledge through free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), and Target 22 ensures full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity decision-making.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities’ capacities and access to tailored finance

Indigenous Peoples and local communities’ capacities

Accessing finance from global systems requires a specialized skill set. Although Indigenous Peoples and local communities are experts in a broad array of disciplines (e.g., ethnobotany, climatology, ecology and biology) that enable them to manage their landscape effectively^[10], historical marginalization has undermined the authority and resourcing of Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ representative organizations. The resulting capacity gaps are structural and specific^[11]. In many countries, legal and regulatory frameworks still fail to recognize Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ rights to land and forests, such that Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ organizations may be excluded from participating in and benefiting from state-sponsored development and climate initiatives^[12]. Many communities have faced discrimination in access to education, which translates into limited specialized human resources, and makes it difficult for Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ organizations to build or retain expertise in the technical fields required for tenure security and forest stewardship, such as mapping and demarcation, business development, legal defense, IT systems, communications, and advocacy. In practice, raising external funding, managing grants, and reporting against complex donor systems has become a specialized discipline of its own, and donor processes frequently remain long, rigid, and costly in time for applicants^[13]. Because donor eligibility, fiduciary risk standards, and audit requirements are built around state-recognized legal entities and standardized upward accountability, Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ organizations often must overcome barriers linked to legal recognition, banking access, language, and compliance capacity^{[14],[15]}. These systemic constraints often result in biodiversity finance flowing through intermediaries that can assume formal fiduciary responsibility and translate community priorities into donor formats, even when Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ institutions have demonstrated real experience re-granting funds across their own networks.

A further mismatch lies between Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ priorities for capacity-strengthening and the way such programs are typically funded. They are often designed in a top-down manner, with standardized content and priorities defined by donors rather than by Indigenous Peoples and local communities themselves, despite IP organizations’ rich experiences with participatory identification of priorities. This approach limits their relevance and effectiveness, particularly in contexts where capacity levels are highly heterogeneous and institutional needs are more suited to personalized support and gradual self-strengthening. In the context of Indigenous Peoples, this is particularly stark. Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states that «Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development», while Article 32.1 highlights IP right to self-determination, i.e., to “determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources”. Yet many IP organizations report that donor priorities remain narrow and short-term, sometimes excluding basic livelihood needs or allowing intermediaries to set agendas on their behalf, which risks fracturing long-term community plans and weakening self-determination^[216]. At the same time, the dominant model of capacity support in conservation continues to be one-off trainings and workshops, whereas evidence shows that effective strengthening is longer-term, relational, and embedded in Indigenous and traditional governance and land-based practice, targeting not only individual skills but organizational capacities and changes to the enabling environment^[17]. Another challenge is that donors let intermediaries define

priorities on behalf of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, not only undermining the right to self-determined development but also risking aligning with the priorities and technical skills of intermediaries[18].

Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' access to tailored finance

The recognized need and global commitment to equitably and effectively partner with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to support tenure security and successful stewardship of nature has not yet resulted in delivery of adequate financial resources at the local level. In the absence of fully financed partnerships that deliver the much-needed funding to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, more communities will lose the fight to protect[19] and conserve their lands, territories and resources and maintain their sustainable ways of life that contribute to Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs). This will have catastrophic consequences for the cultures, spiritual beliefs, languages, traditional knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation at a global scale[20]. Without support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to implement their self-determined priorities to enhance stewardship of territories, lands, waters and resources[21],[22], the world will not reach its climate and biodiversity goals.

Yet, support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities remains critically underfunded by the international community. Over the period of 2011 to 2020, projects supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure and forest management in tropical countries received USD2.7 billion from bilateral and multilateral donors and private philanthropy – equivalent to less than 1% of the official development assistance (ODA) for climate change mitigation and adaptation over the same period. In addition, most of the resources disbursed towards support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities flow through large intermediaries, with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations receiving just a fraction as sub-grants. As an indication of how much of the committed funding reaches Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, only about 17% of analyzed projects cite the name of an Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations in the implementation description. Out of the USD 2.7 billion, just 11% were directed towards supporting securing tenure rights, the remainder going towards less politically sensitive Indigenous People- and local community-led forest management approaches. Moreover, regional disparities are significant. Over the 2011-2020 period, Latin America was the primary region for donor funding supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land tenure and forest management (USD 99.9 million per year), followed by Africa (USD 89.9 million per year) and Asia (USD 74.9 million per year)[23].

Private foundations have contributed only about 3% of the funds directed towards supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land tenure and forest management in tropical countries. Nonetheless, they have paved the way for increased direct support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations by making more direct, flexible and less bureaucratic grants[24].

Environmental protection, education, health, and human rights are the most funded areas, yet these priorities are typically donor-defined, reflecting limited Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' participation in needs identification and decision-making. Further, the strategies supported are typically general program support, which is an intrinsically unsustainable source of funding. Meanwhile, policy advocacy and capacity-strengthening strategies critical to long-term sustainability are less commonly funded[25].

There has been a growing political momentum on increasing funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. At CBD COP16 held in Cali Colombia in 2024, Parties launched the Cali Fund, a new mechanism to mobilize private sector contributions linked to commercial use of digital sequence information (DSI), with at least 50% of resources allocated to the self-identified needs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in support of the KMGBF implementation, under an institutional arrangement involving UNDP and UNEP. At UNFCCC COP30 in Belém in 2025, the Brazilian Presidency advanced major forest-finance initiatives, including the launch of the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) and renewed political and financial momentum around land tenure through the Forest and Land Tenure Pledge. This expected increase in funding will require Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations—and the intermediary channels that support them—to have the capacities needed to receive, manage, and transparently disburse funds at scale. The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) has set an ambitious goal of allocating 20% of its funding to support the actions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities by 2030. Furthermore, under the GEF's 9th replenishment, there is a target of directing 20% of resources toward supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities[26].

Closing these gaps requires a shift to “fit-for-purpose” biodiversity finance that is led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, flexible and multi-year, language- and context-appropriate, and mutually accountable to donors and communities alike[27]. In this way, compliance systems can support rather than distract from the core work of territorial defense and biodiversity stewardship.

Drivers

The major drivers of the trends behind the problem statement are the following:

National policy and regulatory environments: The extent to which biodiversity conservation and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights are integrated into national legal frameworks, development plans, land-use policies, and climate strategies is a decisive factor shaping the enabling environment for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Strong legal and institutional alignment between environmental, social, and economic policies can facilitate inclusive conservation finance, while fragmented or

inconsistent policy regimes may perpetuate barriers to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' participation. National recognition of customary land tenure, governance systems, mechanisms for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), and alignment with commitments under the KMGBF and the Paris Agreement influences Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' access to, and control over, biodiversity-related resources and incentives.

Tenure security and land governance systems: Where Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land and resource rights are unrecognized, weakly enforced, or where customary governance systems are not adequately supported, their ability to sustain traditional practices and protect their lives and territories is undermined. Weak tenure security limits legal recourse and effective responses when faced with competing or illegal land-use change (e.g., mining, agribusiness expansion, logging, or infrastructure) and contributes to persistent conflict and encroachment. In turn, insecure tenure and weak governance constrain long-term territorial planning, sustainable resource management, and equitable benefit-sharing — raising risks for both communities and donors and ultimately weakening conservation outcomes.

Availability and accessibility of tailored financial mechanisms: The limited availability, inadequate scale, and restricted accessibility of financial mechanisms tailored to the realities, priorities, and governance systems of Indigenous Peoples and local communities constitute a major constraint on their ability to lead and sustain conservation actions. Where financial instruments are poorly adapted, overly standardized, or embedded in complex administrative and fiduciary requirements, Indigenous Peoples and local communities face structural barriers to direct access and effective use of funds. In the absence of sufficiently inclusive, flexible, and community-designed mechanisms — accompanied by appropriate capacity-strengthening for financial management — Indigenous Peoples and local communities often remain reliant on intermediaries. This reliance on intermediaries can dilute local decision-making authority, reduce efficiency, and weaken local ownership and accountability of conservation outcomes.

Urban migration: The migration of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to urban areas — driven by economic pressures, social aspirations, insecurity, or climate stress — has profound implications for community cohesion and biodiversity stewardship. Outmigration often leads to the erosion of traditional knowledge systems and reduced human capacity for local natural resource management. Rural-urban dynamics shape the social and economic foundations of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement in biodiversity conservation.

Shifting donor priorities: The evolving landscape of international aid and philanthropy represents a critical driver of future access to biodiversity finance. Donor attention may increasingly shift toward global crises, or geopolitical concerns, economic and social development goals, potentially reducing funds available for rights-based conservation. At the same time, emerging frameworks, such as nature finance, impact investing, and loss-and-damage mechanisms offer new opportunities — yet are contingent upon a range of enabling conditions: including the respective need for donors to adopt a rights-based approach and be more responsive to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' realities, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities to have the institutional readiness to engage with donor requirements (albeit better tailored ones). Limited predictability of funding and weak alignment between donor agendas, requirements, and community-defined priorities and capacities remain key factors constraining the flow of direct finance to Indigenous Peoples and local community-led conservation and the scaling of conservation impact.

Climate change impacts: Climate change is a compounding driver, influencing both biodiversity and the socio-economic resilience of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Increasing frequency of droughts, floods, and storms, alongside shifting species distributions and ecosystem degradation, negatively affect traditional livelihoods, knowledge, innovations and practices, and the ecological integrity of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' lands and territories. Climate change is also affecting Indigenous and local food systems, traditional agricultural and fisheries practices, and nature-based local economies, increasing out migration, food insecurity, and loss of traditional ecological knowledge. These pressures not only threaten biodiversity but also reshape financial needs and risk profiles, making climate adaptation and resilience-building integral components of conservation finance design.

Future narratives

The four future narratives below describe plausible scenarios in the absence or presence of any additional intervention, including support from the GEF. They represent potential changes in the broader context within which the HCI project will operate, and therefore the conditions to which the project design must remain robust. They are developed against a backdrop of increasing climate risks, which are assumed to intensify across all scenarios and continue to place growing pressure on biodiversity, livelihoods, and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories.

Based on the drivers identified above, two primary axes of uncertainty are defined. The first relates to the global financing landscape, which may range from declining to sustaining financing flows of international public and private finance for biodiversity and climate

action. While project-level advocacy may influence how funds are accessed or allocated, overall trends in official development assistance, philanthropy, and global environmental finance are largely exogenous to the project.

The second axis of uncertainty concerns the national enabling environment, particularly the extent to which national policies, regulatory frameworks, and tenure security support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, territorial governance, and access to finance. This axis ranges from enabling contexts—characterized by supportive policies, recognition of customary tenure, and political openness to rights-based conservation—to restrictive or volatile environments, where policy reversals, weakened land rights, or extractive-oriented development pathways constrain Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations' ability to secure funding and exercise stewardship over their territories. While the project may contribute to advocacy efforts at national level, these dynamics remain uncertain and politically contingent. Together, these axes generate a set of future narratives framed around varying levels of global financing availability and national policy and tenure conditions, under conditions of escalating climate stress affecting all Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories.

Narrative 1: Enabling context, sustained resources (Stable global financing + enabling national policies and tenure security): Global financing for biodiversity and climate action remains stable, and national policy environments broadly support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights. Legal recognition of tenure, functioning Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) mechanisms, and policy alignment with biodiversity and climate commitments enable Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to access and manage funds directly. Although climate impacts intensify, strong culturally rooted governance systems and institutional capacity allow communities to channel finance toward adaptation, conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and territorial management, sustaining biodiversity and socioeconomic outcomes and reinforcing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' roles as environmental stewards.

Narrative 2: Constrained context, sustained resources (Stable global financing + restrictive or unstable national policies and tenure insecurity): Despite stable global finance, restrictive national policies, weak tenure security, or political shifts limit Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' ability to access funding directly. Resources are often mediated through intermediaries or diverted toward short-term priorities. Climate impacts intensify pressures on territories, and while funding is available, misalignment with local governance systems, nature-based economies, and rights constraints reduces effectiveness, equity, and long-term conservation impact.

Narrative 3: Sustained partnership, fragile stewardship (Declining global financing + enabling national policies and tenure security): Global financing declines due to shifting donor priorities and fiscal constraints, but national policies and tenure frameworks are supportive of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights. Strong governance, legal recognition, and institutional cohesion allow some Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to remain competitive for limited funds and to leverage alternative mechanisms. However, shrinking resources constrain the scale and continuity of action, forcing difficult trade-offs between conservation, adaptation, and basic livelihood needs under escalating climate stress.

Narrative 4: Constrained context, scarce resources (Decreasing global financing + restrictive or unstable national policies and tenure insecurity): Global financing contracts sharply while national policy environments deteriorate or become volatile, including rollbacks in tenure security and reduced recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights. Intensifying climate impacts, combined with limited access to finance, exacerbate territorial pressures such as tenure insecurity, conflict, out-migration and loss of traditional ecological knowledge. Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations struggle to sustain governance systems and conservation efforts, biodiversity loss accelerates, and inequalities deepen as Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' stewardship roles are increasingly marginalized.

In this context of uncertainty regarding the global financing landscape and national enabling environments, the HCI project intervention logic is meant to be catalytic and multi-level, addressing structural barriers to Indigenous Peoples and local communities access to biodiversity finance and decision-making, while recognizing the political and contextual uncertainty of national policy environments. Rather than directly reforming national legal and policy frameworks, the project focuses on influencing enabling conditions for Indigenous Peoples and local communities' direct access to multilateral finance and strengthening Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' collective capacity across scales.

At the national and regional levels, the project seeks to provide direct financial and technical support to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to advance self-determined priorities, strengthen institutional and fiduciary capacities, and enhance collective actions for territorial governance and conservation (Components 1 and 2). This support is intended to increase readiness to access, manage, and deploy funding, while reinforcing internal governance, accountability, and coordination among Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

At the global level, the project will support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' cross-learning, as well as representation and strategic communications and advocacy in biodiversity finance forums, policy dialogues, and funding platforms (Components 3 and 4). Through this engagement, HCI seeks to influence norms, standards, and practices within the biodiversity finance ecosystem—promoting more rights-based, inclusive, and accessible funding modalities for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Together, these complementary pathways are expected to shift incentives and practices within the biodiversity-funding landscape, improve alignment between donor requirements and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' realities, and create conditions for increased, more direct, and more effective financing for Indigenous Peoples- and local community-led conservation. While broader global financing trends and national policy trajectories remain largely exogenous, HCI is designed to reduce structural barriers, mitigate risks, and enhance the ability of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to navigate and influence these systems.

Baseline

There already exists a diverse landscape of conservation-focused Indigenous People- and local community-related initiatives. They can be organized under four main categories: (i) policy and governance advocacy and influence; (ii) access to funding and financial mechanisms; (iii) institutional and capacity strengthening; and (iv) knowledge generation and learning. Together they provide an important baseline, but remain fragmented, under-capitalized and mostly project-based rather than systemic. As detailed in greater detail throughout the baseline, the GEF, in particular, has a long history and strong track record of supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities: engaging them through more than 220 medium and full-size projects and more than 2,300 projects under the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) between 1991 and 2014 [28]; developing policies and guidelines to appropriately engage with Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and instituting an advisory body advising the GEF Secretariat on matters related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Policy and governance advocacy, and influence

Since its inception in 1991, the GEF has acknowledged the role of Indigenous Peoples in the development of GEF policies, programs and processes - both as contributors to the different stages of project development and also as partners and stakeholders in the identification, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages [29]. The GEF was among the first international financial institutions to adopt a dedicated policy for engaging civil society, including Indigenous Peoples, which serves as the foundation for Indigenous Peoples' participation across all areas of the GEF's work [20]. The CBD, at its 11th Conference of the Parties in 2012, called on the GEF to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in strengthening their capacity to engage in legal, policy, and decision-making processes [31]. The GEF also helps Indigenous Peoples and local communities enhance their capacities and traditional knowledge related to genetic resources to support implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing [32].

Across major environmental conventions — including ones that the GEF serves as the financial mechanism for, such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and others like Ramsar, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of wild animals (CMS) — Indigenous Peoples and local communities are being progressively recognized not only as stakeholders but as rights-holders and custodians.

The CBD has long had a formal space on traditional knowledge via article 8(j) which was supported with the establishment of a working group in 1998 and the adoption of its program of work adopted at COP 5 (2000). The KMGBF underscores that Parties should respect Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights in all related activities. The first meeting of the recently established **Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (SB8J)** was held in November 2025 in Panama. The CBD now has a permanent body to address issues related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, which replaces the previous ad-hoc working group. The establishment of SB8J gives Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations a clear and permanent entry point for advocacy within the CBD framework, enabling them to shape agendas and provide direct input on issues such as rights, funding, tenure and traditional knowledge. By design, SB8J also helps mainstream Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' considerations across all CBD and Protocol workstreams, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, governance and knowledge are reflected not just in a single track, but in decisions on finance, planning, monitoring and implementation, more broadly.

The Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acknowledges that climate action should respect obligations including the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and Article 7 on adaptation highlights the role of Indigenous and local knowledge systems. Further, in 2015, the COP established the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) for sharing experiences and best practices on mitigation and adaptation. In 2024, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) also formalized participation spaces and COP-level recognition through the first Indigenous Peoples' Forum, and the establishment of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' caucuses. In addition, the Ramsar convention on wetlands recognizes Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' cultural values and knowledge and has some of the earliest and most practical convention guidance on Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' participation in wetland management.

Global and regional Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' networks play a central role in advancing territorial rights, participation and recognition in environmental and development agendas. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are represented by a wide range of local, subnational, national and regional organizations and alliances, including women's and youth organizations. Platforms such as the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) – representing some 35 million people in 24 countries through six regional organizations – advocate for full realization of collective rights, secure tenure, and direct access to climate and biodiversity finance. Networks in Asia, Africa and Latin America are actively engaging in international fora and negotiations to ensure that the KMGBF and other global commitments translate into concrete changes for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories. Regional Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' alliances include (but are not limited to) Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) representing 46 members in 14 countries in Asia, Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) representing 511 Indigenous peoples across 9 countries of the Amazon, Mesoamerican Forest Peoples Alliance (AMPB[33] representing 10 members across 6 countries – that together represent 140 local organizations), Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC) representing 135 IP organizations in 21 African countries, and Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Central African Forest Ecosystems (REPALEAC), an HCI Component 1 partner, representing 120 Indigenous Peoples across eight Central African countries, and the recently formed Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for Conservation in Africa (AICA) [34]. The networks and alliances translate dispersed local struggles into visible movements that have advocated for and achieved significant policy change.

