

Shandia

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Introduction

Between 2024 and 2025, the Shandia Platform has consolidated itself as a singular political actor — simultaneously global and deeply rooted in the territories. During this period, we crossed a decisive stage in the debate on direct funding, amid the redefinition of multiple global commitments (such as the *Forest Tenure Funders Group Pledge 2.0* and the *Intergovernmental Land Tenure Pledge*), the creation of new global financial mechanisms (*Tropical Forest Forever Facility*), the development of learning and territorial articulation tools (*Shandia Learning Community*), and the continuous flourishing of territorial mechanisms whose impact in addressing multiple crises is becoming increasingly strong — and can no longer be ignored. These processes have shown that Shandia is, fundamentally, a political movement — one that connects peoples and communities in defense of their rights, their ways of life, and their capacity to decide upon the future of their territories.

The first section of this report examines the role of Shandia and the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) in international advocacy spaces. It analyzes the legacy and challenges of the *Forest Tenure Funders Group Pledge* five years after its creation, the progress of the *Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership* and the *Intergovernmental Land Tenure Pledge*, and Shandia's active engagement in co-designing the *Tropical Forest Forever Facility* (TFFF).

Together, these processes reflect a coherent strategy: to turn global commitments into concrete instruments that recognize Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities as protagonists of climate solutions and forest governance. We close this section by presenting our own collective commitment: *The Peoples' Pledge* — a commitment of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to give substance to global promises, grounded in the ancestral wisdom developed within our communities.

The second section introduces the creation and first steps of the *Shandia Learning Community* — a collective learning space for institutional strengthening among direct funding mechanisms. From Brazzaville to London, from virtual sessions to thematic publications, the Learning Community has become a political and pedagogical instrument to consolidate financial sustainability, governance, and cooperation among territorial funds. It is also a field of experimentation — exploring how to share knowledge, systematize experiences, and generate common tools that sustain the global ecosystem of funding led by peoples and communities, grounded in our own priorities.

Finally, the third section presents the concrete experiences of territorial mechanisms — the living expression of what direct funding truly means.

The report highlights how the *Fondo Amazonía por la Vida* advances the consolidation of Indigenous Peoples economies in the Amazon Basin; how the *Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano* transforms historical inequalities into practices of cultural and territorial mediation; how the *Nusantara Fund* redefines direct support to communities in Indonesia through movement-led action; how the *REPALEAC Fund* builds, in the heart of Central Africa, an instrument for transformation; how the *Jaguará Fund* continues strengthening Indigenous Peoples struggles and organizations in Brazil; how the *Rutê Fund* expands the already consolidated work of the Indigenous Peoples Council of Roraima; how the *IPAS Fund* faces the challenge of financing initiatives in a continent marked both by its vast Indigenous Peoples population and by fragile recognition of their rights; and how *Podaali* continues its pioneering path as a direct financing mechanism in the Brazilian Amazon.

Real impact is born on the ground — it is there that numbers and metrics become tangible.

Through this report, we aim to demonstrate how Shandia today stands as both a global actor — with a strong political voice — and one whose meaning exists only through territorial action. By connecting territorial funds and engaging in decision-making

arenas with governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and philanthropic donors, Shandia's legitimacy does not come from distant seats, but from coherence with what is lived and built within our communities. Our political strength grows from this foundation: from governance that reflects the diversity of our peoples, from priorities defined by their own modes of existence, and from a vision that understands financing not as an end in itself, but as a means to sustain life and to achieve our collective demands — territorial rights, protection of life, traditional knowledge, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

If COP-30 represents a crucial moment, we know that our path will continue beyond it. The effort reflected here is but one more step in a journey that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities have walked for millennia.

The
answer
is us.

A person's hands are shown holding a small, dark, textured globe. The globe has a light-colored, woven or knitted pattern around its center. The background is a blurred image of a person's face, overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

Section 1.

**Advocacy in the
global arena to
ensure our rights
on the ground**

Forests Ternure Founders Group Pledge - 5 years later

In 2021, during COP26 in Glasgow, a group of donors organized around the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) to establish the first Pledge aimed at strengthening the land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs&LCs). The commitment emerged as a response to a widely acknowledged fact: less than 1% of global Official Development Assistance (ODA) was directed to initiatives related to IP&LCs, despite their essential role in forest conservation, climate mitigation, and biodiversity protection (Rainforest Norway, 2021).

