



Concept Note for the Annual Shandia Forum 2024

Background - Why we established the Shandia Platform

In 2021, the GATC launched Shandia as our common platform to facilitate direct funding to the territories of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for actions that combat climate change, conserve biodiversity and sustain our rights and self-determined development. The factors that led to this decision are briefly outlined below:

The world is currently grappling with a convergence of crises, including irreversible climate change, accelerated biodiversity collapse, human rights violations, and increasing inequalities. These challenges have profound implications for the health of our planet and the well-being and future of humanity.

In our territories, these intertwined crises are reflected in increased pressure on our lands, territories, natural resources and social fabric, resulting in environmental degradation, pollution, land grabbing, forced displacements, attacks on environmental and human rights defenders, poverty and outmigration of youth, among others. For these reasons, our peoples and communities are among the most marginalized and impoverished groups within our respective societies. Notably, while Indigenous Peoples comprise only 6.2 % of the global population, we account for a staggering 18.7 % of the extremely poor¹.

The cumulative impact on our lands, territories and natural resources makes it increasingly difficult to uphold our traditional sustainable management practices and governance systems, and pass on traditional knowledge, practices and innovations to future generations.

Yet, our peoples and communities remain the protectors and guardians of vast traditional territories, which host many of the world's remaining forests and intact ecosystems and play a vital role in carbon sequestration and biodiversity. For example, an estimated 36% of the world's remaining intact forests and at least 24% of the above-ground carbon in tropical forests are found within Indigenous Peoples' territories. Deforestation rates on lands where Indigenous Peoples

¹ ILO, 2019: *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169: Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future*, p. 13. Available [here](#)



have secure tenure rights are significantly lower than in areas outside of our control². Hence, we are essential partners for combating climate change, conserving biodiversity, and securing sustainable development and empowering our peoples and communities is not only a matter of justice and equity but also a strategic imperative.

The global society is mobilizing resources for achieving the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework. Yet, while our role is paramount, we face significant obstacles in accessing funding for initiatives in our territories.

There is no systematic tracking, but Rainforest Foundation Norway estimates that funding to tenure rights and forest management of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities amounted to less than 1 percent of international climate development aid from 2011-2020³. Moreover, only a small fraction of funds is allocated directly to organizations led by Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities. A survey among 75 major Indigenous Peoples' organizations, national and regional networks and funding mechanisms from Africa, Asia and Latin America in 2022 revealed that only 6 of these had a budget above 1 million a year⁴. Under the 2021 Forest Tenure Pledge, which explicitly aims to increase direct support for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, it is only 2.1% of funding disbursed so far, which is allocated directly to an organization led by our peoples or communities⁵.

Most funds addressing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are channeled through multilateral agencies, governments, international NGOs and other so-called "intermediaries". For example, under the 2021 Forest Tenure Pledge, around 50% of total funding is channeled via international NGOs. A review of the projects funded by Norway from 2021-23 with a purpose related to the Pledge revealed only one project where funding went directly to an indigenous organization, constituting 0.19 % of the budget reviewed⁶.

The transaction costs of this indirect approach to funding are not known, but as the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, we can affirm that our organizations and communities remain underfunded in the midst of the interwoven crises we are facing.

Moreover, where funding is available, it is often short-term, competitive and unpredictable, driven by supply rather than aligned with our self-determined priorities. In many cases, funding is

² See data of the [World Resources Institute](#)

³ Rainforest Foundation Norway, 2021: *Falling Short*. Available [here](#)

⁴ Charapa 2022: *Directing Funds to Rights*, p. 31. Available [here](#)

⁵ See the 2021-22 Annual report of the Forest Tenure Funders Group, p. 9. Available [here](#)

⁶ GATC/Shandia data collection 2023, forthcoming publication.



subject to complex rules and procedures that are often prohibitive for our organizations and do not support transparency and accountability towards communities.

Donors tend to be unaware of the organizational capacity of our organizations, and we are often left out of the dialogue between donors and the so-called intermediary organizations. Thereby, our fundamental rights to participation in decision-making and to Free, Prior and Informed Consent are not upheld. This has negative implications for the self-determination, institutional ownership, capacity and empowerment of our organizations and communities. These are the reasons why we created the Shandia Platform.

New challenges and the political context of the Shandia Forum 2024

Since the asymmetry between our importance in confronting climate change and biodiversity loss and the resources directed to IP&LCs gained traction in global arenas thanks to the IP&LCs advocacy, we have observed some progress in this scenario. According to the report released in April 2024 by the Rights and Resources Initiative and Rainforest Foundation Norway⁷, the resources invested for this purpose have averaged \$517 million per year since 2020, which represents an increase of about 36% compared to the previous four years. A significant part of this growth is attributed to investments made by the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG), responsible for 72% of the increase, confirming the importance of the Pledge established in 2021 at COP26. Another positive development is that resources directed to ensure our territorial rights have also increased across all regions analyzed in the report.