Conservation organizations are supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities as part of their strategy. For instance, IUCN is partnering with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) on the [ACT30](#) initiative to bring together governments, Indigenous Peoples and local communities to map diverse and effective pathways to conservation. WWF-US is working with GATC in the context of the TFFF and WWF-International is partnering with GATC to build a collaborative agenda of action. In addition, WWF is supporting the [People Protecting Landscapes and Seascapes](#) (PPLS) initiative which aims to counter biodiversity loss, climate change and environmental decline through supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities in advocacy, securing and strengthening their rights to land and occupied territories.

Access to funding and financial mechanisms

A growing set of actors is working to increase Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' access to funding, both through dedicated facilities and within broader conservation and climate finance programs. Some of these are Non-Government Organization (NGO)-led and some are Indigenous People- and local community-led.

Many Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' networks have already established, or are in the process of establishing, Indigenous People- and/or local community-led funding mechanisms that re-grant resources within their regions and constituencies. In 2025, these mechanisms formed a network of Indigenous-led funds (ILFs) from the global South to enhance cooperation, joint advocacy and dialogue with donors. At the global level, GATC's [Shandia Platform](#) – which aims to mobilize 300M USD over 10 years – is an example of efforts to facilitate more direct financial flows to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Other examples include the AYNi Fund established by the International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF), which has accompanied and co-invested in female IP-led projects across the world, and the Pawanka Fund, which has 80% of its budget dedicated for direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. At the regional level, Indigenous People- and local community-led funds include the Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Trust (IPAS) and the NAAPU Indigenous Women Fund. Under the Shandia Platform, the Indigenous Amazonian Fund is currently under establishment as its regional operational arm. The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests has established the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, an HCI Component 1 Partner. There are also several national-level IP-led funds, such as Podáali Fund (Brazil), also an HCI Component 1 Partner, Nusantara Fund (Indonesia), the Na-ah Illahee (Canada) and Colorado Plateau Foundation (USA).

Several dedicated financing mechanisms complement these ILFs and local community-led funds. The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), through mechanisms such as its [Strategic Response Mechanism](#), provides timely, flexible grants (typically USD 10,000–100,000) to support Indigenous People- and local community-led advocacy and legal action on land and resource rights, allowing communities and organizations to respond to emerging threats and opportunities. The [Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative](#) (CLARIFI), co-led by RRI and Campaign for Nature, and co-funded by BMZ, provides grants for self-determined Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ efforts to secure tenure and advance rights-based conservation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The [Tenure Facility](#), an HCI co-financier, similarly works in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to strengthen their tenure and ability to protect and benefit from their lands, territories and resources. [Nia Tero](#) provides grants and accompaniment to Indigenous guardianship initiatives, particularly in the Amazon and Pacific.

Furthermore, Conservation trust funds such as the Micronesia Conservation Trust have developed systems and processes to channel funding and technical support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities as part of a broader landscape and seascape conservation approach. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Rainforest Foundation Norway also launched a fund in 2023 for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to protect forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Kawari Fund provides small (\$10k) to medium-sized (\$150k) grants to Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and subnational governments to advance rights-based jurisdictional forest carbon finance initiatives.

Multilateral and international institutions also provide targeted funding windows for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In 2010, the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), through its Forest Investment Program, established the [Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities](#) (DGM), co-funded by the German government, which is investing \$80 million globally to support community-led, context-specific programs that draw on local expertise to advance sustainable forest stewardship and elevate Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ voices in local, national, and global climate action. The DGM is governed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities who are both the leaders and beneficiaries of DGM activities. In addition, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) supports Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ conservation initiatives, including collaboration with the ICCA Consortium to strengthen “territories of life”. IFAD’s Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF) provides small grants to IP organizations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean for self-determined priorities. The World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) includes funding for capacity building for Indigenous Peoples and civil society, and the EnABLE program, co-funded by the German government, aims to enhance inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other marginalized groups in emissions reduction programs under the Climate Emissions Reduction Facility. Launched in 2025, the TFFF is a proposed large-scale, long-term mechanism to compensate tropical forest countries for maintaining standing forests, with a requirement that at least 20% of payments directly reach Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Private philanthropic foundations, including those in the Forest Tenure Funders Group and the Protecting Our Planet Challenge, alongside some donor governments such as Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, are increasingly directing resources toward Indigenous People- and local community-related initiatives on territorial rights, forests and nature-based solutions. Among others, Germany announced in 2022 an investment of 85 Million Euros in efforts to strengthen the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in international nature conservation. Germany also supports the project “Living Land” in Brazil, which aims to strengthen the protection of human rights and particularly environmental rights of Traditional Peoples and Communities within their ancestral territories by developing innovative digital solutions.

Furthermore, the KMGBFF’s Policy on Allocation of Resources includes one portfolio-level target dedicated to supporting actions by Indigenous Peoples and local communities: “an aspirational programming share of 20% at the portfolio level by 2030 from the total amount of resources allocated under the GBFF is to support actions by Indigenous Peoples and local communities[35]. For its fourth round of replenishment, 29% of the GBFF funds will go towards supporting actions by[36]. For its 9th replenishment, the GEF has formally adopted the same 20% of funds target towards supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Through the aforementioned SGP, the GEF has also strived to promote social inclusion including that of Indigenous Peoples and local communities: since 1992, the SGP has delivered about USD 60 million to Indigenous groups, amounting to approximately 15% of the SGP portfolio. Responding to recommendations from the IPAG, Indigenous Leaders and the UNPFII, the GEF, under its 7th replenishment, funded the Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI) -- as dedicated and direct financing to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, co-implemented by Conservation International (CI) and IUCN -- which aims to support Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ efforts to steward land, waters, and natural resources to deliver Global Environmental Benefits through large-scale and longer-term conservation finance for Indigenous-led organizations.

Conservation organizations are working across a range of the above and other initiatives, such as IUCN’s establishment of Podong and CI’s launching of [Weave](#). Notably, the Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) model brings together coalitions of partners including conservation organizations, governments, philanthropies, local community organizations, multilateral development banks, international financial institutions and private sector to support Indigenous Peoples, local communities and governments to

continue stewardship of their natural places to deliver enduring protection. Building on the first PfP, ARPA, in Brazil, WWF worked closely with Indigenous groups, the Brazilian government, FUNBIO and other partners including the GEF to launch ARPA Comunidades (Amazon Regional Protected Areas - [Áreas Protegidas da Amazônia](#)) in 2025. This follows a project finance for permanence model in which USD120M were mobilized to strengthen community resilience and promote the sustainable use of natural resources in 60 protected areas spanning 58.6 million acres of new protected areas, to improve biodiversity conservation, increase sustainable community livelihoods, and reduce deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. This year, a global coalition of the Enduring Earth partnership (Pew Charitable Trusts, TNC, WWF and ZomaLab) and key partners like the GEF, launched [Namibia for Life, Africa's first PFP](#) initiative, and Herencia Maya, the first state-led PfP. In collaboration with Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Tourism, the Community Conservation Fund of Namibia, the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organizations and other key partners, Namibia for Life secured an initial \$63 million in public and private funding to permanently conserve more than 24% of the country and bolster livelihood opportunities for 283,000 people. [Herencia Maya](#), in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, will secure quality freshwater sources for more than a million inhabitants and directly benefit people living in protected areas - nearly 40% of whom identify as Indigenous Peoples - ensuring cultural identity and nature sustain each other by supporting sustainable practices, farming systems, and community values rooted in the Maya worldview. These are a few examples of NGOs collaborating through the Enduring Earth partnership to support Indigenous People- and local community-led conservation.

Integrated capacity and institutional strengthening

Many of these funding mechanisms are accompanied by significant capacity-strengthening and institutional support for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations. The Tenure Facility combines grants with legal and technical assistance to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations' ability to navigate land administration systems, manage projects and engage with governments. CLARIFI and RRI's activities often include support for organizational strengthening so that Indigenous People and local community partners can more effectively use and leverage resources for rights and conservation outcomes.

Conservation organizations have likewise developed dedicated capacity-strengthening programs with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. CI runs the Indigenous Leaders Conservation Fellowship to strengthen IP leadership and technical skills. WWF's portfolio includes multiple initiatives explicitly aimed at strengthening Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' capacities and leadership in conservation across all major regions, such as the People Protecting Landscapes and Seascapes initiative, the Coastal Communities Initiative, and Stewarding Landscapes and Seascapes, all of which combine technical, organizational and governance support with financial resources.

As part of its efforts to engage with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the GEF through the SGPs launched the Indigenous People's Fellowship Initiative in 2016 to respond to expressed needs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for targeted capacity development by supporting their advocacy work on global environmental and sustainable development issues, while also advancing the work of their communities, organizations and networks at national, regional and global levels¹⁰⁰. In 2023-2024, the SGP supported the creation and management of Indigenous Peoples and Communities Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs)¹⁰¹. The GEF7-funded ICI also contributed to providing tailored capacity-building plans, technical training, and leadership development through the Inclusive Conservation [Makinisi Learning Academy](#), promoted cross-regional learning exchanges, partnerships, and communities of practice to strengthen collaboration and knowledge sharing. The GEF Fonseca Leadership Program was launched in GEF8 and targets youth, including Indigenous youth, providing support for formal graduate academic training and conservation field work. The GEF will continue to support capacity development for Indigenous and local community organizations in GEF9, including integration of diverse knowledge systems to achieve GEBs.

Inclusive conservation knowledge generation, learning and practice

A substantial body of knowledge, tools and learning processes on Indigenous People- and local community-led conservation and finance is emerging. Organizations such as WWF, IUCN, CI, Rainforest Foundation Norway and others including academic institutions are generating research, guidance and monitoring frameworks on inclusive conservation, rights-based approaches and the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in delivering biodiversity and climate outcomes. WWF, for example, has launched the [Inclusive Conservation Academy](#) and co-authored the [State of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Lands and Territories](#) report and co-led the development of the OECM [assessment tool](#) and [guidelines](#) that advance the recognition of Indigenous and traditional territories under KMGBF Target 3. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) also supports the newly launched Conservation

Monitoring Effectiveness Techniques (COMET), which is a web repository for monitoring methods that includes biocultural indicators and traditional knowledge.

Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' platforms such as GATC and the Shandia Platform, membership organizations like the ICCA Consortium, and NGOs like Forest Peoples Programme, act as producers and stewards of knowledge, documenting territorial governance, biocultural indicators and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' solutions. Multilateral programs (e.g., SGP, IPAF, FCPF) are also generating lessons, but these are not yet consistently consolidated in an Indigenous People- and local community-led knowledge ecosystem that directly shapes global finance and policy design.

Some key lessons learned from GEF-7 ICI and recommendations from existing literature are provided in Annex I.

Project barriers

Barrier 1: Insufficient financing not fit-for-purpose Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territorial security and stewardship

Despite increased international attention, the volume of finance that reaches Indigenous Peoples and local communities remains far below what is required to secure territorial and resource rights and sustain long-term stewardship. When it does reach Indigenous Peoples and local communities, funding is often not "fit-for-purpose," which would entail being led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, mutually accountable, flexible, long-term, gender inclusive, timely and accessible.

Barrier 2: Complex multilateral donor procedures incompatible to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge and governance systems

While large multilateral donors are making an effort to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities, their structures and bureaucracies are complex and require lengthy institutional change processes to effectively provide direct support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Access to these funds requires specialist knowledge and extensive experience. Although Indigenous Peoples and local communities have systems of governance, accountability, and administration to manage their activities, these align with their worldviews, knowledge systems, spiritual beliefs and cultural practices – i.e., differ from those used by most global funders. While regional and international organizations may play an intermediary role, their structures to meet the demands of donors add another layer between Indigenous Peoples and local communities and the donors, diluting the funding that reaches the ground. Indigenous People- and local community-led funding mechanisms have been established to deliver more timely, flexible, and predictable funding. However, most are newly established and need institutional strengthening to access more complex funding and deliver it to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations at the scale of the demands. For example, an emerging trend from the >800 expressions of interest received to become HCI Component 1 partners was that a majority applicant organizations did not have adequate systems, policies or processes in place to meet minimum standards of multilateral donors like the GEF. The gap between mainstream models of conservation and development aid, on one hand, and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizational realities and knowledge systems, on the other, must be bridged from both sides with mutual respect and strength-building to meet in the middle. This includes access to technology and technical expertise, if it is requested by Indigenous Peoples and local communities to support their activities.

Barrier 3: Limited participation, influence, and decision-making authority in national, regional, and global environment and development arenas

Indigenous Peoples and local communities have historically been marginalized, excluded, and subjected to a myriad of human rights abuses within the context of global power structures. Although progress has been made (for instance, the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights in the KMGBF), Indigenous Peoples and local communities still lack equitable influence on the decisions made in many national and global decision-making bodies, which affect their lives and that could benefit global biodiversity. These include processes relating to biodiversity as well as human rights, climate, desertification, international trade in endangered species, as well as various finance-related processes.

Barrier 4: Limited external recognition and understanding of Indigenous and traditional knowledge and successful solutions for achieving GEBs

Due to the marginalization and exclusion noted above, there remains limited external recognition and valuation of Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems and Indigenous Peoples and local community-led stewardship models that deliver GEBs

alongside local social, economic and cultural benefits. There is also limited accessible evidence of best practices to advance a rights-based approach to inclusive conservation.

Project approach, intervention strategy and incremental reasoning

The project applies a systems change approach to contribute to transforming the enabling conditions that determine Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' ability to access global biodiversity and climate finance and influence relevant frameworks. Systems change recognizes that barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in financing and stewardship are not isolated problems but outcomes of deeply interlinked legal, financial, institutional, and socio-cultural systems. Following the principles outlined in [The Art of Systems Change](#) (CISL, 2022) developed by WWF, HCI intervenes across multiple levels to unlock more equitable pathways for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to deliver GEBs, alongside other interlinked (e.g., social, economic, political) benefits.

The project identifies leverage points where strategic interventions can shift the functioning of the broader system. These include: (i) Policy and institutional levers, by strengthening the recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights and the influence of their governance systems within biodiversity finance frameworks; (ii) Financial architecture levers, through the promotion of inclusive, flexible mechanisms that enable direct Indigenous Peoples and local communities' access to multilateral finance; (iii) Capacity and network levers, by investing in sustained, culturally-grounded capacity development systems and peer-to-peer learning among Indigenous Peoples and local communities organizations; and (iv) Narrative and knowledge levers, by amplifying Indigenous Peoples and local communities' voices in global decision-making arenas and transforming perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from beneficiaries to co-investors in biodiversity outcomes.

These levers work in concert to shift the current equilibrium—where finance is centralized, risk-averse, and exclusionary—toward a more inclusive, adaptive, and rights-based system. At the local level, the project channels resources through Indigenous Peoples and local communities -led institutions to implement on-the-ground actions that strengthen territorial governance, secure rights, restore and sustainably manage lands, waters and ecosystems, and diversify nature-positive livelihoods, while generating evidence and learning that can inform broader reform. At the global level, the project supports improved representation and influence of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in relevant fora, contributing to shifts in norms, criteria, safeguards and financing approaches that determine how resources are designed, governed, and delivered.

The incremental value of GEF-8 support lies in moving from fragmented, project-by-project support to a coherent, multi-level intervention that links local stewardship with finance and policy reform, strengthens Indigenous Peoples and local communities -led funding pathways, and builds the capacities and knowledge base required for long-term impact. Through this approach, HCI contributes not only to expanding Indigenous Peoples and local communities' ability to access financial resources, but also to strengthening the governance and stewardship systems that underpin biodiversity conservation globally, positioning Indigenous Peoples and local communities as central partners and rights-holders in delivering lasting GEBs.

Table 1 in Annex J presents the HCI actors, primary roles, and envisaged benefits from the project.

Lessons learned and coordination and complementarity with relevant GEF and non-GEF initiatives

For Indigenous People- and local community-led on-the-ground action, HCI builds on the proven direct-grant mechanics of GEF SGP and Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas – Global Support Initiative (ICCA-GSI), especially participatory selection, community-suitable grant sizes, and light reporting, providing key lessons to the HCI grantmaking approach. HCI learns from TerrIndigena, Transformative Pathways, and the Brazil GBFF project (Ywy Ipuranguete) on financing self-determined territorial plans and on pairing grants with sustained organizational and monitoring support; these projects show that durable biodiversity outcomes come when funding follows Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance systems rather than externally designed activities. HCI will also draw directly from the WB/CIF climate-finance access project on what fiduciary, financial management, and project-development capacities are prerequisite for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to handle larger funds and will align its support packages to those milestones.

Building on these lessons, HCI is designed to complement and coordinate with existing GEF and non-GEF initiatives within the Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' conservation finance ecosystem. For representation and influence, HCI has clear complementarities with Indigenous Peoples' Network for Change ([IPNC](#)), Podong, Communities, Local Outcomes and Regional Science ([COLOURS](#)) initiative, and Our Future Forests, which demonstrate effective models for building policy leadership pipelines, coordinated caucusing, and the translation of territorial results into negotiation-ready evidence. To the extent possible, HCI will

seize opportunities to coordinate with the GEF-7 ICI, its predecessor, including on Indigenous- and community-directed governance, and global knowledge exchange, while complementing ICI through a stronger focus on systemic barriers to Indigenous Peoples and local communities' access to finance.

In this way, HCI fills a distinct niche by operating at a larger grant scale than SGP and similar mechanisms, targeting ILFs, federations, and networks to build a pipeline of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations with the institutional readiness to manage increased and more direct funding flows and associated fiduciary requirements. The GEF HCI is founded on the understanding that comprehensively addressing the resource-related challenges faced by local Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations requires interventions at multiple strategic points within the broader ecosystem that facilitates finances reaching the ground - where they are most needed and most effective. It will also seek opportunities to work closely with the GEF-7 ICI Implementing Agencies and partners to ensure synergies and the integration of emerging lessons.