The launch of the Pledge represented a significant milestone. For the first time, a substantial group of bilateral and philanthropic donors publicly committed to a concrete financial target: investing at least USD 1.7 billion over five years in actions related to IPs&LCs rights in tropical forest regions. The main goal was to support land tenure security and strengthen representative organizations of forest peoples and communities.

Observed progress

At the end of the cycle initiated in 2021, important progress can be recognized. According to the 2025 report by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)

and the Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN), since the launch of the Forest Tenure Pledge, annual funding for IPs&LCs-related initiatives increased by 46% compared to the previous period, reaching an average of USD 728 million per year. More than half of this growth is directly attributed to Pledge signatories, and some donors, such as Germany and the World Bank, doubled their disbursements compared to the previous four years.

The most recent public report from the FTFG, referring to 2024, indicates that financial commitments were not only met but exceeded: between 2021 and 2024, approximately USD 1.86 billion was disbursed, surpassing the initial goal, with steady growth each year. These results demonstrate the mobilizing effect of the Pledge and the consolidation of a sustained dialogue space between donors and Indigenous Peoples and Local community organizations around the agenda of direct funding and tenure rights.

Persistent challenges

Despite progress, available data show that the proportion of funds reaching IPs&LCs-led organizations and mechanisms directly remains



limited. Between 2021 and 2024, direct funding rates fluctuated between 2% and 10%, averaging less than 8%. A positive trend was observed among philanthropic donors—whose direct funding rose from 3.8% in 2021 to 34% in 2024—but bilateral donors declined from 4% in 2023 to 1.6% in 2024.

These figures reflect institutional and regulatory barriers that continue to restrict direct access to international funding. The Norwegian Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) in Brazil, which directed about 90% of its latest funding round directly, shows that progress is possible, though such examples remain exceptional. In 2024, international NGOs received around USD 165 million, while IPs&LCs and Afro-descendant organizations and funds received only USD 39 million—highlighting the need to review funding flows and strengthen trust in territorial mechanisms.

Regional and thematic inequalities

Resource distribution continues to reflect historical imbalances. In 2024, 58% of total investments were concentrated in Latin America, while Asia—home to one-third of the world’s Indigenous Peoples population—received 18%. Within regions, most funds remain concentrated in major tropical biomes (Amazon, Borneo-Mekong, and

Congo Basin), reinforcing internal inequalities and limiting reach to other communities.

Important thematic and demographic gaps also persist. Only 1% of 2024 resources went to initiatives primarily targeting Indigenous and local youth. Projects focused on Indigenous Peoples, local, and Afro-descendant women represented 14% of investments, with 52% including them as a secondary focus. Thematic areas most directly linked to land rights—such as land reform and legal recognition—remain among the least funded, with USD 26 million and USD 48 million allocated respectively.

Risks and new opportunities

According to RRI-RFN (2025), funding for tenure rights remains below 1% of global climate aid and has shown a declining trend since its 2021 peak. This may signal waning political momentum. The report estimates a USD 2.9 billion gap toward the USD 10 billion Path to Scale goal if current trends persist.

This scenario highlights the need for a renewed cycle of commitments, with instruments better adapted to territorial realities and greater predictability in resource flows.

Perspectives for Pledge 2.0

The announcement of a new Pledge comes at a strategic moment. The first Pledge helped catalyze the emergence of territorial funds and mechanisms; the second can support their consolidation and growth.

Priority areas include developing specific metrics for monitoring the impact of direct funding—covering social, environmental, and governance dimensions—and strengthening transparency and shared accountability standards among donors.

The Shandia Platform, which gathers territorial funds from 24 tropical countries, contributes to the development of these tools and is ready to collaborate in building more robust accountability mechanisms suited to the cultural and political diversity of the communities.

Five years after its creation, the FTFG Pledge stands as a relevant initiative. It brought direct funding to the global agenda and proved that collective commitments can generate results when coordinated with political will. The new Pledge represents an opportunity to build upon that progress—expanding direct access, strengthening territorial governance, and deepening effective partnerships between donors and territorial communities.