A year later, during COP 27, in Sharm El-Sheikh, the Forest & Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP) was established, aiming to increase Global North governments' commitments with Global South countries towards the expansion of political action for forests, land-use and climate policies. One of the FCLP agreed priorities is to better engage with IP&LCs organizations globally and for that one of the main strategies was to create the Dialogue Platform for IP&LCs, which was launched during COP28 and in which the GATC is a central actor.

Additionally, it is also important to highlight the launch of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) in August 2023 under the umbrella of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Aimed at achieving the goals set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at CBD COP15, the GBFF initially promised \$211 million, including a non-binding commitment that 20% of the

⁷ Rights and Resources Initiative & Rainforest Norway Foundation. "State of Funding for Tenure Rights and Forest Guardianship: Donors Funding For Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Afro-descendant peoples in Tropical Forested Countries (2011–2023)." 2024.



resources would be allocated to projects related to IP&LCs. In its first work program, the GBFF allocated **\$37.8 million** for the development of three projects in Mexico, Gabon and Brazil.

Access to this data itself also represents progress, resulting from a collective effort by funders, IP&LC organizations, multilateral and bilateral institutions, and governments to increase transparency of resources addressed to IP&LCs. Among these initiatives, the Paris Roadmap stands out for its work in building a common framework to track funds to Indigenous Peoples, in which the GATC plays a central role.

While such progress should undoubtedly be celebrated, there is still much to be done regarding systemic changes towards the effective guarantee of our five demands. In this sense, some critical data should be highlighted about the current status of finance addressed to IP&LCs.

It is estimated that at least **\$10 billion** needs to be invested by 2030 to recognize territorial rights over about 400 million hectares in 18 critical countries to meet commitments in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. Even with the recent initiatives and commitments, we still are far away from this amount and the historical inequalities between global north and global south countries make this path even harder. For instance, countries with significant deficits in recognizing territorial rights do not receive proportional resources to address this crucial issue. This specially the case of **Indonesia and Cameroon, that account for 36% of unrecognized territories** worldwide but receive only about **9% of funding** for this purpose.

Concerning the resources that are already being implemented, the most recent data⁸ shows that in the last 13 years, **140 projects** received more than half of all resources invested for IP&LCs. These projects are typically implemented by governments, multilateral institutions, large consulting firms, and international conservation organizations and tend to be long-term, receiving from **tens to \$100 million**. On the opposite side are the funds received by our organizations, usually distributed in short-terms projects and receiving much smaller amounts - between **\$30,000 and \$50,000**.

This asymmetry persists despite the **multiplication of IP&LCs mechanisms**. Under the Shandia umbrella, it's admirable the work of **Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM)**, which, in its first cycle of projects up to 2022 has invested **\$600,000** to support **10 projects** in **six different countries**, reaching **16.952** people. It's also the case of **Nusantara**, which has supported up to **157 initiatives** in **32 provinces of Indonesia**, addressing **\$948.142** to indigenous communities in little more than a year of existence. Also under the Shandia umbrella, is important to highlight that the **Articulation**

⁸ Rights and Resources Initiative & Rainforest Norway Foundation. "State of Funding for Tenure Rights and Forest Guardianship: Donors Funding For Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Afro-descendant peoples in Tropical Forested Countries (2011–2023)"



of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) and the Network of Indigenous and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC) are in process of creating their **own mechanisms** to move forward with direct finance to IP&LCs in Brazil and in the Congo Basin.

All this progress could reach another scale if the necessary resources were allocated to IP&LCs led mechanisms. Nowadays, the **demand for support by communitarian initiatives is much larger than the resources available**. It is estimated that **only 30% of the projects received**⁹ by IP&LC mechanisms are financed, due the lack of funds. This data is corroborated by reports elaborated by the donors: for instance, the FTFG¹⁰ declared in its last report that, although the total amount for direct financing increased in 2022, **only 2.1%** of resources allocated went to IP&LC-s led organizations, **proportionally less than the 2.9% in 2021**.

The situation is even more serious if we talk about historically marginalized groups. Considering the resources directed to women and girls, **only about 1.4%** of all philanthropic budgets addressed worldwide was allocated to **Indigenous women** between 2016 and 2020, mostly implemented by non-Indigenous organizations¹¹.