Annex K presents the list of GEF and non-GEF projects relevant for the HCI project, their synergies and lessons learned

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Project Objective and Theory of Change

HCI's objective is ***to increase Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizational capacities and ability to access sustainable finance at scale for territorial stewardship to deliver social, economic, cultural, and Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs)***. The project seeks to improve the management of approximately 2.17 million ha of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, restore about 12,200 ha of land, and increase land-tenure security in the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities across roughly 230,000 ha of landscapes, while contributing to climate change mitigation through avoided deforestation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable land management. GHG emission reductions will be quantified once beneficiaries have been identified by partner organizations at project inception, and by the first Project Implementation Report (PIR). It is expected that the project will directly benefit an estimated 110,000 people across three continents, including by strengthening sustainable livelihood systems and income, food sovereignty, sociocultural wellbeing and local resilience through Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' stewardship of biodiversity-rich lands, waters, and ecosystems.

The theory of change (ToC) is grounded in the understanding that Indigenous Peoples and local communities already protect and sustainably manage many of the planet's most biodiverse and carbon-rich ecosystems, but that their stewardship is constrained, among other things, by systemic barriers in the global funding architecture, as well as by mismatches between mainstream aid models and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance systems, and by persistent gaps in territorial security, long-term financial planning, and recognition in decision-making arenas, which in turn undermine communities' abilities to sustain economies, culturally appropriate food systems, and climate-resilient livelihoods connected to their territories and natural resources:

if

Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, knowledge, and governance systems are recognized and embedded in policy and finance frameworks;

Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, ILFs and similar organizations can access greater volumes of predictable, flexible, and culturally appropriate finance;

Indigenous Peoples and local communities have stronger institutional, technical, and strategic capacities to manage these financial resources and govern territories; and

Self-determined Indigenous- and community-led sub-projects are implemented;

Then

Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance and stewardship of lands, territories and resources will be strengthened and scaled, catalyzing pathways toward sustained delivery of GEBs, while also generating long-term socioeconomic benefits through strengthened sustainable customary livelihoods, diversified local economies, food security, women's and youth participation and leadership, territorial governance, cultural continuity, and increased resilience to climate and economic shocks.

In order to alleviate the identified barriers, the project will act on three key levers – finance systems, organizational capacity, and influence – in order to contribute to long-lasting system changes in the way that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are able to access funding through more inclusive and self-determined processes. In turn, it is expected that these system changes will lead to better protected and conserved ecosystems with direct contributions to the objectives of the KMGBF, while enabling Indigenous Peoples and local communities to strengthen community wellbeing and self-determined economic development rooted in traditional knowledge and sustainable management of lands, territories, and natural resources.

The first causal pathway focuses on contributing to strengthening capacities of Indigenous-led Funds (ILFs) and other Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to directly access biodiversity and climate-related finance. The expected result – as part of several interventions in and changes to the biodiversity conventional funding ecosystems noted above – is more direct access to GEF resources for Indigenous Peoples and local communities through HCI, thus directly addressing the under-developed funding landscape (Barrier 1). Improved direct access to finance will also enable Indigenous People- and local community-led organizations to invest in locally determined livelihood priorities, including agroecology, nature-based economies such as eco-tourism and non-timber forest product value chains, sustainable community forest and fisheries management, women- and youth-led enterprises, and other sustainable livelihood activities that reinforce biodiversity restoration and stewardship while strengthening household resilience and local economies.

The second pathway centers on self-strengthening Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations' technical, institutional, and strategic capacities through Components 1 and 2. **Component 1** will support Indigenous People- and local community-led partners to implement self-defined self-strengthening plans. Training, mentoring, and support will be self-determined and personalized, focusing on topics such as financial management, gender and socially inclusive project design and reporting, monitoring and evaluation, risk management, and the articulation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' accountability practices in ways that funders can understand and accept. By investing in collective needs across existing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' networks, **Component 2** will seek to embed peer-to-peer learning and capacity-strengthening within Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' platforms and organizations, rather than as one-off, externally driven interventions. If these efforts are successful, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, especially ILFs, will be better equipped to access and manage larger and more complex funding flows, to plan holistically for their long-term financial sustainability, and to sustain the governance functions that underpin territorial security and nature stewardship, thereby addressing Barrier 2 and contributing to overcoming Barrier 3.

The third pathway aims to increase Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in decision-making arenas and knowledge systems. **Component 3** will grow the capacity of Indigenous and local communities' youth to engage in key international and potentially regional fora, and support experienced Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' negotiators to participate in processes in which Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' influence over biodiversity and climate finance decision-making and funding flows remain limited, while ensuring gender balance. By doing so, it will help ensure that Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' priorities, rights, and knowledge are upheld and inform the design of biodiversity and climate finance, the implementation of the KMGBF, and contribute to related climate and land degradation agendas, thereby addressing barriers 3 and 4. In parallel, **Component 4** will document and disseminate evidence of Indigenous People- and local community-led conservation and finance solutions, including the role of Indigenous and traditional knowledge and biocultural indicators in achieving and monitoring GEBs (Barrier 4). This includes documenting and elevating evidence of how Indigenous People- and local community-led conservation systems sustain livelihoods, support local food systems, strengthen women's and youth leadership, and generate socioeconomic benefits through sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. As these examples gain visibility and credibility, they are expected to influence multilateral and philanthropic donors, governments, and private actors to adopt more inclusive, rights-based models of conservation and finance, thereby addressing barriers related to limited recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge and marginalization in decision-making arenas. **Component 5** enables Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to demonstrate quantifiable impact linked directly to financial support provided

under the HCI and to provide transferrable insights about ways in which Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge, innovations and practices can be used by funding partners as part of monitoring and evaluation processes.

Taken together, these pathways converge toward the sustained delivery of GEBs alongside linked social, ecological and cultural benefits. As Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations gain improved access to finance, strengthen their institutional and territorial governance capacities, and increase their recognition and influence in biodiversity and climate decision-making, they are better positioned to secure land and resource rights, uphold and enforce culturally-rooted conservation rules, and implement locally defined restoration and sustainable use practices. With improved resourcing and stronger governance, Indigenous Peoples and local communities can maintain and expand stewardship across their lands, territories and resources, resulting in: improved management of forests, freshwater, and coastal-marine ecosystems; reduced deforestation and degradation; restoration of degraded areas; strengthened ecological connectivity; and climate mitigation co-benefits through the protection of carbon-rich ecosystems. By anchoring conservation finance and governance in self-determined Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' systems—and tracking outcomes through both scientific and biocultural indicators—the project creates enabling conditions for durable stewardship at scale, directly contributing to KMGBF targets and the generation of measurable GEBs, while elevating the socioeconomic foundations that enable Indigenous Peoples and local communities to sustain conservation outcomes over the long term.

This theory of change is built on various assumptions, risks and enablers listed below and represented in the ToC diagram:

Assumptions

A1. National policies and regulatory frameworks do not regress and continue to move (even slowly) toward stronger recognition and operationalization of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights and stewardship, providing broader space for policy dialogue and uptake of project lessons.

A2. Tenure situations in participating countries remain at least stable or moderately improving, allowing Indigenous Peoples and local communities to plan and invest in long-term stewardship and to be seen as strong partners by funders.

A3. Global biodiversity and climate finance for Indigenous Peoples and local communities remains moderately stable; and a critical mass of donors and foundations are willing to financially support ILFs and other Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, adapt procedures, and co-develop tailored instruments rather than reverting to highly centralized, intermediated, or purely extractive models.

A4. Migration and social change do not hollow out core Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' culturally-rooted governance structures; youth and women wish to be engaged through meaningful leadership and livelihood opportunities strengthened by conservation and ecosystem services.

A5. Climate impacts and related socio-environmental pressures do not irreversibly affect Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories.

Risks

R1. Changes in government, political backlash, or nationalist agendas could roll back recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, restrict civic space, criminalize or endanger environmental human rights defenders.

R2. Competing interests could lead to new or escalating conflicts over Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories, or legal uncertainty and deter investment, and undermine conservation outcomes.

R3. Donors and funds revert to centralized, highly intermediated models; ILFs remain under-capitalized and over-burdened.

R4. High out-migration, especially of youth, weakens Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' institutions and traditional knowledge systems, undermining stewardship capacity.

R5. Shift in donor priorities: Indigenous People- and local community-focused work becomes marginal and Indigenous People- and local community-led organizations cannot secure funding, rendering them unable to maintain capacities, governance structures, staff, monitoring activities and conservation activities after HCI.

R6. Intensifying climate shocks, conflicts, and environmental degradation, outpace Indigenous People- and local community-led adaptation and ecosystem restoration; crisis response displaces conservation and long-term planning.

R7. Despite capacity strengthening, multilateral funding requirements for management and monitoring overwhelm Indigenous People- and local community-led partners – diverting efforts away from implementation to deliver GEBs.

Enablers

The project will leverage four enablers that increase the plausibility and feasibility of the project's intended three causal pathways:

E1. Shift towards Indigenous People- and local community-led and inclusive biodiversity and climate finance:

Directly supports the finance pathway by creating a receptive environment for Indigenous People- and local community-tailored instruments, simplified access modalities, and for ILFs;

Reinforces the capacity pathway by increasing the value of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations having strong fiduciary and governance systems;

Strengthens the recognition and influence pathway by bringing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' perspectives into global debates on how biodiversity and climate finance should be structured.

E2. Relatively strong Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, alliances, networks and emerging ILFs:

Foundational enabler for the finance pathway as these organizations are vehicles to design and test tailored mechanisms and to interface with donors;

Supports the recognition and influence pathway by giving Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' collective voice and representation in policy and finance arenas;

Enables the capacity pathways as they are the primary partners for self-strengthening activities.

E3. Strength and resilience of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge, governance and cultural systems:

Provide substantive content—e.g., territorial governance, biocultural indicators, traditional knowledge—for elevation in policy and knowledge arenas for the recognition and influence pathway;

Contribute to resilient governance and knowledge systems for the finance pathway, making Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations effective stewards of finance and informing the design of accountability models that are both robust and culturally grounded.

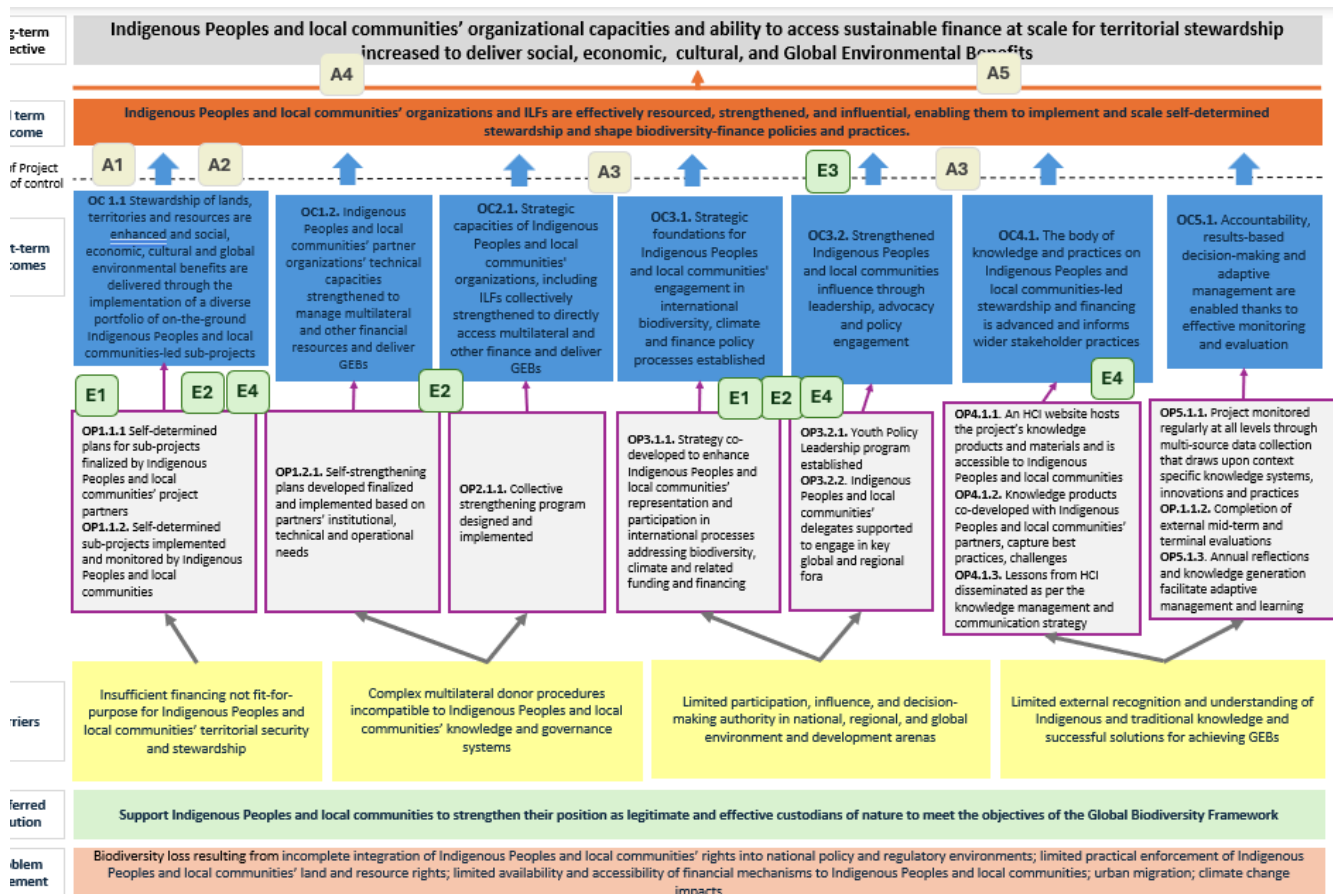
E4. Existing experience and lessons from similar initiatives:

Learn from previous experience (see Annex on previous GEF and non-GEF initiatives) with small grants, re-granting and ILFs for the finance pathway, providing tested approaches for selection, due diligence, grant-sizing, and support packages;

Build on existing tools, curricula and peer-learning models for the capacity pathway to adapt and scale them, rather than designing from scratch;

Build on prior advocacy, participation mechanisms and knowledge products for the representation and influence pathway, giving a starting point for strengthening Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' presence in global fora and policy processes.

Figure 1: Diagram Theory of Change (The ToC is also available to view in the Roadmap section as an annex)

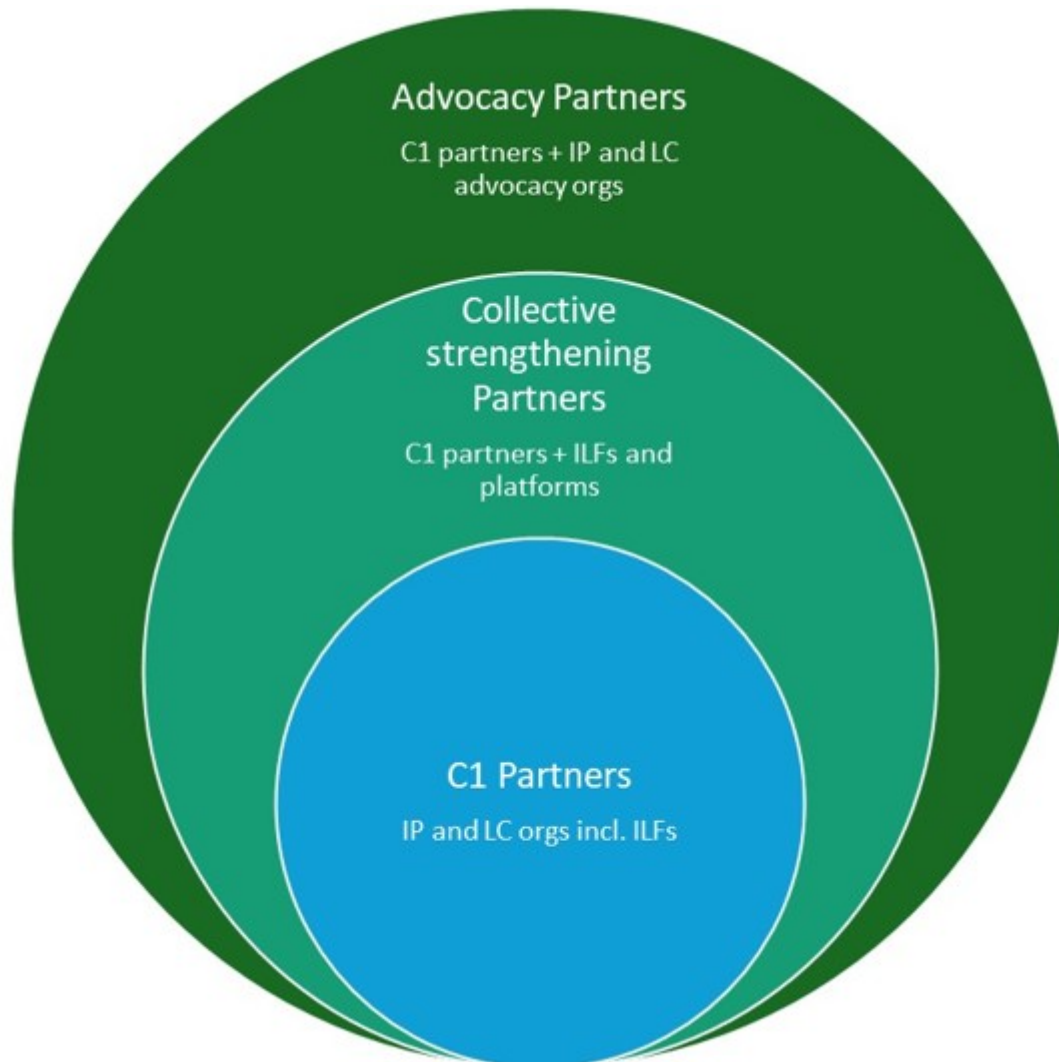


Project components and expected outcomes

respects, and seeks to support, Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights, including self-determination, territorial governance, and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Indigenous Peoples and local communities have been centrally engaged from the start of project development. As outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), the Project Development Team (PDT) PPG process was strategically guided by consultations with the Interim Steering Committee (ISC) – comprised largely of Indigenous Peoples representatives starting in April 2025. In addition, the PDT carried out several project design consultations, such as a consultation workshop in Rome with representatives of global Indigenous Peoples' networks like the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) in February 2025 and a consultation workshop in Nairobi with pre-selected Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' partner organizations (see their relevance across project components in Figure 2, below) in February 2026. These in-person workshops and other online consultations have shaped HCI project governance and design, including clarifying places where further co-design is necessary, such as Component 2's collective strengthening program and Component 3's Youth Policy Leaders program. A critical feature of the consultations to date has been to communicate the requirements attached to GEF funding – providing clear information about where WWF, as the GEF Agency, is able and unable to be adaptive to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' realities – prior to the signing of grant agreements, which will constitute consent by Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to those conditions. WWF understands that FPIC is a continuous, iterative process rather than a static outcome, and will continue to work with partners to ensure consent to the ongoing co-development of HCI strategy and

activities. In turn, C1 partners will implement and document consensus-driven planning and implementation with the Indigenous Peoples and local communities they represent and serve at the grassroots level.

re 2: HCI layered Partnership structure



To ensure clarity throughout the project description in this Indigenous People- and local community-centered project, the partnership architecture of HCI is explained in the above diagram and following text.