Forest Climate Leaders Partnership and the Intergovernmental Pledge

The FCLP is a donor country led coalition of governments from the global North and South who have come together to expand and maintain high-level political leadership on forests, land-use and climate, to work together to implement solutions that reduce forest loss, increase restoration and support sustainable development, and to ensure accountability for the pledges that were made at the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow- the Glasgow Leaders Declaration and the associated pledge organized by the FTFG described above. The FCLP has six priority lines of work:

The GATC began engaging the FCLP from the beginning, although the pace of interactions between COP26 and COP27 was slow and mostly focused on meetings with the UK, German and Norwegian governments. At COP27 in Egypt the GATC met with key actors in the FCLP and secured agreement to collaborate, which eventually led to the creation of an “IP & LC Dialogue Platform” once the FCLP Secretariat was established and formally transferred to the UNDP . The Platform has been spearheaded by Norway and Peru, and in 2025, has been joined by Brazil. The GATC submitted a number of proposals,

1. Sustainable land use and supply chains

3. Shifting the private finance system

5. Strengthening and scale carbon markets for forests

2. Mobilizing public and donor support for implementation

4. Supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities initiatives

6. Building international partnerships to preserve high integrity forests

aligned with the overall demands of the GATC, for collaborative work with the FCLP, however most of these have not been implemented yet.

At the first in person meeting of the FCLP IP & LC Dialogue Platform- held during the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum in Norway in 2024, the GATC proposed a land tenure pledge as a way to get forest country governments in the global south to advance land tenure security for IP & LC. The idea was for countries to pledge to title a certain number of hectares of Indigenous Peoples or community lands as a tangible means of advancing land rights and creating enabling conditions for the other areas of work prioritized by the FCLP. While progress was slow in 2024, in 2025 the work on the “Inter-governmental Land Tenure Pledge” has moved more quickly.

As we approach COP30, where the FCLP Inter-governmental Land Tenure Pledge will be launched, there are only a handful of countries who have committed to participate, these include: Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania. Among donor governments, the UK, Germany, Netherlands and Denmark are actively supporting the pledge. As it currently stands, the pledge text commits to:

- Reform national policy and legislation to streamline land titling and recognition efforts;
- Integrate land rights into national NDC's and NBSAP's or similar;
- Incorporate traditional knowledge into national forest and climate policies;
- Reaffirm the right to FPIC and full and effective participation;
- Promote direct finance to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
- Implement a transparent monitoring framework for the implementation of the Land Tenure Commitment;
- Report annually through the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Platform of the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership.





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The Tropical Forest Forever Facility

The Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) is a global initiative proposed by the Government of Brazil, in collaboration with the World Bank and international partners, aimed at mobilizing long-term resources for the conservation of tropical forests and the recognition of the ecosystem services they provide. Its goal is to create a permanent financial mechanism capable of ensuring recurring payments to countries and communities that keep their forests standing, thus contributing to climate change mitigation, biodiversity preservation, and the strengthening of sustainable local economies.

The Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) and its Shandia Platform decided to actively engage in the co-design process of the TFFF because they see in it a concrete opportunity to transform the architecture of climate finance. This transformation requires the explicit inclusion and commitment to direct funding for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs&LCs)-led organizations and mechanisms, ensuring that new global financing initiatives are built upon the principles of self-determination and the right to

meaningful participation. Moreover, we seek to ensure that all resources mobilized through the TFFF are guided by a vision that fully respects and integrates the knowledge, practices, and rights of Indigenous Peoples, which are fundamental to protecting tropical ecosystems.

Throughout the design process, the GATC has contributed to the inclusion of two specific modalities of direct funding, guaranteeing that at least 20% of TFFF resources are allocated to IPs&LCs-led territorial funds and mechanisms. The next step is to ensure that this commitment is effectively implemented through clear eligibility criteria, adequate social and environmental safeguards, and governance arrangements that respect the self-determination and leadership of Indigenous Peoples. Only then can the TFFF fulfill its transformative potential and consolidate a new paradigm for global climate finance.

PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE RESULTS OF GATC'S COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY IN THE TFFF 3.0 (September 23, 2025)

The Brazilian government recently launched the proposal for the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) in its Concept Note 3.0. We at the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) endorse this new version as a direct result of the collective struggle of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP's and LC's) for fair and direct access to climate finance resources, acknowledging all the changes that have taken place since the fund was first announced in 2023.

The guarantee that a minimum of 20% of results-based payments from the TFFF will be channeled directly to frontline forest defenders represents an historic victory that consolidates the leading role of our peoples in addressing the climate crisis. Additionally, the inclusion of an exclusion list for fossil fuels in Note 3.0 responds to a central demand of our organizations, reaffirming the urgency of preventing the TFFF from becoming a new mechanism of territorial destruction.