Regarding transparency, we still have a long way to go to ensure the effective monitoring of resources allocated to IP&LCs, especially those executed through direct financing. The multiple forms of accountability by funders and intermediary organizations, as well as the different understandings of the notion of direct funding itself, represent significant challenges. Overcoming these challenges will require considerable collective effort from the various stakeholders.

Hence, our perspective is that, although the reasons why GATC created the Shandia Platform are now a political consensus, this does not mean that the purposes of Shandia have been achieved. Instead of IP&LCs taking the lead of this process and direct financing being effectively reinforced, the data available show the strengthening of the so-called intermediaries and a competitive atmosphere for resources jeopardizing IP&LC-led mechanisms. On the political level, climate and biodiversity finance futures are still made by governments, Big NGOs, and non IP&LCs organizations, frequently without any kind of consultation process. Furthermore, attacks on our lives and territorial rights are still widely funded worldwide.

⁹ Charapa

¹⁰Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Ternure Group. "Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Ternure Pledge: Annual Report (2022-2023)" (2023)

¹¹ International Funders for Indigenous Peoples and Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas 2024 "Leaders and Stewards: Global Analysis of Funding to Indigenous Women" (2024)



We appreciate the efforts of donors, strategic allies and partner organizations that have worked with us over the past years to change this situation. We also notice enhanced dialogue and support from our strategic allies in strengthening outreach and advocacy and engaging decision-makers. Their support and alliance are crucial to overlap the systemic issues on the climate and biodiversity financial architecture, in an auspicious moment. A new Pledge from the FTFG is being planned, new climate funds are being articulated or being operationalized, (Loss and Damage Fund and the Adaptation Fund, for instance) and the Platform to Support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Climate and Forest Action from the FCLP has a work plan to move on with.

It is also very important to emphasize that, even in such a complex scenario, what we testify on the ground is the flourishing of creative and communitarian initiatives, based on IP&LCs traditional knowledge, systems of governance and land rights, financed through IP&LCs- led mechanisms. The IP&LCs-led mechanisms are themselves building innovative accountability procedures to simultaneously attend donors' requisites and communities' needs, thus struggling to guarantee our crucial role in maintaining the forest, the biodiversity and therefore the world alive. The **territorial-based solutions** are multiplying worldwide, in collaborative ambiance between Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Afro-descendant organizations. Shandia is part of this effort, working side by side with the territorial mechanisms under our umbrella.

Shandia Annual Forum 2024

Shandia will annually organize a global forum convening representatives of the GATC member organizations and their respective regional and national territorial funding mechanisms, likeminded territorial funds established by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, along with key donors, strategic allies and resource persons. The Shandia Forum will be organized in conjunction with the New York Climate Week (NYCW), which also takes place simultaneously with the United Nation General Assembly (UNGA), a crucial political moment for human and environmental rights actors. Furthermore, convening the Forum at NYCW also enables important articulations towards the UN Conventions, such as the UNFCCC and the CBD - COP, assuring that the discussions made during the event can also be taken into account on the political decisions made on the further negotiations.

These considered, our mains objectives with the Shandia Forum 2024 are:

- i) To deepen the political consensus on the lack of resources directed towards IP&LCs, discussing the reparative nature of climate financing, and its necessary connection with direct financing, territorial rights and IP&LCs governance;



- ii) Build political commitments with donors to prioritize direct financing and IP&LCs leadership in decisions regarding financial flows;
- iii) Showcase what the Shandia Platform has built since its inception, bringing concreteness to our work.

Expected outcomes from the Forum include:

- 1) Progress of Territorial Mechanisms under the Shandia umbrella showcased, facilitating new funding;
- 2) The two new mechanisms under the Shandia Umbrella made visible, networked with donors to initiate their work;
- 3) The crucial role of the Shandia Platform consolidated as: promoter of knowledge exchange between mechanisms, articulator of various tropical forest peoples, facilitator of new mechanisms, and a key player in climate and biodiversity financing negotiations;
- 4) The common framework for tracking funds for Indigenous Peoples consolidated and adopted by multi/bilateral actors and civil society organizations;
- 5) Accountability and learning processes on the ground exchanged between mechanisms;
- 6) Best practices in funding centered on women and girls and youth systematized, towards the construction of Best Practices of IP&LC mechanisms and future Policy Papers;
- 7) Commitment to direct funding to IP&LCs adopted as a priority in the construction of the new FTFG Pledge;
- 8) GATC consolidated as a decision-making part in the direction of the FCLP, especially regarding funding for territorial rights in the participating countries

The Shandia Forum 2024 will take place during New York Climate Week:

23rd September - Opening event, 3pm - 5pm

24th September - whole day event, 9am - 6pm

26th September - Paris Roadmap Tracking of Funds Workshop, 9am - 1pm