Under Component 1, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, including ILFs, that were pre-selected by the Interim Steering Committee during the Project Preparation Phase (PPG) are referred to as C1 Partners. These organizations will design and implement their self-determined sub-projects and are therefore core executing partners.

Under Component 2, participation expands beyond C1 Partners to include additional ILFs and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' platforms that will be identified in partnership with C1 Partners during implementation. Together, these actors are referred to as Collective Strengthening Partners. They will participate in joint capacity-strengthening processes designed to reinforce shared organizational, technical, and governance capacity needs. At least some of the collective strengthening activities themselves are likely to be delivered by at least one Indigenous-led Executing Partner specialized in capacity-strengthening, which is neither a C1 Partner nor a Collective Strengthening Partner.

Under Component 3, engagement broadens further to include C1 Partners and additional Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' advocacy organizations that will be identified in partnership with C1 Partners. These actors are referred to as Advocacy

Partners and participate in coordinated advocacy and policy engagement activities. Advocacy accompaniment will be delivered, to the extent possible, by Indigenous-led Partners specializing in Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' advocacy.

In summary, C1 Partners implement sub-projects; Collective Strengthening Partners participate in joint capacity-strengthening; Advocacy Partners engage in coordinated advocacy efforts; and to the extent possible, specialized Indigenous-led Executing Partners will deliver the technical accompaniment under Components 2 and 3. This structure ensures that Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations are positioned as rights-holders, implementers, and strategic partners at every level of the project, as well as ensuring that at least 80% of the project budget is executed by Indigenous People- and local community-led organizations.

COMPONENT 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF-DETERMINED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITY-LED SUB-PROJECTS

Component 1 of HCI is designed to build partnerships with institutions, organizations, networks and funding mechanisms led by Indigenous Peoples and/or local communities that are accessing, managing and disbursing funds to affiliated communities, members and partners. Based on an open call for Expressions of Interest (Eols) carried out during PPG, a select number of organizations were pre-selected by the ISC, comprised of Indigenous representatives and experts to guide PPG. These pre-selected Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations will support communities, members and partners to enhance stewardship of lands, territories and resources (e.g., by advancing land and tenure rights, guarding against territorial land conversion and degradation threats, and developing strategies for long-term sustainable livelihoods based on traditional knowledge) and deliver GEBs alongside other social, economic and cultural benefits.

The pre-selected organizations are from the main GEF-recipient geographic regions and span across Latin America, Africa and Asia. Their confirmation as Component 1 partners is contingent on a due diligence process by the GEF Agency and a letter of Endorsement from the GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) from the respective country in which they are registered. The subset of pre-selected organizations that have received Letters of Endorsement (LoE) are described in Annex L. At time of submission, five partners have received LoE and their due diligence processes are ongoing.

Outcome 1.1. Stewardship of lands, territories and resources are enhanced and social, economic, cultural, and Global Environmental Benefits are delivered through the implementation of a diverse portfolio of on-the-ground Indigenous People- and local community-led sub-projects

The C1 partners will support on-the ground projects at different scales; some will conserve a single, large territory while others will contribute to the conservation of several smaller areas within a country or across several countries. Each partner will contribute to the global HCI portfolio to achieve goals related to enhanced stewardship of lands, territories, and resources to deliver GEBs as well as self-determined social, economic and/or cultural benefits. Partner Expressions of Interest and consultations during project preparation demonstrate that Indigenous Peoples and local communities' priorities extend well beyond biodiversity conservation alone. Across regions, partners identified land tenure security, territorial governance, Indigenous food systems, sustainable local economies, women's and youth leadership, forest governance, and climate resilience as essential and interconnected dimensions of effective stewardship. Many partners emphasized that biodiversity outcomes cannot be sustained without secure territorial rights, resilient livelihoods, culturally grounded governance systems, and the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge and food practices.

The process for pre-selecting these C1 Partners, described in detail in Annex M, was carried out during the PPG phase, based on a series of published eligibility criteria for partners and selection criteria for sub-projects. During the PPG phase, an initial seed grant was allocated to the pre-selected partners to engage in continued consultations with communities and members to shape HCI project strategy, complete an operational and technical due diligence process that will inform their self-strengthening plans and to continue bottom-up development of their sub-project plans.

Output 1.1.1. Self-determined plans for sub-projects finalized by Indigenous Peoples and local community partners

The sub-project plans initiated during the PPG phase through seed grants are anticipated to be finalized within the first project year. Support from the Global Coordination Unit (GCU) will be provided with oversight from WWF.

Considering the global reach of the HCI project, sub-project plans will be unique in their approach to enhancing stewardship of lands, territories, and resources and delivering GEBs, but may include some combination of activities to:

- Strengthen traditional territorial governance practices, including customary resource governance systems.
- Improve management of natural and cultural resources in Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lands and territories.
- Address the drivers of environmental degradation.
- Strengthen land tenure security, including through state recognition and Indigenous People- and local community-led land-use planning processes.
- Strengthen sustainable economies, livelihoods, and well-being (including agroecology, Indigenous food systems, agroforestry, sustainable agricultural production systems, sustainable forest management, non-timber forest products, community-based ecotourism, sustainable fisheries and other nature-based value chains that will diversity income sources, improve food sovereignty and increase resilience to climate and economic shocks while reducing dependence on unsustainable extractive activities). Support cultural revitalization and intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge critical to conservation.
- Support Indigenous food sovereignty, intergenerational transmission of ecological knowledge, and culturally grounded livelihood systems linked to biodiversity stewardship.
- Enhance long-term financial sustainability of Indigenous People- and local community-led conservation activities.
- Protect territorial rights and the rights of environmental human rights defenders.
- Share knowledge and build solidarity with other communities.
- Engage in local, sub-national or national beyond biodiversity policy decisions, strategies and implementation activities, enhancing visibility, recognition and respect of the contributions and rights of Indigenous Peoples and/or local communities in conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biodiversity but also strengthening land tenure rights, forest management, and Indigenous food systems as foundational for biodiversity conservation in Indigenous Peoples and local communities' territories .
- Strengthen Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' contributions to national planning and strategies (e.g. NBSAPs, NDCs, and others to be identified with the IGSC).
- Engage with the private sector to strengthen Indigenous Peoples'- and local communities' self-determined socioeconomic priorities and benefits, including by supporting women-, youth- and Indigenous-led enterprises, developing partnerships and value chains, connecting to markets that support sustainable livelihoods, improving access to responsible buyers, and promoting equitable benefit-sharing for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' products and services derived from sustainable stewardship of nature.
- All sub-projects will include self-strengthening activities in line with the self-strengthening plans developed in Output 1.1.2.

The minimum requirements for sub-projects, discussed with the pre-selected C1 partners at a workshop in Nairobi in March 2026, include:

SEP

A GESI (Gender and Social Inclusion) analysis that takes into account the political/economic context, including conflict sensitivity, as relevant;

A context-specific GESI Action Plan (GAP) to advance the inclusion and equitable participation of women, youth and other marginalized groups, including GESI-responsive actions, processes and decision-making related to biodiversity.

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, including a Results Framework with at least two GEF Core Indicators (must include GEF Core Indicator 11 - the number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender, age and IP identity), and biocultural indicators co-developed with C1 partners, to track achievement of project objectives, and provisions regarding learning and reporting.

Ability to meet safeguards requirements outlined in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), i.e., the identification and mitigation of environmental and social risks, and a brief plan/description for sub-project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).

Proposed activities:

Support C1 partners to conduct local consultations, GESI- and conflict-sensitivity assessments.

Facilitate technical backstopping from Global Coordination Unit (GCU) to ensure alignment with SEP, GAP, ESMF, and M&E.

Sub-project plans validated through Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance processes, consultation and consent procedures.

Output 1.1.2. Self-determined sub-projects implemented and monitored by Indigenous Peoples and local community partners

C1 partners, in collaboration with affiliated communities, members and partners will execute activities outlined in their sub-project plans.

One of the lessons from the ICI Mid-Term Review (MTR) is that monitoring and reporting frequency should be feasible and co-designed with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to ensure high level of cultural appropriateness[33]. As part of output 1.1.2., M&E and reporting systems of each individual sub-project will thus be built in close collaboration between the GCU and partner organizations, and alignment with the global HCI M&E framework developed as part of Component 5.

Proposed activities:

C1 partners execute sub-projects based on sub-project plans.

Co-develop local M&E and reporting systems, integrating GEF Core Indicators and biocultural indicators, contributing to the global HCI M&E framework (see Component 5).

C1 partners collect data and report to the GCU semi-annually to allow aggregated reporting at the HCI project level.

Outcome 1.2. Indigenous People and local community partner organizations' technical capacities self-strengthened to manage multilateral and other financial resources and deliver GEBs

This outcome focuses on HCI C1 partner organizations enhancing their institutional, fiduciary, and technical competencies required to directly manage multilateral and other financing and implement complex, rights-based conservation programs. This can help contribute to interested organizations' (in eligible countries) ability to access a range of new funding, including through the Cali Fund and TFFF (noting not all eligible organizations will wish to engage these mechanisms).

Output 1.2.1. Self-strengthening plans finalized and implemented based on partners' institutional, technical and operational needs

The HCI project will support the C1 partners in finalizing and implementing tailored self-strengthening plans that align with due diligence assessment recommendations while respecting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance systems. These plans will serve as practical implementation frameworks, grounded in institutional, technical, and operational needs and will guide both capacity strengthening priorities and effective execution and monitoring of activities supported under Outcome 1.1. The finalization of the self-strengthening plans is planned during the first year of project implementation.

Capacity strengthening discussed with the pre-selected C1 partners at a workshop in Nairobi in February 2026, may address the following:

Organizational and movement leadership and strategy: Leadership and governance systems; organizational strategy and planning; collective decision-making

Institutional infrastructure: institutional policies (HR, internal controls, procurement); financial management and fiduciary capacity; fundraising and financial sustainability;

Project and grant management: reporting (to the GEF); monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management; sub-grant partner support and accountability

Assessment and monitoring: biodiversity assessment, GHG/carbon stock assessment;

Environmental and social safeguards and GESI: stakeholder engagement and accountability; gender, youth, and inclusion strategies; youth leadership and succession planning/advancing youth into leadership positions;

Strategies and tools for conservation: Legal empowerment and land tenure security; community-led conservation pathways; nature-based solutions; sustainable economies and economic literacy; carbon markets; digital mapping and smart technology

Communications and advocacy: multimedia communications; policy advocacy; negotiation with donors;

Indigenous rights and traditional knowledge: data safeguarding in relation to traditional knowledge; intergenerational learning of Indigenous cultures, self-determination, FPIC;

Modalities and mechanisms used for self-strengthening will be self-determined with project support focused on enabling implementation, tracking progress, and learning.

The sub-projects partners will lead the implementation of their self-strengthening plans, grounded in due diligence outcomes, their own organizational development priorities, cultural contexts, and stages of institutional development. Plans will then be implemented using the most appropriate and effective approaches as determined by each partner, which may include targeted recruitment, mentoring and coaching, peer learning, organizational restructuring, development or refinement of internal systems, and other context-specific actions. Implementation will prioritize approaches that are locally led, culturally appropriate, and embedded within existing governance structures, and may draw on internal expertise, peer support from other Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, or specialized technical assistance where required. The HCI project will place particular emphasis on supporting successful execution, monitoring progress, and adaptive management, ensuring that self-strengthening plans translate into sustained institutional performance and long-term leadership in biodiversity conservation and land stewardship.

Proposed activities:

Co-develop a template and/or provide guidance for the development of self-strengthening plans, including, where relevant, readiness for Cali Fund or TFFF.

C1 partners finalize their self-strengthening plans based on due diligence assessment recommendations, their own organizational development plans and priorities.

C1 partners implement their plans with support, as requested, from WWF or other organizations.

COMPONENT 2. STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL COLLECTIVE SELF-STRENGTHENING OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES' ORGANIZATIONS

Like the self-strengthening portion of Component 1 (namely, 1.2.2), Component 2 focuses on strengthening the strategic and technical capacities of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to access, manage, and deploy multilateral, philanthropic and private finance in ways that deliver GEBs as well as self-determined social, economic and/or cultural benefits. The distinction between Component 1 and Component 2 capacity-strengthening is two-fold: first, C2 capacity-strengthening will not be

targeted to individual partners' needs but to the shared needs of C1 partners and a wider set of ILF and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations (C2 Collective Strengthening partners); and second, the methods will be more collective (e.g., network-based) than individualized. Component 2 responds directly to the pledges and programs being made and established to increase funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including those launched at CBD COP 16 and UNFCCC COP 30 such as the Cali Fund and the TFFF and the GEF9 aspirational target of 20% of Trust Fund resources to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (see description above). Through customized training, mentoring and peer learning, Component 2 will seek to enhance institutional readiness for financial management, safeguards, inclusive leadership, and project delivery, while also expanding support to a broader pool of organizations^[C2] (compared to Component 1 partners) enabling them to successfully engage with financing institutions, and develop robust proposals that meet donor requirements to secure access to resources for long-term conservation impact, including through, for example, the Cali Fund and TFFF.

Outcome 2.1. Strategic capacities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations, including Indigenous-led Funds (ILFs), collectively strengthened to directly access multilateral and other finance and deliver GEBs

This outcome expands support beyond C1 partners to strengthen the readiness of a broader pool of ILFs and Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations (Collective Strengthening Partners) to effectively engage with, influence, and access finance from multilateral funds and other sources (including private sector and philanthropy, and other biodiversity finance mechanisms). The process to co-identify with C1 Partners these Collective Strengthening Partners will include targeting key ILFs that applied but were not pre-selected as C1 Partners, and learning from C1 partners who they are already working with as well as research to identify relevant organizations, such as Indigenous People- and local community-led platforms and networks that support collective strengthening.

The GCU and the Indigenous Global Steering Committee (IGSC) will evaluate the opportunities offered by partnering with one or more Indigenous People- and local community-led platforms or networks already involved in collective strengthening to collaborate in the delivery of activities to enhance target skills. Activities will be co-designed, and may include tailored training programs, providing live online trainings, regional in-person trainings, and asynchronous online content and tools, and/or mentorship programs. The topics of the training program will be selected based on common topics across C1 partners, topics that were identified during the analysis of Eols received at the PPG stage, and other topics identified by C1 partners (such as measuring avoided greenhouse gas emissions, which was identified as a need in the Nairobi consultation).

Output 2.1.1. Collective strengthening program designed and implemented

Recognizing budget constraints and the need to maximize reach, the collective strengthening program will combine a limited number of strategically planned in-person convenings with a robust set of virtual learning and exchange opportunities. Where HCI is planning targeted in-person events (rather than supporting existing programming that dovetails with HCI-identified needs), they will be organized back-to-back with major regional or global gatherings and opened to participants supported by other organizations, to broaden participation and reduce costs. Given the limited nature of face-to-face activities, the program will prioritize live virtual events delivered in multiple languages and across time zones, complemented by online, on-demand access to recordings, materials, and practical tools to ensure sustained and inclusive engagement over time.

In addition to collective needs emerging from C1 partner self-strengthening priorities, the collective strengthening program will be designed to advance critical skills, such as proposal development, results-based management, cost recovery, risk assessment, and building capacity to engage with and influence financing institutions, including philanthropies and other private sector donors. This collective strengthening program co-design process will be informed by the due diligence process undergone by Component 1 partners as well as consultations with the institutional partner(s) and their members. These may be stand-alone GEF HCI events or may entail partnership and providing support to external programs in the ILF and related ecosystem of partners and platforms that advance Indigenous People- and local community-led collective strengthening.

Proposed activities:

Identify existing collective strengthening opportunities and institutional partners.

Co-design a collective-strengthening program (GCU and C1 partners).

Implement a collective-strengthening program (both in-person and online), as designed through the process set out above.

Upload multilingual resources on the HCI website to enable access by interested Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Support interested Partners and Collective Strengthening Partners to engage with new funding opportunities, including the Cali Fund and TFFF.

COMPONENT 3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES' REPRESENTATION AND INFLUENCE IN GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE, FINANCE AND RELATED DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Component 3 seeks to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence on policy and funding arenas, including related to biodiversity conservation, climate, resource mobilization and philanthropic-related policy issues at the international, and potentially regional, level. Component 3 may be implemented in partnership with relevant Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' networks, to be decided with C1 Partners in year 1. This Component will support emerging young leaders, including youth nominated by C1 partners to join the Youth Policy Leadership Program. Strategic direction under this outcome will be determined by the IGSC.

Outcome 3.1. Strengthened Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement in international biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy processes

This outcome focuses on establishing the strategic foundations for enhancing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement in international biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy processes. The GCU and C1 partners will co-develop a strategy for strengthening Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' participation, ensure alignment with relevant networks and platforms, and establish strategic advocacy partnerships with existing networks to amplify the voice of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in priority fora.