We have been closely monitoring the TFFF since its first announcements at COP-28 in Dubai. However, it was not until October 2024 that we were officially invited to discuss the possibility of including a minimum of 20% of resources for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities as part of the fund's operation. Since February 2025, we have chosen to collaborate with the Government of Brazil, the World Bank, and the TFFF Secretariat in co-designing the so-called Direct Allocation of Financing (IP's and LC' DAF), based on an intense collective journey. We held side events at the UN,

technical workshops, weekly meetings with the core team, face-to-face meetings of the Global Steering Committee in Brazzaville and London, and a conversation with over 400 participants at the Forest Basin Congress.

The proposal, developed by many hands, contemplates the leading role of IP's&LCs in all decisions regarding the use of resources at the national level, through national steering committees and freely chosen implementing agencies, enabling resources to reach our organizations and territorial funds. Our decision to participate in the co-design of the DAF was in line with our commitment to transforming the architecture of climate and biodiversity financing, so that we are truly acknowledged as the guardians of our territories.

Although not all our proposals were accepted—such as the requirement for IP's&LC's seats on the TFFF and TFIF Boards of Directors—we recognize the progress in the creation of a Global Advisory Committee and will continue to mobilize to ensure that the fund's governance truly reflects the principles of participation, equity, and autonomy.

We acknowledge our victories, but we remain vigilant. Now is the time to put the TFFF into action and, at the same time, guarantee the necessary resources for the fund implementing national structures in tropical forest countries that ensure our full and effective participation in inclusive steering committees, legitimate implementing agencies, and



culturally appropriate monitoring mechanisms. We reaffirm our commitment to socio-environmental integrity and reiterate our demand that no TFFF resources be allocated to oil, gas, or mining—a red line reaffirmed in all our spaces.

Finally, we call on our allies in civil society, communications, and international cooperation to support the next step: building a robust process of national dialogue and advocacy, led by our Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, to ensure the effective implementation of everything that has been achieved so far.

We know that tropical countries still have a long way to go to establish a truly respectful relation-

ship with us —whether in building inclusive governance structures or in guaranteeing our human and territorial rights. We therefore call on governments and our allies to actively engage in this process, as well as in improving the monitoring systems for forests, other ecosystems, and our territories.

Similarly, it is essential to advocate for the resources already allocated to countries to be directed to this new direct financing mechanism, strengthening public policies that truly protect our territories and rights.

The answer is us. The answer is all of us, including you.



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The peoples pledge: the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities commitment

At COP-30, we, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, present our own commitment. We are prepared and committed to invest 500 million dollars over the next five years in truly territorial actions, guided by our own governance systems and aligned with the principles of direct funding. This is the Peoples' Pledge — a commitment that gives substance to global pledges and turns promises into concrete action on the ground. We are the ones who can ensure that the resources announced at this conference actually reach our communities and become tangible results for life, rights, and the ecosystems we protect. That is our strength.

We arrive at COP-30 knowing that this is a historic moment for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities around the world. No other Climate Convention has ever sought to recognize so broadly the essential role we play in addressing the multiple crises we face. Western science has long confirmed what we have known for generations: the most vibrant ecosystems, natural landscapes, and forests — and much of the planet's biodiversity — are found in our territories. Despite constant threats and violations, we continue to protect vast traditional areas that hold many of the world's remaining intact ecosystems and play a fundamental role in climate regulation