Output 3.1.1. Strategy co-developed to enhance Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' representation and influence in international processes addressing biodiversity, climate, and related policies

This output will deliver a jointly developed strategy to strengthen the coherence and preparedness of Indigenous People and local community representation in international biodiversity and climate finance and policy processes. It will be informed by a mapping of existing Indigenous Peoples and local community representation across key global, and potentially regional or other, fora and co-designed with C1 partners and one or more Indigenous Peoples and local communities' advocacy networks, before validation with the IGSC.

Proposed activities:

C1 partners and GCU to map existing Indigenous People and local community representation in key global (e.g., GEF, CBD, CITES, BBNJ, WCC, IUCN WCPA, UNFCCC, UNCCD, Minamata Convention, GLF, TFFF, Climate Weeks, etc.) and, potentially regional or other, decision-making fora including fora related to land tenure, Indigenous rights, food systems, mercury, forest governance, climate finance, and sustainable development. This mapping will be used by the C1 partners and GCU to prioritize key fora to include in the C3 strategy for Indigenous Peoples and local community representation and influence.

Undertake an assessment of youth capacities and needs, to determine the kinds of knowledge and skills to target in the training.

Co-design a strategy with one or more Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' advocacy networks and the IGSC to enhance Indigenous and local community representation at priority fora through outputs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

Agree with C1 Partners on partnership arrangements between the HCI and one or more Indigenous Peoples' and local community advocacy networks for delivery of the Youth Policy Leadership Program (e.g., mentoring of youth - see 3.2.1).

Outcome 3.2. Strengthened Indigenous Peoples and local communities' influence through leadership, advocacy and policy engagement

This outcome aims to translate the strategic foundations established under Outcome 3.1 into concrete engagement and leadership in global, and likely regional, biodiversity and climate policy and finance, and related policy processes. It supports Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' participation in priority fora while strengthening long-term advocacy capacity through dedicated leadership development for Indigenous- and community-based youth. A scaling strategy, such as training-of-trainers or peer-to-peer

learning networks, will also ensure that Youth Policy Leaders share their increased understanding and skills with a wider network of Indigenous and community-based youth. Together, these outputs aim to reinforce inclusive, intergenerational policy engagement and sustained Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' presence in relevant decision-making spaces. This outcome will target the advocacy partners as described in Figure 2.

Output 3.2.1. Youth Policy Leadership Program established

Indigenous Peoples' youth face complex, intersecting challenges in their territories and have important contributions to make across a wide range of political, social, and environmental discussions. A Youth Policy Leadership Program will be developed with C1 partners, including youth representatives and one or more Indigenous Peoples and local communities' advocacy networks, and implemented to achieve the influence objectives of the advocacy and partnership strategy. With a focus on gender equity, the Youth Policy Leadership Program will complement other strengthening activities, and integrate a plan with the necessary training, guidance, and mentoring based on the specific needs of the participants. The Program will help build familiarity with biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy fora, procedures, language, and power dynamics among the next generation of Indigenous People- and local community leaders. This approach ensures coherence with the fora identified under Output 3.1.1, with support from the organizations identified under Output 3.1.2, and directly supports meaningful participation under Outcome 3.2.

Building on discussions with pre-selected C1 partners in Nairobi, the Youth Policy Leaders Program will be co-designed with C1 partners, and their selected Indigenous Peoples and local communities' advocacy networks, with inputs from the IGSC, during the first year of project implementation. This design process with the C1 partners will include an evaluation and decision on whether the support is deep or broad, given the funding allocated -- for example, a smaller cohort across multiple years with deeper engagement, or more participants with a less comprehensive package. At least one cohort of youth leaders (at least half women) will participate in the program. The Youth Policy Leaders will be nominated by the C1 Partner organizations and contracts will be between the HCI and the nominating organizations. Such contracts may include the following components:

- A time-bound commitment by the Youth Policy Leaders (plus a return-of-service requirement, if desired by the nominating organization).
- A commitment to complete the training provided under output 3.2.1.
- Attendance and active engagement at selected biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy fora. Youth Policy Leaders attend relevant CBD, UNFCCC and/or GEF or other prioritized fora meetings

Subject to the findings relating to capacity needs of youth under outcome 3.1.1, participants may choose to improve their abilities to: negotiate at international fora; advocate for the implementation of the KMGBF and for increased access to finance; advocate for the promotion, respect and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights; analyse information documents and negotiating texts; understand procedural rules and use them strategically; prepare draft statements; support the organisation of a press conference; deliver statements; and prepare draft negotiation text.

Based on that training, Youth Policy Leaders will attend international meetings and potentially regional policy processes, as defined by the mapping and strategy described in output 3.1.1 and further refined under this output. The Youth Policy Leaders will be mentored at these meetings by seasoned Indigenous negotiators, ideally those that either developed the course or are affiliated to the related Indigenous network.

Proposed activities:

Youth Policy Leaders Program designed and operational (selection criteria, curriculum, training and mentoring)

Nomination of cohort by C1 partners.

Participation of Youth Policy Leaders in agreed fora.

Sharing of Youth Policy Leaders' increased understanding and skills with a wider network of Indigenous and community-based youth.

Output 3.2.2. Indigenous People and local community experts and negotiators supported to engage in key global and regional fora that represent new and emerging opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to influence policy

This output supports Indigenous People and local community experts and negotiators identified by C1 Partners (from their organizations and networks or beyond) to engage in priority global and regional meetings identified through the strategy.

Proposed activities:

Fund participation of Indigenous and local community experts and negotiators in relevant meetings identified in strategy (Output 3.1.1).

Provide logistical support for experts and negotiators.

Facilitate coordination meetings among Indigenous People and local community participants before and after major events.

COMPONENT 4. LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Component 4 will advance the body of knowledge and practice on Indigenous People- and local community-led stewardship and funding. Documenting and disseminating lessons learned from the HCI will target five objectives:

- Enable knowledge sharing across C1 partners to maximize biodiversity stewardship, GEBs and demonstrate linkages with related social, ecological and political strategies.
- Provide Indigenous Peoples and local communities not participating in HCI with practical information to advance their self-determined priorities and strengthen their local, regional, and global movements.
- Share lessons learned for partnerships between Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations and other organizations to advance and mainstream rights-based approaches to inclusive conservation to achieve GEBs and linked social, economic and cultural benefits.
- Share best practices regionally and globally as a part of advocacy efforts that create the enabling conditions for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to support Indigenous People- and local community-led stewardship and sustainable livelihood goals.

Share models to support the development of effective and mature Indigenous People- and local community-led funding mechanisms.

Outcome 4.1. The body of knowledge and practices on Indigenous People- and local community-led stewardship and financing is advanced and informs wider stakeholder practices

This outcome ensures that lessons from HCI — especially from Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations themselves — result in global learning, strengthen broader movements for rights-based conservation and influence biodiversity and climate related policy and funders. It will generate evidence on Indigenous People- and local community-led territorial stewardship and tenure security, Indigenous Peoples- and local community-led financing models, and women's and youth leadership in Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance and advocacy in biodiversity and climate finance decision-making fora and disseminate these widely through accessible, multilingual platforms. Activities include establishing a functional online knowledge platform (the HCI website), co-developing learning approaches and knowledge products with Indigenous People and local community partners, documenting replicable models, producing policy briefs and thematic reports, organizing webinars and side events, and facilitating exchanges that elevate Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' experience into global biodiversity and climate policy and funding processes.

Output 4.1.1. An HCI website hosts the project's knowledge products and materials and is accessible to Indigenous Peoples and local communities

The HCI website will be developed to house the project materials and knowledge products. The website and materials contained therein will be easily accessible to, and user friendly for, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including multilingual functionality. To the extent possible, knowledge products will also be shared across relevant platforms, such as:

- GEF-7 ICI Knowledge Management hosted on [UNDP Learning for Nature Platform](#)
- High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People [Online Toolkit](#)
- Global Alliance for Territorial Communities [Shandia Platform](#)

The platforms listed above are illustrative and will be further validated and refined through the development of the HCI communications strategy in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and local community partners (Output 4.1.2.). In recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' leadership, priorities, and communication preferences, the strategy will identify the most appropriate, accessible, and culturally relevant platforms and dissemination channels to support knowledge sharing, visibility, and engagement throughout project implementation.

Proposed activities:

HCI website developed to house the project materials and knowledge products in multiple languages.

Knowledge products shared across multiple relevant platforms, including but not limited to C1 partner websites.

Output 4.1.2. Knowledge products co-developed with Indigenous Peoples and local community partners, capturing inclusive best practices, challenges, and lessons

The approach to documenting knowledge, including but not limited to age and gender inclusion approaches (e.g., successful models and constraints in advancing gender equality and youth and women's leadership), will be developed under the guidance of the IGSC and HCI partners through Components 1, 2 and 3. At the Nairobi consultation workshop in February 2026, C1 partners noted that C4 can build upon traditional knowledge exchange and learning approaches, including: oral storytelling, community assemblies and dialogues; learning through observation and by doing, including intergenerationally; and increasingly, Indigenous schools. C1 partners highlight that these traditional methods are relevant at the community level, while more technical methods will be necessary for mutual learning at the organizational level and between IP-led organizations and others (donors, NGOs, governments). C1 partners have also identified innovative communications formats to reach Indigenous Peoples and local community audiences, such as comic books and infographics to break down complex approaches and lessons. Continued co-creation with C1, 2 and 3 partners will ensure that the approach is culturally appropriate, led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and meets the needs of their organizations. Materials developed will be in formats prioritized by and accessible to Indigenous Peoples and local communities – and made available in multiple languages (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and local and Indigenous languages, whenever possible).

It is expected that the HCI will result in the development of replicable and adaptable models that will contribute to enhancing broader Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' initiatives and advance a rights-based approach to inclusive conservation to better respond to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' priorities beyond the life of the project. They may focus on:

- How recognition of Indigenous and Traditional Territories as a "third pathway" (in addition to PAs and OECMs) in achieving Target 3 of the KMGBF could support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement with national governments to support Indigenous People- and local community-led stewardship of natural resources. This builds on the GEF-7 ICI's KMGBF Briefing Document^[3], which highlights opportunities to demonstrate how a rights-based approach can contribute to achieving the KMGBF targets (Targets 1, 3, 5, 9, 19, 21 and Goal C).
- How investing in Indigenous People- and local community-led funding mechanisms to support small- and medium-size organizations supports the achievement of GEBs.
- How supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' management of territories, lands, waters and resources, intergenerational knowledge transfer to preserve traditional cultural practices and language,

strengthening inclusive governance, and promoting sustainable livelihoods advances biodiversity conservation and climate resilience can garner more funding for similar activities.

- How technology can support enhanced monitoring and appropriate enforcement measures for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lands and territories (e.g., as related to preventing illegal resource extraction).
- How addressing major gaps in knowledge on Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' stewardship can inform conservation and climate approaches.
- How territorial governance, land security, Indigenous food systems and customary livelihoods contribute to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

Proposed activities:

Co-develop effective knowledge management and communication strategy with Component 1, 2 and 3 partners.

Co-develop and validate HCI knowledge products with Indigenous and community partner organizations, respecting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' sovereignty over their traditional knowledge and data.

Output 4.1.3. Lessons from HCI disseminated as per the knowledge management and communication strategy

Opportunities to share lessons and findings through dialogues with key stakeholders will be identified and/or created with guidance from and oversight of the IGSC and C1 partners. Dissemination will target Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations as a primary audience, supporting peer learning, exchange of experiences, and the strengthening of Indigenous People and local community-led stewardship practices across regions. C1 partners have already weighed in on appropriate communications platforms to reach Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' audiences, including their websites (see 4.1.1), social media, and Indigenous youth and journalism networks. Dissemination approaches will emphasize accessible formats and Indigenous-led platforms to ensure that lessons generated through HCI are shared widely within and among Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations.

At the same time, knowledge products and dialogues will also engage NGOs, governments, donors, and other actors to influence broader conservation, biodiversity, and climate finance practices. Opportunities to share lessons and findings with NGOs, government, donors and beyond could include participating in existing events or creating side events as part of large convenings (for example, organizing an Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' financing summit at a convening such as the GEF Assembly or events on specific high-profile targets such as Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' contributions to the UN CBD KMGBF T3), but also through the publications of policy briefs, videos and reports.

Proposed activities:

Disseminate HCI knowledge products as per knowledge management and communication strategy through:

- Webinars, conferences and side events.
- Policy briefs, videos and thematic reports.
- Culturally appropriate approaches and institutions, such Indigenous schools and journalism networks.

COMPONENT 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In Component 5, the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan will be developed and implemented to monitor results and impacts and aid in results-based decision-making, adaptive management, and effective project execution.

Outcome 5.1. Accountability, results-based decision-making and adaptive management are enabled thanks to effective and locally appropriate monitoring and evaluation

The project will develop and implement a participatory M&E and learning framework, whereby participation of community members involved in project implementation will be sought through field visits involving, for example, focus group discussions, culturally-appropriate games, storytelling opportunities, and videos to ensure a greater understanding of the project, its interventions, and ultimately contribute to higher participation rates and long-term sustainability of interventions. This will also ensure that project results are properly monitored throughout implementation by establishing an M&E framework and implementing regular monitoring activities, reflection workshops (see 5.1.3) and the mid-term review. The findings and recommendations will feed into the learning framework, and inform IGSC adaptive management decisions throughout implementation, building on lessons learned and best practices. Indeed, co-design of the results framework began during the PPG phase, in which representatives of the pre-selected C1 partners co-developed a shared biocultural indicator relating to traditional ecological knowledge, proposed an approach to capture women and youth-led livelihoods initiatives, validated core GESI and other indicators that all C1 Partners will report against and the GCU will aggregate in the overall HCI Results Framework.

The overall project M&E plan will aggregate individual GESI-responsive M&E plans of C1 partners. Where appropriate and desired by Partners, technology will be incorporated, while also supporting culturally appropriate forms of reporting – e.g., oral narratives or visuals.

C1 Partners will report bi-annually to the GCU on sub-project progress and annually against the workplan targets. C1 Partners will report either annually or at mid-term and endline on the results framework indicators, including GEF core indicators and relevant additional indicators to measure progress (as determined by C1 Partners), including indicators for monitoring the KMGBF and biocultural indicators emerging from Indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices.

Output 5.1.1. Project monitored regularly at all levels through multi-source data collection that draws upon context specific knowledge systems, innovations and practices

M&E data will be collected and reported through methods identified as most appropriate for Indigenous People and local community partners to support monitoring at all levels, such as storytelling and outcome harvesting. M&E plans will be developed by each partner under output 1.1.2, as part of C1 partners' sub-project plans.

The following reports will be provided by C1 Partners: Annual Work Plan and Budget; Bi-annual Project Progress Report; Quarterly Financial Report; annual reflection workshop. The GCU will collate the data in an annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) to be presented to the GEF.

Proposed activities:

Conduct an inception workshop and support development of baseline studies by C1 partners for Indigenous People- and local community-led sub-projects, as needed.

Conduct M&E in accordance with the WWF and GEF minimum requirements and reporting as stipulated in this project document, including monitoring GEF core indicators and project results framework, preparing annual GEF project Implementation Reports (PIR).

Conduct Annual project indicator monitoring including of the Environmental and social safeguards management framework and gender and social inclusion action plan (GAP). One global GAP has been developed, with gender-responsive and sex- and age-disaggregated indicators integrated into the overall M&E framework. Each C1 partner will develop a SEP and include GESI-responsive strategies and GESI-responsive activities in their engagement plans and annual workplans.

Conduct annual support and learning missions to C1 Partner sub-projects (WWF GEF).

Output 5.1.2. Completion of external mid-term and terminal evaluations

Independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project will be completed to which all partners will participate and contribute.

Proposed activities:

Conduct an independent project MTR.

Conduct an independent project TE.

Output 5.1.3. Annual reflections and knowledge generation facilitate adaptive management and learning

Proposed activities:

Hold reflection workshops with C1 partners after project year M&E data has been received, and before preparing the annual PIR and next annual workplan and budget.

Adjust workplans and budgets based on lessons learned.

Document lessons and adaptive management processes for inclusion in knowledge products.

Guiding principles for the Heart of Conservation Initiative

The HCI project has been designed and will be implemented according to 14 cross-cutting principles for inclusive partnership that emerged from consultations with Indigenous Peoples and GESI leaders and were validated with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' pre-selected partner organizations during the consultation workshop held in Nairobi in February 2026:

Trust-based partnerships take time.

Respect and incorporate our knowledge and governance systems into decision-making.

FPIC is necessary, but not sufficient.

Co-creation: Design with, not for, us.

Concepts of gender vary by culture - don't impose yours.

Center Indigenous women's leadership.

Recognize women's unpaid labor and value project contributions from everyone as real work.

Adequately resource GESI and safeguarding efforts.

Prevent, monitor and address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harrassment (SEAH).

Foster intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Support positive youth development and leadership opportunities.

Plan for sustainability from day one.

Respect our sovereignty over traditional knowledge and project data.

tnotes can be found in the Roadmap under 'Footnotes Annex')

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

1. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US) is the GEF Agency and also has an execution role in this project. HCI will be governed by an Indigenous Global Steering Committee (IGSC). Figure 1 below illustrates the governance structure.