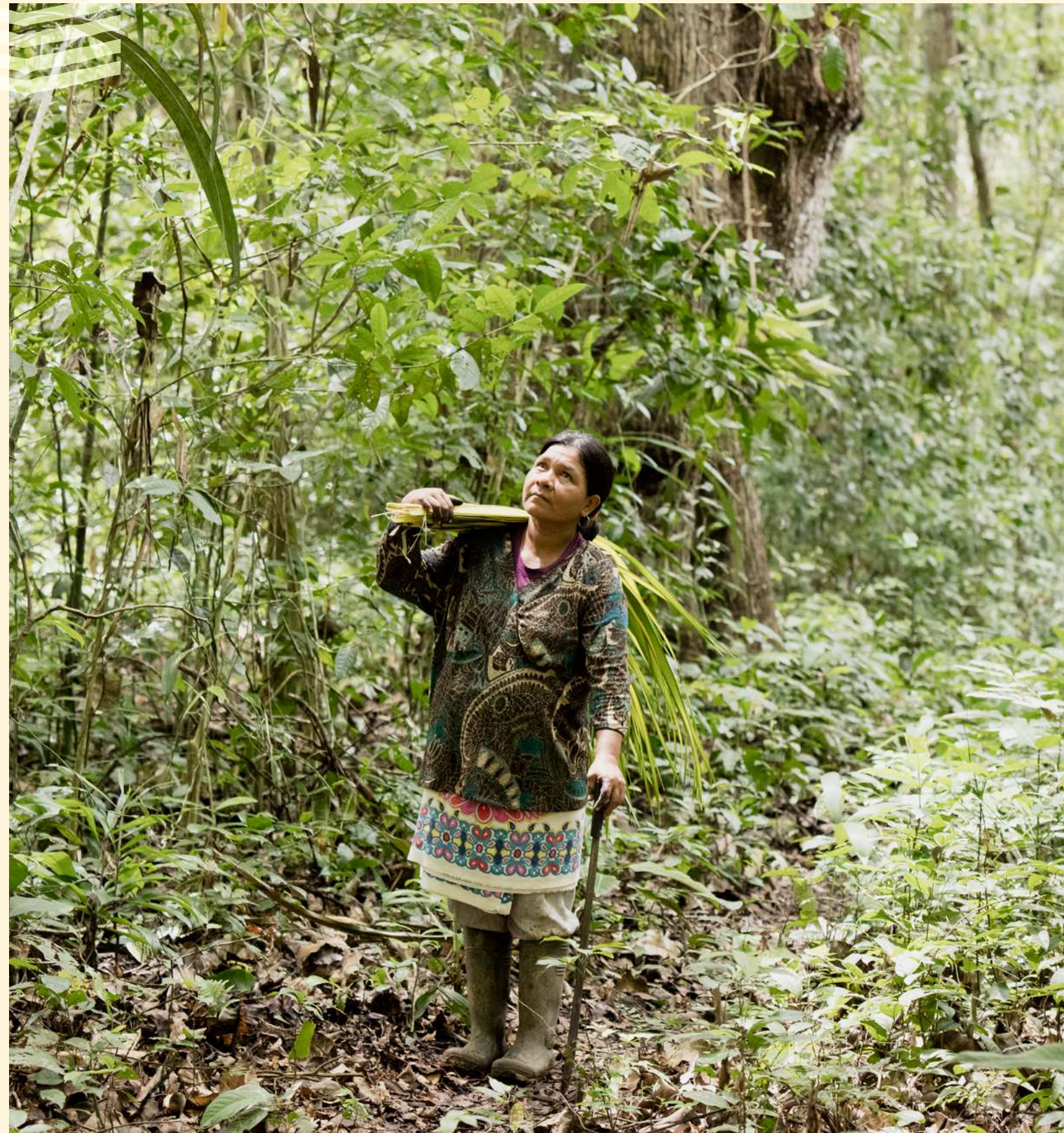
and the preservation of life. Between 2000 and 2016, for example, the rate of intact forest loss in our territories was less than half that recorded elsewhere. This is because we are inseparable from our territories and, more than anyone, we understand their value — including in facing crises that we did not create.

Despite this growing recognition, a profound imbalance persists. While many investments are made in the name of global environmental policies, powerful economic interests continue to destroy our ways of life and turn our lands into sources of profit. As a result, the resources intended to strengthen our actions remain scarce. Even rarer are the funds that reach our organizations and territorial mechanisms directly — those that are genuinely close to our communities and know what must be done.

This is why COP-30 is decisive. It has been four years since the Glasgow COP, when, after our persistent demands, a group of donors gathered under the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) and pledged 1.7 billion dollars for our territories. Now, at this COP, a new commitment will be made. We welcome this initiative and acknowledge the efforts of donors who exceeded the initial amount before the end of the commitment period. At this same conference, the first Intergovernmental Commitment on Land and Territorial Rights will be launched through the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP),

along with the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), which allocates at least 20 percent of its resources directly to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. These achievements are not only a reflection of donor commitment but also the direct result of our political engagement and constant vigilance, ensuring that what is debated in the global arena resonates with the voices of our communities and truly secures our rights and territories. In any of these pledges and also in new initiatives like the Tropical Forest Forever Facility, also to be launched in COP-30, all the resources invested must draw on Indigenous Peoples knowledge, governance, and values to deliver real and lasting results for the remaining ecosystems of the world. As the IPBES Transformative Change Assessment highlights, no climate or biodiversity policy can succeed without respecting and embedding diverse knowledge systems and worldviews.