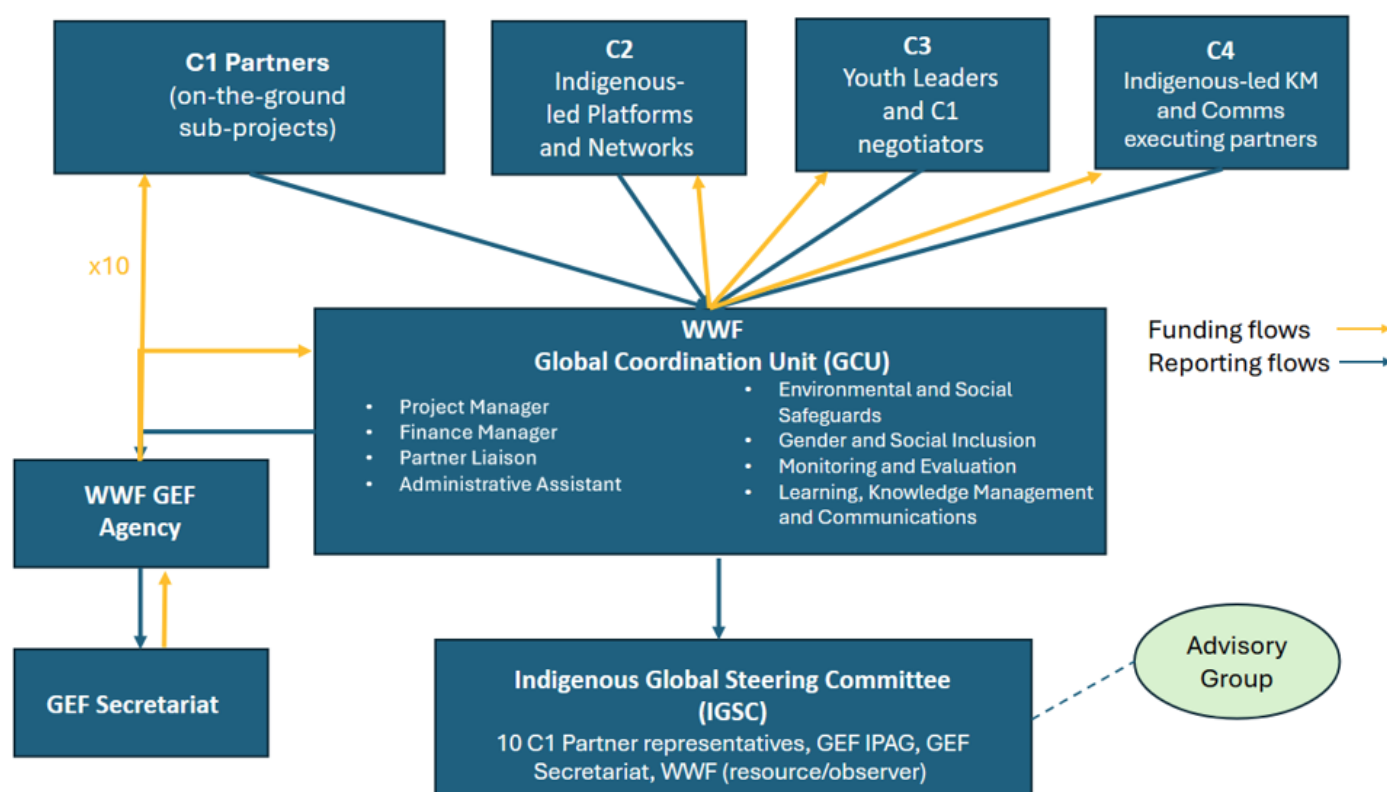


Figure 1. HCI Governance structure

A **Global Coordination Unit (GCU)** will be established for the day-to-day management, administration and (coordination of) delivery of the global HCI (C2-5) and to ensure project-level monitoring and rollup of reporting to WWF GEF. The GCU will cover the following functions: project management and technical expertise, project administration and financial management, capacity strengthening, M&E, learning, knowledge management and communications. It will undertake financial management of GCU operations and financial management support to C1 partners as needed, provide Safeguards and GESI support to C1 Partners as needed, track against implementation of Safeguards, SEP and GESI Action Plans across the global HCI, coordinate with C1 partners and additional C2, C3, C4 and C5partners and specialists and provide technical assistance to C1 Partners as requested. Partners and specialists, wherever possible Indigenous People- and local community-led, will be identified during implementation for specific activity delivery. Please see Annex N for the GCU Terms of Reference (TOR). Those TORs reflect that staff, like consultants, working directly with Indigenous Peoples and local community partners are expected to demonstrate experience in

respectful, culturally grounded, community-centered collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including an understanding of culturally appropriate engagement approaches, traditional knowledge systems, and rights-based approaches. Trust-building, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive facilitation are core competencies reflected not only in those TORs but also in recruitment processes and performance expectations across the HCI.

The Interim Steering Committee (ISC), which guided the project development phase, will dissolve, and an **Indigenous Global Steering Committee (IGSC)** will be constituted for project execution. The IGSC will serve as the main advisory body, providing strategic leadership and guidance for the HCI. The IGSC will comprise one representative each from the C1 Partners (including youth alternates), one representative of the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG), one member from the GEF Secretariat, and staff from WWF as resources/observer. The GCU will be responsible for organizing and preparing the IGSC meetings, including sharing relevant documentation in advance of the meetings and taking and sharing meeting minutes. The IGSC will meet twice a year, either virtually or in-person, potentially aligned to an event identified in the strategy developed in C3. The IGSC TOR will be co-developed with C1 Partners during implementation and agreed amongst the IGSC members.

An **Advisory Group**, made up of co-financiers, organizations involved in other similar initiatives and organizations and institutions working on Indigenous Peoples- and local community-led governance and stewardship will be set up (or potentially an existing similar body might be expanded) to facilitate cross-learning, exchanges and coordination with HCI. This will expand the number of advisors available to Component 1 partners and others involved in the GEF HCI, providing a valuable resource over the implementation of the project. It will also enable synergies with people and organizations who are working on similar issues with overlapping partners. To strengthen culturally grounded implementation and peer learning, the Advisory Group may also seek participation from Indigenous Peoples' and local community-led organizations, networks, and knowledge holders with demonstrated expertise in community-centered conservation, governance, and capacity strengthening.

The **WWF GEF Agency** serves as the Implementing Agency of HCI and is responsible for project implementation support and oversight, ensuring the project adheres to WWF and GEF policies and standards. WWF GEF Agency will maintain the relationship with the GEF Secretariat, support and provide no-objection to the C1 Partner sub-project plans and their associated Safeguards, Stakeholder Engagement and GESI Action Plans, and is responsible for reporting to the GEF. The WWF GEF Agency will: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaise between with the GEF Secretariat; (iii) report on progress to GEF Secretariat via the annual Project Implementation Report; (iv) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e., Minimum Fiduciary Standards, Gender and Social Inclusion, Environmental and Social Safeguards, Monitoring and Evaluation, reporting requirements); (v) provide no objection to the overall HCI and partner sub-project annual workplans and budgets; (vi) undertake annual implementation support and learning visits, (vii) approve budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds; (viii) oversee the midterm and terminal evaluation; (ix) certify project operational and financial completion to the GEF Trustee, and (x) provide no-objection to key Terms of Reference for Global Coordination Unit.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

Yes

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

WWF will serve as the Implementing Agency as well as the Executing Agency for the HCI.

The GCU will be hosted by WWF-US. The GCU will undertake the following execution functions:

- Ensure day-to-day management, M&E, and reporting requirements of the project, including the overall coordination and coherence of the HCI.
- Lead project delivery and provide high-quality technical guidance, including, and subject to C1 Partner preference, provision of TA to support C1 sub-projects and self-strengthening plans and C2 collective self-strengthening.
- Develop, manage, and regularly update the website with knowledge products and implement an overall KM and communications strategy.
- Develop and disseminate knowledge, learning and policy products, practical tools, and capacity strengthening approaches designed to enhance broader Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' initiatives.
- Oversee sub-grants and contracts to partners/specialists consultants and organizations.

Dedicated staff will be recruited for key positions in the GCU, as described in the Terms of Reference (Annex N) and figure 3 above.

The WWF GEF Agency is responsible for project implementation support and oversight, ensuring the project adheres to WWF and GEF policies and standards. WWF GEF will maintain the relationship with the GEF Secretariat, approve the overall HCI and C1 Partner subproject annual workplans and budgets, and is responsible for reporting to the GEF via annual Project Implementation Reports.

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

A significant number of Indigenous Peoples- and local community-led organizations, as well as other organizations, are involved in advancing issues that the HCI is addressing. The HCI explicitly integrates systems change into its theory of change, which requires the GCU to actively engage with actors engaged in the broader ecosystem of finance directed to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Actors that the GCU may engage include Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations who are not partners under a component, platforms established to support and promote ILFs, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' networks – including those focused on geographies, biomes and negotiating at the international level, UN bodies, and private philanthropic organizations. It will also engage NGOs, civil society networks and university faculties working at the intersection of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, land and environment. All engagement will be based on what is relevant to the project and is agreed by the Component 1 partners.

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
150000	264423	0	0

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
150000	264423	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
TBC			150,000.00	264,423.00					

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
100000	4084	0	0

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
100000	4084	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
TBC			100,000.00	4,084.00					

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
10000	12200	0	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
8,000.00	7,400.00		

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
2,000.00	4,800.00		

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1250000	2169235	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,250,000.00	2,169,235.00		

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
		1,250,000.00	1,093,458.00		

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
150,000.00			

Indicator 5.1 Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Type/name of the third-party certification

Indicator 5.2 Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE

Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	62,500	55,000		
Male	62,500	55,000		
Total	125,000	110,000	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Indicator targets expected at CEO Endorsement are based on estimates provided by pre-selected C1 Partners following a survey circulated in January 2026. Targets were further refined between February and May 2026 following the workshop organised with pre-selected C1 Partners in Nairobi to clearly differentiate between ecosystem types and protected areas versus other landscapes under improved management practices. For each core indicator, C1 Partners provided strong rationales behind the estimates, including the identification of protected areas and/or Indigenous and traditional territories (ITTs) and/or priority landscapes covered by their sub-projects based on mapping and/or formal recognition, as well as consultation with Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Estimates of GHG emissions mitigated at baseline and end-of-project (EO) will be defined by the first PIR, with WWF-US providing support to sub-project partners to build capacity in using the Ex-ACT tool or other methods to calculate avoided emissions data.

3. Contribution to GEBs

The project recognizes that biodiversity conservation and socio-economic wellbeing are mutually reinforcing within Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories, which informs the diversity of social, ecological, cultural and political strategies and benefits referenced throughout the project, and, in particular, across Component 1 self-determined sub-projects.

The HCI will generate sustainable GEBs by addressing systemic barriers that limit Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' ability to steward their lands, territories, waters, and biodiversity-rich ecosystems. Through a globally representative portfolio of self-determined, Indigenous People- and local community-led sub-projects, the initiative will support improved management of ecologically critical landscapes and seascapes, restore degraded ecosystems, and promote sustainable land-use practices that reduce pressures on biodiversity and ecosystem services. By securing tenure rights and embedding rights-based approaches, the project will help maintain intact and sustainably managed ecosystems that store significant carbon stocks, thereby contributing to climate mitigation goals. In addition, integrated conservation, governance and livelihood strategies identified and led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities will strengthen social-ecological resilience to climate impacts, delivering adaptation benefits for Indigenous Peoples and local communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The project's portfolio-based and systems-oriented approach—combining direct financing for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations, institutional and collective capacity-strengthening, and engagement with policy and enabling environments—ensures that these benefits are not isolated but embedded in long-term governance, institutional and financial structures. Expected contributions include improved management of large areas of protected and conserved lands and waters, restoration of thousands of hectares of degraded ecosystems, adoption of sustainable practices across extensive landscapes and territories, and contributions to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions. These outcomes will be tracked through GEF Core Indicators and complemented by biocultural, governance, and right-based indicators co-developed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, ensuring that biodiversity, climate, and socio-economic co-benefits are measured in culturally appropriate ways, achieved at scale and sustained beyond the project's life.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	Extreme weather events coupled with the high vulnerability of many Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories could hamper implementation progress or negatively impact some activities. The technical due diligence questionnaire for C1 Partners includes a question regarding their organization's institutional processes for considering climate Change and if and how insights are incorporated into projects to enhance climate adaptation and resilience. Additionally, sub-project plans will ensure climate change risks and potential mitigation measures have been duly considered in their design. If project work or a community is heavily impacted by an extreme weather event, the GCU will work with the IGSC and the Partner to assess options and revise plans to support delivery/recovery of GEBs to the extent possible.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	This is a Moderate risk project, as any anticipated risks are expected to be limited in scope with mitigation measures in place that will ensure no long term, irreversible negative impacts. Both the GCU and each C1 partner will be required to complete a yearly ESS Screening and identify activities with Safeguards risks that require mitigation. Based on this screening and the guidance offered in the ESMF, they will create mitigation plans that are relevant to the risk and culturally appropriate. A notable social safeguard risk is inadequate Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) by Indigenous Peoples who could be affected by HCI -- and in particular, in C1 sub-projects, especially for regional C1 partners, such as Indigenous-led funds in which organizational leadership may not be from the same Indigenous Peoples as communities receiving HCI funds. The risk is mitigated by HCI selection criteria for C1 partners, "Applicant organizations must have established mechanisms for consultation and accountability with the Indigenous Peoples and/or local communities that they represent or serve." In addition, the above-described ESS process requires culturally appropriate documentation of FPIC processes and outcomes, including any consent conditions or agreements, during sub-project finalization and throughout the life of implementation. During the project development process, a seed grant was provided to pre-selected partners to enable them to proceed with FPIC processes with their communities and members prior to implementation funding becoming available. The risk was also mitigated by a consultation workshop carried out in Nairobi with pre-selected Indigenous Peoples partner representatives, in which detailed information was shared about the requirements associated with GEF funding prior to forthcoming grant agreements that will constitute

		Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizational initial consent to those conditions. WWF understands that FPIC is a continuous, iterative process rather than a static outcome, and will continue to work with partners to ensure consent to the ongoing co-development of HCI strategy and activities. In turn, C1 partners will implement and document consensus-driven planning and implementation with the Indigenous Peoples and local communities they represent and serve at the grassroots level.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Across the countries where C1 partners were pre-selected, government support of and relationship with Indigenous Peoples and local communities varies. Particularly in some countries, there is a risk of low government support or of a negative change in support with a change in government during the project cycle. Early outreach to governments will be conducted to build support. Projects will be fully owned and managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities to mitigate the effects of changing governments or their support. More generally, electoral processes during project implementation may lead to unrest and disruptions in project implementation. GCU and C1 partners will conduct ongoing monitoring of political and security context in the sub-projects implementation areas. A flexible approach to work planning will be adopted to adjust activity timelines around known electoral periods.

INNOVATION

Institutional and Policy	Moderate	The project is global in nature C1 partners are from the main GEF-recipient geographic regions. Institutional and policy contexts vary extensively among subregions and countries. Indigenous-led governance, financing, and conservation approaches may face limited recognition or enabling policy frameworks at national or sub-national levels, potentially delaying adoption or scaling. Mitigation measures identified include: early policy engagement, alignment with national strategies (NBSAPs, NDCs), engagement with multi-stakeholder platforms, capacity-strengthening for institutions, and adaptive implementation to ensure legal compliance and uptake.
Technological	Low	The strategy is not focused on technological innovation; however, if an IP- or LC-determined activity includes the use of new technology, there is a low risk that the technology will not work in the setting. For plans that include the integration of technology, consideration of the most appropriate options for the setting will be supported to inform the selection and/or adaptation of the specific technology to be used.
Financial and Business Model	Low	As a part of organizational strengthening, HCI Partners may adopt new financial or business models. This will be undertaken based on an operational risk assessment and any new models will be derived from or adapted through culturally rooted Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' approaches to ensure successful adoption of the new models.

EXECUTION

Capacity	Moderate	By issuing a broad call for EOIs with clear criteria and a rigorous selection process, the pre-selected organizations have a minimum level of required
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		capacity. Nonetheless, pre-selected HCI Partners have varying levels of capacity, assessed in the operational and technical due diligence process, and planned to be addressed throughout implementation – both C1 (self-strengthening plans) and C2 (collective strengthening).
Fiduciary	Moderate	There is a risk that HCI Partners receiving direct funding do not have the processes in place to meet the GEF fiduciary requirements. This will be addressed in the same manner as the above. In two cases, Partners are working with a fiscal sponsor chosen by the Partner and trusted by both parties to manage the fiduciary responsibilities. In any circumstance of noncompliance with the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards, project funding to that sub-project will be paused until there is an acceptable resolution.
Stakeholder	Moderate	There is a risk that stakeholder expectations may be higher than what the project can deliver. The project will work through the channels outlined above and in the SEP to clearly communicate the project objectives, requirements and timeline. There is a risk of elite capture and inequitable benefit-sharing on multiple levels, such as: 1. Organizations that are not connected at the global level may not be aware of the HCI, resulting in a limited number of organizations (non-C1 partners) that benefit as part of components 2 (collective strengthening) and 4 (learning, knowledge management and communications). This will be mitigated through a proactive, network-based outreach strategies to ensure a wider set of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations and ILFs benefit as part of components 2 and 4. 2. At the local level, women, youth or other minority or vulnerable groups might be excluded, thus potentially resulting in inequitable participation and/or sharing of project benefits. This will be mitigated through safeguards, stakeholder engagement and GESI action plans. Furthermore, C2 online trainings and resources will be accessible to any interested Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organization; C3 opportunities are targeting youth leaders from each of the C1 partners, some of which are less well-connected Indigenous organizations than others. In the event that exclusionary practices are discovered, the IGSC will work with the Partner organization to develop and implement a corrective action plan. Information will be shared through Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' networks, including those of women and youth, using email, WhatsApp, and other channels as recommended by regional experts.
Other	Moderate	At community level, technical capacities may be limited and delay implementation of sub-project activities such as participatory mapping, restoration work, land titling. C1 partners will provide technical support with support from GCU as needed, using culturally appropriate tools.
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The overall risk rating is moderate, given eight risk categories are rated moderate (Climate, Environment and Social, Political and Governance, Institutional and Policy, Capacity for Implementation, Fiduciary, Stakeholder

		and Other), whilst two categories are rated low (Technological and Financial and Business Model). This also aligns with the moderate Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks rating. The GCU will track risks through project execution and identify mitigation and management approaches as risks arise.
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C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The GEF has been working with Indigenous Peoples and local communities since its beginning in 1991 and recognizes their role in achieving GEF's goal for the global environment. The GEF is also aware of the differential impact that climate change has had, and will continue to have, on Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' livelihoods and territories. In response to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' desire to engage more with the GEF, the Facility developed in 2012 Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples,[34] which strengthened its previous policies including *GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards* and the *GEF Policy on Public Involvement in GEF Projects*, both of which contain fundamental principles that inform engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The 2012 guidelines aimed to operationalize existing GEF policies and enhance the GEF's effectiveness in ensuring that the GEF and its agencies include and promote Indigenous Peoples and local communities throughout the project cycle. In line with the GEF's guidelines, HCI recognizes the paramount role that Indigenous Peoples and local communities play in safeguarding global biodiversity and delivering GEBs. It follows the GEF requirements for full and effective Indigenous participation across the project cycle through self-selected representation, culturally appropriate processes, and technical support from recognized Indigenous and community experts. HCI also advances GEF principles on valuing and integrating Indigenous and traditional knowledge. Finally, by strengthening direct access finance through Indigenous Peoples- and local community-led mechanisms and supporting long-term institutional capacity, the project reflects the GEF commitment to improve financial arrangements for Indigenous Peoples and local communities and to provide accessible accountability and grievance pathways.

In addition, HCI is aligned with the GEF-8's programming directions. While it contributes to several focal areas, including climate change and land degradation, the project contributes most directly to the biodiversity focal area, which emphasizes the need for full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for the successful implementation of the KMGBF. HCI will support the achievement of the focal area's first objective to improve conservation, sustainable use and restoration of natural ecosystems by (i) operationalizing the GEF-8's integrated landscape/seascape management approach to support the conservation of biodiversity, (ii) promoting capacity strengthening of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, (iii) supporting the recognition and realization of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights to control and manage their lands and territories and (iv) supporting customary sustainable use of biodiversity by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The HCI is fully aligned with the KMGBF's vision to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and Indigenous Peoples and local communities as central actors in achieving its targets. The project directly supports Goal

C by recognizing Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights, traditional knowledge, and equitable participation in biodiversity governance, and includes two KMGBF indicators in the overall HCI Results Framework to track its contributions to KMGBF implementation. It contributes to multiple KMGBF targets, including **Target 1** on inclusive spatial planning that respects Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' territories; **Target 2** by enabling Indigenous- and community-led restoration of degraded ecosystems; **Target 3** by promoting equitable governance of conserved areas and recognizing Indigenous and traditional territories as key pathways toward the "30x30" goal; and **Targets 5 and 9** by safeguarding customary sustainable use of wild species and sustaining biodiversity-based livelihoods. Through its systemic approach, HCI also advances **Target 13** on fair and equitable benefit-sharing; **Target 14** by ensuring Indigenous and community values inform broader land- and seascape decision-making; **Target 15** by strengthening accountability of actors affecting biodiversity in and around IP/LC territories; **Target 19** by improving direct financial access for Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and **Target 20** through long-term capacity building for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' institutions and knowledge systems, alongside **Targets 21 and 22** by embedding FPIC and ensuring full, equitable, and effective participation in biodiversity governance. By strengthening Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance systems, securing tenure rights, and channelling resources through Indigenous People- and local community-led mechanisms, the project operationalizes KMGBF principles and demonstrates how rights-based, locally led conservation can deliver GEBs while addressing structural inequities in biodiversity finance.

(Footnotes can be found in the Roadmap under the 'Footnotes Annex')

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Yes

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier; Yes

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B project description?

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate	Medium/Moderate		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

The project recognizes that biodiversity conservation and socioeconomic wellbeing are mutually reinforcing within Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' territories. partners identified territorial governance, land tenure security, Indigenous food systems, biodiversity-based local economies, women's and youth leadership, and cultural continuity as core priorities alongside conservation objectives. HCI-supported activities are therefore expected to strengthen agroecology, community fisheries, non-timber forest product economies, restoration enterprises, sustainable forest management, and Indigenous-led enterprises, while reinforcing food sovereignty, climate resilience, and intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge. These activities will diversify household incomes, improve food sovereignty, increase resilience to climate and economic shocks, and reduce dependence on unsustainable extractive activities.

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
WWF-US	GET	Global	Biodiversity	BD Global/Regional Set-Aside	Grant	22,535,780.00	2,028,220.00	24,564,000.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						22,535,780.00	2,028,220.00	24,564,000.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

400000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

36000

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
WWF-US	GET	Global	Biodiversity	BD Global/Regional Set-Aside	400,000.00	36,000.00	436,000.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)					400,000.00	36,000.00	436,000.00

Please provide Justification

Additional funding needed for travel; the consultation process; due diligence process on partners; and for supporting development of the Impact and Accelerator plans.

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
Total GEF Resources					0.00

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	22,535,780.00	45660208
Total Project Cost		22,535,780.00	45,660,208.00

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	WWF US	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4133762
GEF Agency	WWF-US	Grant	Investment mobilized	4068294
Civil Society Organization	WWF International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3646132
Civil Society Organization	WWF International	Grant	Investment mobilized	10898678
Civil Society Organization	Tenure Facility	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1170000
Civil Society Organization	Tenure Facility	Grant	Investment mobilized	3500000
Civil Society Organization	WWF Cameroon	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	60000
Civil Society Organization	WWF Cameroon	Grant	Investment mobilized	77500
Civil Society Organization	WWF Brazil	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	556775
Civil Society Organization	WWF Brazil	Grant	Investment mobilized	1467889
Civil Society Organization	WWF India	Grant	Investment mobilized	708009
Civil Society Organization	REPALEAC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	65000
Civil Society Organization	REPALEAC	Grant	Investment mobilized	300000
Civil Society Organization	Podaali - Fundo Indigena da Amaznia Brasileira	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1680000
Civil Society Organization	Podaali - Fundo Indigena da Amaznia Brasileira	Grant	Investment mobilized	292000
Civil Society Organization	CIPO	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	41173

Civil Society Organization	CIPO	Grant	Investment mobilized	828485
Civil Society Organization	WWF Peru	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1120622
Civil Society Organization	WWF Peru	Grant	Investment mobilized	11045889
Total Co-financing				45,660,208.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

WWF-US investment mobilized is identified as a grant for the 30x30 Global OECM Framework SW Amazon project.

WWF International investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects, including People Powering Biodiversity, and INT/SWIO Fisheries – Improving Governance, Livelihoods and Ecosystems – Phase 2.

Tenure Facility Investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects including the 'Securing Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Recognition over Ancestral Land, Territories and Resources in Cambodia' project managed by CIPO and the 'Ensuring the Territorial Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Brazilian Amazon' managed by Podaali.

WWF Cameroon Investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific initiatives, including 'Project d'appui a la Conservation et l'Adaptation Marine Participative pour les Oceans – CAMPO (Pro-CAMPO)', 'Intact and Efficiently Managed Forest and Biodiversity (INFORBIO)', and 'Together for People and Planet Civil Society for Environment, Human Rights and Equity 2025-2030'.

WWF Brazil Investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects, including Together for people and planet – ToPP and Healthy Rivers for nature and People.

WWF India Investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects: "Snow Leopard Conservation in Khangchendzonga Landscape, Resilient local communities and ecosystems in the Eastern Himalayan Region of India, Traditional Handicraft and Handloom Revival and Economic Advancement through Durable Solutions (THREADS) in select Tiger Landscapes, Empowering Community Institutions in Karbi Anglong and Species, Connectivity and Conflict Management in the Brahmaputra Landscape.

REPALEAC investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects, including funding provided through the Tenure Facility under the MoU with REPALEAC.

Podaali investment mobilized is identified as a grant provided by an international private donor for a specific project.

CIPO investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects from various donors including the UK government, Global Center for Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC), Dunchurch Aid, Norwegian People's Aid, Wildlife Conservation Society and SDC.

WWF Peru investment mobilized is identified as grants for specific projects, including Andes-Amazon Landscape, The Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) Implementation Hub: Delivering the Bonn Challenge, Backing the Stewards of Landscapes and Seascapes, Peru Amazon Strategy, Global Forests Protection 2.0, Earth for Life, Leveraging Partnerships to Tackle Forestry-related Corruption and Crime, and Peru's National Legacy – Amazon and Climate: Effective Management of Peruvian Amazon Protected Areas for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

Provided that Letters of Endorsement are received for the pre-selected partners, the anticipated co-finance contribution of C1 partners during project execution is estimated at USD \$6M.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
Project Coordinator	3/13/2026	Astrid Breuer	2026960623	astrid.breuer@wwfus.org
Project Coordinator	7/10/2026	Astrid Breuer	2026960623	astrid.breuer@wwfus.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Dr. Haman Unusa	GEF Operational Focal Point, Minister's Cabinet, Technical Adviser N2	Ministry of Environment Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development	3/9/2026
Dr. Hery Rakotondravony	GEF Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	3/9/2026
Sam Vanty	Permanent Secretary of State and GEF OFP	Ministry of Environment	6/28/2026
Ms. Livia Farias Ferreira de Oliveira	General Coordinator for Sustainable Finance and GEF OFP	Ministry of Finance	3/27/2026
Mr. Raul Pinedo	Planning Analyst and GEF Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Environment of Panama	5/5/2026

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document.

						Targets (annual, or mid-term and close)					
Indicator / unit	Definition (note if cumulative)	Method/ source	Responsible	Disaggregation	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	Notes/ Assumptions
Objective: Increase Indigenous Peoples and Local communities’ organizational capacities and ability to access sustainable finance at scale for territorial stewardship to deliver social, economic, cultural, and Global Environmental Benefits.											
Objective indicator 1: Number people directly benefiting from GEF-financed investments, disaggregated by Indigenous Peoples and local communities groups, by sex and age (count) (GEF-CI 11)	Direct beneficiary: Individual who receives direct or targeted assistance or support from the project and would be aware of that support OR individual who benefits by using specific resources of the project Cumulative	Will be tallied from project activities, which directly benefit individuals targeted by the project. Efforts will be made to avoid double-counting Attendance sheets, participant lists, grant recipient lists where attendees self-select across the disaggregated categories	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer	Sex: Male/female/ other; Indigenous Peoples / Local communities / Indigenous Peoples and local communities / other; Age bands: 15-35, 36-59, 60+ Note: Cross-disaggregation will be utilized to analyze this data, for example a dedicated Indigenous youth category will be reported against	0		TBD	TBD	TBD	110,000 (50% F / 50% M)	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners

Objective indicator 2: # People indirectly benefiting from GEF-financed investments	Indirect beneficiary: Individual who receives some benefit from project activities but may not have directly participated with project activities or actively received or used project resources Cumulative	Will estimate members of households, entities, communities or administrative areas likely to benefit from the project with attention to avoid double-counting	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer	Sex: Male/female/other; Indigenous Peoples / local communities / Indigenous Peoples and local communities / other	0		TB D	TB D	TB D	190,000 (50% F / 50% M)	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners
Objective indicator 3: Area of landscapes under improved management (# ha) to benefit biodiversity (GEF-CI 4.1. and 4.5)	“Landscapes”: specific geographic area including diverse ecosystems, including human-dominated ecosystems and excludes PAs (GEF-CI 1.2). “Improved management”: improved practices, including in production sectors (e.g., agriculture, rangeland, forestry, aquaculture, tourism, extractives) that lead to improved environmental conditions and/or for which management plans have been prepared and endorsed and are under implementation Cumulative.	Qualitative description of the benefit provided to biodiversity will be reported along with GIS maps where available or appropriate. Project and activity reports	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer	By OECM and/or Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITT) or others (e.g., ICCAs, LMMAs)	0			TB D		2, 169, 235	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners, in accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
Objective indicator 4: Area of increased land	Cumulative	Review of land tenure documentation, survey	M&E Officer to consolidate	Existing vs new	0			TB D		230,000	Monitoring of this indicator will be

tenure security (#ha) due to project activities (KMGBF indicator)	“Improved land tenure security”: a) increase in number of hectares of legal recognition or legally recognized documentation that an individual or collective group has rights to access, use and control resources of the land in question and/or b) perception of greater security associated with existing or new, collective or individual land rights.	on perception of greater security	ate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer								undertaken by C1 sub-project partners, in accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
Objective indicator 5. Number and percent leadership/decision-making roles held by women, youth (and, as relevant, persons from underrepresented or marginalized groups) in HCI-supported organizations (GESI indicator)	Cumulative number of women and youth holding leadership/decision-making roles and respective share of total leadership/decision-making roles	Review of leadership/decision-making roles	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer		0	20 %	25 %	TB D; 30 %	35 %	1959; 40%	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by both the M&E manager and C1 sub-project partners, in accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
Outcome 1.1: Stewardship of lands, territories and resources are enhanced and social, economic and global environmental benefits are delivered through the implementation of a diverse portfolio of on-the-ground Indigenous Peoples and local community-led sub-projects											
Outcome 1.1.a. indicator: Area of terrestrial / marine protected areas (#ha) under improved management effectiveness	“Improved management”: is determined by an increase in score in the METT tool. There should be a minimum of one point increase in the score to be considered improved management	PA management METT exercise	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to	Terrestrial or Marine, Type of protected area (IUCN categories I-VI + other)	METT scores TBD in YR1			TB D		Terrestrial: 264,423 Marine : 4,084	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners, in accordance with

(GEF- CI 1.2 and 2.2)			M&E Officer							the relevance to their targeted activities
Outcome 1.1.b indicator: Area of ecosystems (#ha) under restoration (GEF CI 3)	Cumulative “restoration:” process of repairing and/or assisting the recovery of land and ecosystems that have been degraded, damaged, destroyed, or modified to an extent that the land and/or ecosystem cannot fulfil its ecological functions and/or fully deliver environmental services	Define and measure (e.g. map) where restoration activities take place and returning regularly (after X period of time) to ensure improvements in ecological function/delivery of ecosystem services. Provide GIS map where available.	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer	By type of ecosystems: forest and forest land, and wetlands (including estuaries and mangroves)	0			TBD	12,200	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners, in accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
Outcome 1.1.c indicator: Number of hectares of marine areas under improved management (GEF-CI 5)	Cumulative number of hectares of marine OECMs supported, reported and aggregated from all C1 sub-project partners.	Qualitative description of the benefit provided to biodiversity through a change in management will be reported with GIS maps where available or appropriate.	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer	By OECM and/or Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITT), or others (e.g., ICCAs, LMMAs)	0			TBD	23,156	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners, in accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
Outcome 1.1.d:	“Carbon sequestration”: the capture and secure	FAO Ex-Ante Carbon-	M&E Officer to		0			TBD	TBD	Target will be defined

Greenhouse gas emissions avoided in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (direct) (Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e) (GEF-CI 6.5)	storage of carbon that would otherwise be emitted to the atmosphere, aimed at mitigating global climate change. ³ “Avoided”: reduced emissions due to avoided deforestation or forest degradation, sustainable forest management, and improved practices.	balance tool (Ex-Act) using a 20-year timeframe (5 years for project implementation, 15 years of capitalization)	consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer								for first PIF (aggregation of partners sub-project’s GHG avoided) Will require sub-project partners to be trained on the FAO ex-ACT tool
Outcome 1.1.e: # and % of total initiatives led by women and youth (GESI indicator)	“initiatives” - a plan, process, mechanism or action (new or ongoing) aimed to mitigate/address a concern or problem pertaining to, among other areas, conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and/or advocacy. “Led by”: the initiative is primarily directed and/or managed by women or youth (e.g. majority representation or key decisionmakers)	Review of initiative documentation or interview with key players	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E Officer	By type – conservation; sustainable livelihood initiative; advocacy; or other	0	20 %	25 %	30 %	35 %	429; 40%	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners
Outcome 1.1.f Number of governance practices strengthened that incorporate traditional	“governance practices”: formal and informal processes used by rightsholders and stakeholders to influence and make decisions and exercise responsibility and	Analysis of governance practice via scorecard	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project	By type of governance practice: Conservation, sustainable livelihoods, advocacy, other	0			TB D		417	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project

ecological knowledge (Biocultural)	authority. “Strengthened”: improvements in legitimacy and voice, subsidiarity, direction, performance, equity, do no harm, accountability, transparency, respect for human rights, respect for rule of law, access to information, accountability in decision-making, existence of institutions and/or procedures for fair dispute resolution. “Traditional ecological knowledge:” ecological knowledge held by Indigenous peoples and or local communities, developed through long-term interactions with local ecosystems, that offers practices, skills and insights for sustainable resource management and conservation; “incorporation” of traditional ecological knowledge into governance practices means that this cultural know-how is respected represented and/or formalized within the governance practices.		partners to share data to M&E Officer								partners, in accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
Outcome 1.1.g: Number of countries with improved policies influenced by HCI partners to protect and encourage customary	“policies”: creation or strengthening of legal instruments or other frameworks or administrative measures	Review of policy directly influenced by HCI partners. Description of how policy is	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share	By level of policy change: national, sub-national, local. By country	0			TB D	12	Monitoring of this indicator will be undertaken by C1 sub-project partners, in	

sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities (KMGBF indicator)		strengthened will be captured in notes where feasible and applicable	data to M&E Officer								accordance with the relevance to their targeted activities
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Outcome 1.2: Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' partner organizations' technical capacities strengthened to manage multilateral and other financial resources and deliver GEBs

Outcome 1.2.a. indicator: Percentage of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' partner organizations demonstrating increased capacities to directly access and manage multilateral and other financial resources and to deliver GEBs	Cumulative number of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations that demonstrate strengthened capacities across their self-strengthening plan priorities (e.g., institutional, fiduciary, environmental and social safeguard, and organizational development)	Self-strengthening plans developed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities' C1 sub-project partners addressing due diligence findings. Pre-test/post-test around specific trainings	M&E Officer to consolidate data and C1 Sub-project partners to share data to M&E manager	0	0%	30%	50%	70%	100%	The comparison with pre-project capacities will be on the basis of the due diligence process conducted in PPG phase.
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Outcome 2.1: Strategic capacities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities organizations, including ILFs collectively strengthened to directly access multilateral and other finance and deliver GEBs

Outcome 2.1 indicator: Number of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations, and ILFs collectively strengthened to directly access multilateral and other	Cumulative number of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations that demonstrate improved readiness to engage with and directly access multilateral and other financing mechanisms	Project and activity reports Pre-test/post-test around specific trainings	M&E Officer	number of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations (Indigenous Peoples' organizations v. local communities' organizations v. ILFs)	0					TBD
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finance and to deliver GEBs				C1 partners								
				By region								
Outcome 3.1: Strengthened Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' engagement in international biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy processes co-developed												
Outcome 3.1 indicator: Number of formally established strategic advocacy partnerships with existing networks able to amplify the voice of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in key fora	Cumulative number of formalized strategic advocacy partnerships established with global or regional policy and advocacy networks that have demonstrated reach and influence in international biodiversity, climate, finance and related policy fora.	Project and activity reports	M&E Officer	Number						TBD		
Outcome 3.2.: Strengthened Indigenous and community influence through leadership, advocacy and policy engagement												
Outcome 3.2 indicator: % of youth leaders reporting increased perception of influence over biodiversity and finance related decision-making fora	Percentage of youth leaders participating in project-supported activities who report an increased perception of their ability to influence discussions, processes, or outcomes in biodiversity and finance-related decision-making fora compared to baseline levels measured at the start of their participation in the project.	Survey conducted at the baseline and end of each Youth Policy Leaders (YPLs) cohort using a standardized, culturally appropriate assessment methodology	M&E Officer	Sex: Male/female/other; Indigenous Peoples / Local communities, / Indigenous Peoples and local communities / other	0					100%		
Outcome 4.1: The body of knowledge and practices on Indigenous Peoples and local communities-led stewardship and financing is advanced and informs wider practices												
Outcome 4.1.a indicator: Percentage of Indigenous Peoples' and	proportion of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' partner organizations that confirm that they	Survey conducted at the end of the project	M&E Officer	Stewardship v. governance v. finance practices	0					70%		

local communities' partner organizations reporting that HCI-generated knowledge products informed or influence their stewardship, governance, or financing practices by the end of the project	have used, adapted, or applied HCI knowledge products to inform their stewardship approaches, governance processes, advocacy efforts, or financing strategies. "Informed or influenced" refers to self-reported evidence of practical application, adaptation, or decision-making attributable to HCI knowledge products during the project period.	using a standardized, culturally appropriate and accepted assessment methodology tailored to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' sub-project partners. Qualitative findings of the survey, where available, will provide context on level of influence of the knowledge products and identify which knowledge products were most helpful. Survey findings will be summarized and annexed to monitoring report.		Indigenous Peoples; / Local communities / Indigenous Peoples and local communities / other								
Outcome 4.1.b Number and percentage of communication products and	Cumulative number of unique communication products and KM materials. The same assets in multiple languages are counted only once.	Project website Project implement	M&E Officer			0%	25%	50%	75%	100%		

KM materials produced and shared in four languages on best practices and lessons learned on Indigenous- and community-led stewardship and financing to inform wider practices		ation report Project activity report									
Outcome 5.1 Description: Accountability, results-based decision-making and adaptive management are enabled thanks to effective and locally appropriate monitoring and evaluation											
Outcome 5.1.a indicator: Number of monitoring, reporting and learning deliverables /events to aid results-based decision-making and adaptive management	Deliverables are defined per year as follows: Y1: inception report, Validation/imp rovements of MEL plan in inception, Semi and annual PPRs (2), Pause and Reflect (P&R) with report Y2: 2 PPRs, 1 P&R with report Y3: 2 PPRs, 1 P&R, Inputs to midterm evaluation, P&R with report Y4: 2 PPRs, 1 P&R with report Y5: 1 PPR, 1 learning workshop, 1 Project close report (PCR)		M&E Officer		0	5	3	5	3	3	

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Project Development and Design (consultancies and contracts to develop program and/or project options, preparation of basic costing, technical design parameters, the financial plan, costs of translating documents into and out of English and assessing capacity of executing partners)	198,708.00	198,708.00	
Stakeholder Engagement (stakeholder identification and analysis, stakeholder consultation and participation, Stakeholder Engagement Planning, and forthcoming disclosure of information)	141,292.00	141,292.00	
Safeguards Assessments	30,000.00	30,000.00	
Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis	30,000.00	30,000.00	
Total	400,000.00	400,000.00	0.00

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Amparibe	-18.41667	47	1,078,420

Location Description:

Amparibe, 1st Arrondissement, Antananarivo, Analamanga Region, Madagascar. A densely populated urban neighborhood characterized by the presence of higher education institutions affiliated with the University of Antananarivo; it is frequented by students and civil servants and hosts various local commercial activities.

TAFO MIHAAVO Activities:

_Promoting the rights and responsibilities of local communities regarding community leadership and the sustainable management of natural resources.

_Representing and protecting the interests of RIMHV (Networks of Islands and Mountains Inhabited by Villagers) regarding access to and exploitation of natural resources.

_Supporting initiatives for the sustainable economic valorization of local resources to improve livelihoods.

_Facilitating dialogue and consultation among communities, public authorities, and partners to strengthen environmental governance.

Promoting equity in benefit-sharing and supporting community monitoring to strengthen social justice and local dignity.

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Podáali	-3.11608	-60.02237	

Location Description:

Podáali organization headquarters

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
TRADEX Nouvelle Route Bastos	3.87863	11.51234	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
CIPO HQ	11.53838	104.913405	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
MTF	8.9485	-79.56131	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.

ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title

final_HCI_GESI report

final_HCI GCU GESI Action Plan Framework

final_HCI GCU GESI Action Plan

HCI_Categorization Memo_final

HCI ESMF

HCI SEP

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

The budget remains high-level because of the unique nature of the HCI project, i.e., co-led with Indigenous peoples and local communities. Under Component 1, we have grant amounts for each of the 10 pre-selected partners' sub-projects and self-strengthening plans; we are not including that level of detail because we have not yet received Letters of Endorsement from GEF Operational Focal Points in each country where the likely partner is registered. Components 2 and 3, and to some extent 4, will be co-designed with Component 1, 2 and 3 Indigenous People and local community partners; although the general outlines of activities are known, it is premature to develop a detailed budget. Many of HCI activities will require translation and interpretation, costs that will be covered within the activity budget lines.

1 - Sub-grants to 10 C1 Partners for finalization of their sub-project and self-strengthening plans and their implementation (C1), and for their participation and self-organized travel to collective strengthening (C2) and Youth Leadership Programs (C3).

2 - All efforts will be made to contract Indigenous People's and local communities' Platforms/networks/consultants

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Budget notes and assumptions # (Please include footnote s below)	Component (US\$eq.)					Subtotal	PMC	Total Project	Responsible Entity (Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Agency)[1]
			TOTAL COMPONENT 1	TOTAL COMPONENT 2	TOTAL COMPONENT 3	TOTAL COMPONENT 4	TOTAL COMPONENT 5				
Goods	GCU office equipment (laptops, printer, etc.)		-	-	-	-	-	-	28,132	28,132	WWF
Total Goods			-	-	-	-	-	-	28,132	28,132	
Total Vehicles			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Grants/Sub-grants	Grants to the 10 sub-projects partners, participation including self-organized travel to collective strengthening & Youth leader program events (C1, C2, C3)	1	18,000,000	200,000	367,238	-	-	18,567,238		18,567,238	Indigenous People and local community partners
Total Sub-grants			18,000,000	200,000	367,238	-	-	18,567,238	-	18,567,238	
Contracts with Indigenous-led platforms and networks for collective strengthening	Contracts with IP-led platforms and networks for collective strengthening (C2)	2	-	425,000	-	-	-	425,000		425,000	WWF
Total Sub-contracts			-	425,000	-	-	-	425,000	-	425,000	
Contractual Services – Company	Consulting firm for MTE		-	-	-	-	40,000	40,000		40,000	WWF
	Consulting firm for TE		-	-	-	-	60,000	60,000		60,000	WWF

HCI website development & KM products development		-	-	-	200,00	-	200,00	200,00	0	WWF
Consultancy to develop C3 strategy		-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	WWF
Total Contractual Services - Company		-	-	50,00	200,00	100,00	350,00	-	350,00	
Salary and benefits / Staff costs										
Project manager	Finance Manager	67,500	22,500	-	-	-	90,000	410,000	500,00	WWF
	Administrative assistant	-	-	-	-	-	-	350,000	350,00	WWF
	Environmental and social Safeguards Specialist	-	-	-	-	-	-	125,000	125,00	WWF
	Gender and social inclusion specialist	225,000	75,000	-	-	-	300,000	-	300,00	WWF
	M&E Manager	225,000	75,000	-	-	-	300,000	-	300,00	WWF
	Learning, knowledge management and communication Specialist	-	-	-	-	300,000	300,000	-	300,00	WWF
	Partner liaison	-	-	-	300,000	-	300,000	-	300,00	WWF
		187,500	62,500	-	-	-	250,000	-	250,00	WWF
		0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Staff Costs		705,000	235,000	-	300,000	300,000	1,540,000	885,000	2,425,000	
Collective trainings		-	300,000	-	-	-	300,000	-	300,000	WWF
GCU led workshops		-	-	-	-	-	-	60,000	60,000	WWF
Total Trainings, Workshops, Meetings		-	300,000	-	-	-	300,000	60,000	360,000	
Collective strengthening travels (non-C1 Partners)		-	75,000	-	-	-	75,000	-	75,000	Indigenous People and local community partners (non C1)

GCU travel	45,000	15,000	-	-	-	60,000	100,000	160,000	WWF
M&E travel	-	-	-	-	57,479	57,479		57,479	WWF
IP & LC Delegates travel	-	-	87,931	-	-	87,931		87,931	Indigenous People and local community delegates (non C1)
Total Travel	45,000	90,000	87,931	-	57,479	280,410	100,000	380,410	
Grand Total	18,750,000	1,250,000	505,169	500,000	457,479	21,462,648	1,073,132	22,535,780	

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.

STAP comment number	STAP comments	How the comment was addressed and proposed changes
1	The project summary was quite brief but well-written. The description of the components was very clear and to the point, as was the explanation of the different categories of partners and their proposed functions/roles within the project. The description of some of the more theoretical concepts was supported by evidence from referenced sources, which was fairly adequate. The proposal states that the definitive/final estimate for the project benefits to be reported against the GEF Core Indicators will be further refined at the PPG stage, which is fine, but it would have been good to at least see a methodology for how the project benefits will be calculated.	Keeping the conciseness of the PPG request, the project summary section was redrafted to reflect the changes made between PPG request and CEO ER. The section consists of a brief problem statement, the description of the HCI objective, brief presentation of the project components and contribution to selected GEF Core Indicators.
2	The project rationale provides a very good description of the context and background, which is underpinned by ample references to reputable scientific and technical literature sources and is correlated well with the project objectives at several junctures.	The CEO Endorsement Request retains and further strengthens the rationale section by expanding contextual analysis and reinforcing the links between the identified challenges facing Indigenous Peoples and local communities and the project's objectives, with additional references and clearer articulation of the systemic barriers addressed by the project. The problem statement has been reorganized: 1) the state of global biodiversity and the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation; 2) Indigenous Peoples and local communities' capacities and access to tailored finance. The project rationale section now

		includes a drivers section, a reworked future narrative sections (see response to STAP comment 4), a strengthened baseline (see response to STAP comment 5), reworked project barriers (see response to STAP comment 6), a section on project approach and intervention strategy and finally a section on lessons learnt and coordination/complementarity with relevant GEF and non-GEF initiatives.
3	The project has a fairly well-defined objective, which is appropriate for the type of intervention. However this could and should also be phrased more aptly in the next version of the proposal.	The project objective has been refined in the CEO Endorsement Request to be more specific more clearly reflect the transformational intent of the project, highlighting increased resources, organizational strength, and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' governance and stewardship systems as pathways to delivering Global Environmental Benefits. The project objective now reads: to increase resources, organizational strength, and recognition for Indigenous Peoples and local communities' governance and stewardship of lands, territories and resources to deliver global environmental benefits (GEBs).
4	The section on future scenarios is very brief and too broad/superficial. As a result, it does not provide a convincing account of how different scenarios could unfold in the future.	The future scenarios section has been completely reworked following STAP guidelines. The section now defines two axes of uncertainty and describes four plausible trajectories related to global conservation finance availability and national enabling environments for Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights. In addition, the section also outlines how the project design would remain relevant under the different scenarios.
5	The description of the existing baseline provides a very good overview of existing Indigenous Peoples and local communities' networks, allied organizations, conservation organizations and multilateral institutions supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities. However this is also quite brief and could be expanded in places to provide more details and information. This is specifically the case for the description of existing Indigenous Peoples and local communities' networks, which is absolutely crucial to the success of the project.	Keeping most of the content from the PPG request, the baseline section has been restructured and expanded to provide additional detail on existing Indigenous Peoples and local communities' networks, coalitions, and supporting organizations at regional and global levels. This clarifies the ecosystem of actors already supporting Indigenous Peoples and local community-led conservation and situates the project within this broader landscape. The baseline section now provides a more structured presentation of conservation-focused Indigenous Peoples and local community-related initiatives focusing on 1) policy and governance advocacy and influence, 2) access to funding and financial mechanisms, 3) integrated capacity and institutional strengthening and 4) inclusive conservation knowledge generation, learning and practices.

6	The description of the barriers is fully adequate and provided a clear overview of the obstacles that the project will need to overcome in order to be successful.	The description of barriers has been reworked. While keeping all of the ideas contained in the barriers section in the PPG request, the CEO ER grouped some and now only has 4 key barriers. The purpose of this was to improve conciseness and provided clearer links between identified barriers and description of the intervention logic of the project components outlined in the ToC section to ensure that each barrier is addressed through specific project activities.
7	The proposal makes several references to systems thinking and provides a link to a report published by WWF, which provides a very detailed discussion and analysis about the topic. However, it did not include a description of how the project would apply systems thinking in practice or through its activities and rather repeats some of the information provided in other sections of the proposal.	Under Section B, sub-section 4 now clarifies the project's approach and how systems thinking informs the project design by identifying key leverage points—finance systems, organizational capacity, and recognition/influence—and describing how interventions across components collectively address systemic barriers to IP Indigenous Peoples and local communities' access to conservation finance.
8	While the overall theory of change (ToC) provided an interesting proposition and included all the basic/standard elements and is sound at a global scale, it somewhat failed to convert these into ambitious goals and outcomes, especially when drilling down to the local context. Because local contexts are very variable, each sub-project will need to have its own, more explicit ToC. The ToC presented is basically targeted at the portfolio level, but in the next phase of design, more details will be needed on how the two types of partnerships will contribute to the overall ToC. The causal links presented could also be significantly strengthened and improved. Most of the elements needed to achieve these are disseminated throughout the proposal, but need to be brought together more effectively. The diagram is also not very straightforward and could be improved by making it more linear and less counter-intuitive (i.e. too many arrows pointing in different directions and unclear labeling). Furthermore, if the project is going to be transformational, as suggested, more detailed causal pathways are needed, especially related to scaling. The ToC diagram should be redesigned to ensure this flows more coherently and provides a more linear illustration of the intended causal pathways, which are very well-described in the description of the project components, outputs and outcomes. Rethink and rephrase the ToC narrative description to ensure this reflects what is already conveyed through the description of the project components.	The Theory of Change narrative has been revised to strengthen causal linkages between activities, outputs, and outcomes by introducing three causal pathways 1) strengthened ILFs and other Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations to access biodiversity-related finance, 2) self-strengthened Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations' technical, institutional, and strategic capacities, 3) increased Indigenous Peoples and local communities' recognition and influence in decision-making arenas and knowledge systems. In addition to assumptions, the ToC now also includes risks and enablers connected to the causal pathways. The ToC diagram has been reworked to improve readability and reflect the restructured project intervention logic. C1 Partners will clarify their project context and define their specific expected outputs and outcomes by the end of year 1.

9	The description of the project components was one of the strongest aspects of the proposal. The components are really well structured and include a coherent set of activities that fit well together and complement one another to provide a clearly defined vision/sense of direction of what the project is aiming to achieve.	The project components/outcomes and outputs have been rearranged and a table highlighting the structural changes between PPG request and CEO ER has been included in section A, with a brief explanation of the changes made. Importantly, all of the activities which were included in the PPG request that were to be undertaken during the PPG phase were removed.
10	Country policies that fail to recognize or support Indigenous tenure and resource rights are mentioned as a project risk (political and governance), but perhaps this should also be considered as a barrier. For example, there are countries without legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' tenure and resource rights or that actively seek to direct finance away from Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This potentially seems to be more than a risk. Regardless, a more specific pathway should be described for mitigating the situation	The CEO Endorsement Request clarifies that limited recognition of Indigenous tenure and governance systems represents both a structural barrier and a contextual risk. The narrative now better explains how the project will support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in strengthening governance and engaging with national policy processes where appropriate (Component 1).
11	Provide a more detailed description of the Accelerator Partners to clarify whether these must be Indigenous Peoples and local community-led mechanisms or whether they will be other types of organizations. Also describe the role of sub-grantees more fully. At what level will the sub-grantee operate, i.e. local, regional or global? The proposal indicates they will be "well positioned to work with communities" but in some cases would sub-grantees be individual indigenous territories or communities? Will sub-grantees use fiscal sponsors and, if so, is there a plan to phase these out over time?	This terminology has been dropped. A paragraph and a diagram now explain the partnership architecture of HCI under section C2. Some of the grantees will operate at regional level, others at national level and others at much more local level. A detailed description of each sub-grantees is provided as an Annex.
12	Given the cultural diversity among the target beneficiaries, a diversity of consultation approaches is needed. What models for consultation have been considered and what are the most effective mechanisms of consultation in different contexts?	The project's approach emphasizes self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including their locally and culturally appropriate consultation processes.
13	Outcome 4.2 would be strengthened if it were revised to include, not only dissemination outwards from the project to the broader Indigenous Peoples and local communities, but also dissemination inwards from other projects and actors. This seems particularly important since this is a dynamic and rapidly evolving area and would help ensure the project continuously incorporates learnings from this broader community.	Opportunities to share findings through dialogues with key stakeholders will be identified and/or created with guidance from and oversight of the IGSC. This could include participating in existing events or creating side events on the sidelines of large convenings, but also through the publications of policy briefs, videos and reports.
14	Parts of the Risk Table need to be revised. For example, the explanation of risk is the same for climate and for environmental and social risks. This seems to be an error. The description of mitigation for political and governance risks is somewhat generic and should be written in a more systematic manner.	The risk table has been revised to correct inconsistencies and strengthen mitigation measures. Risk descriptions have been clarified across categories and mitigation strategies have been made more specific and systematic.