We recognize these commitments as signs that, with political will, we can move forward together. Yet we know that much remains to be done. The pledges made at COP-30 must gain strength, coherence, and substance. To do so, they must be grounded not only in good intentions but in the practices, processes, and responsibilities that we have built within our communities. Real commitments go beyond financial promises — they depend on the capacity to transform resources into strength for our peoples and concrete results in our territories. It means putting resources at the service of life,



self-determination, and the defense of our rights. To ensure these commitments lead to lasting impact, and as the KCI warns (Katowice Committee on Impacts, 2024), poorly implemented response measures can worsen the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples and local communities; therefore, all investments must first consider safeguards, that guarantees secure tenure, Free, Prior and Informed Consent, inclusive governance, equitable benefits, and effective social and environmental protection.

For the pledges launched at this COP to have meaning, we must be part of them — not as beneficiaries, but as partners who will ensure that resources truly reach the territories and communities. Our territorial mechanisms have already shown that they can do this. They have developed policies, metrics, and innovative indicators based on our own concept of direct funding. What remains is for resources to reach them: even initiatives such as the current FTFG Pledge achieved only 6 percent of direct funding in 2024.

Direct funding begins with the recognition that we, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, are key actors in the global response to climate and biodiversity crises. We are not beneficiaries or service providers, but political subjects who decide the course of our own territories. This type of funding only makes sense when it is rooted in territories, respecting our rights and our ways of life. It is based on the understanding that no one knows our territories better than we do, and there-

fore it must align with our strategies, use our own institutions, and adapt to the diversity of contexts in which we live. Direct funding must be flexible, to respond to local realities and changes we face, and predictable, providing long-term support for decisions made by our communities. It is also built on our capacity to learn from one another, continuously strengthening the ecosystem of territorial funds and organizations we have created, and it must be transparent, with traceable resources and culturally adapted impact metrics that make sense to us and to the communities to whom we are accountable. We reaffirm that Indigenous Peoples cannot implement climate solutions while under threat. We call for urgent measures to protect land defenders, and for investments to include protocols for safety, legal support, and emergency response.

By strengthening our territorial funds and organizations, we also strengthen the global network of peoples and communities who protect forests and life. Through this investment, we are the ones who can give real substance to the commitments made in Belém and advance our territorial rights, free, prior and informed consent, the protection of life in the face of mounting threats, and the flourishing of our traditional knowledge. Likewise, we recognize the importance of investing in youth — the seeds of the future — and in women — the great guardians of our knowledge — as well as ensuring a fair distribution of resources across regions and ecosystems, because we understand that each part of the whole sustains and strengthens the other.



The Peoples' Pledge is both our commitment and our invitation to a joint effort — a commitment to continue doing our part, and an invitation for everyone to do theirs. Because we know that the answer is us — all of us.



Section 2.

Strengthening our ecosystem: Shandia Learning Community

Since March 2025, the Shandia Platform, with technical support from TINTA – The Invisible Thread, has advanced the creation of a Learning Community on Direct Financing Mechanisms. The Learning Community stands out as a strategic space to enhance peer learning among direct financing mechanisms, build capacities, foster inter-territorial collaboration, and move towards greater institutional and financial sustainability for initiatives led by the organizational members of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities.

The process began with the first in-person meeting during the Pre-Congress of the First Global Congress of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from the Forest Basins, held in Brazzaville on May 26, 2025. Nearly 200 participants, including representatives of the GATC, regional delegations, youth, women, and strategic allies reviewed the initial proposal for the Learning Community and provided key inputs for its joint development and consolidation.

During the session, the background and objectives of the Learning Community and the Shandia Platform were introduced following a dialogue session, featuring contributions from representatives of direct financing mechanisms attending, who shared lessons and endorsed the initiative. In addition, 13 surveys and multiple bilateral interviews were

conducted to capture insights on perceptions, opportunities, interests and priority topics for exchange; as well as operational challenges, anticipated barriers and concrete proposals to guide the participatory design of the Learning Community. These findings laid the foundation for the official launch during the London Climate Action Week.

On June 25, 2025, the Learning Community on Direct Financing Mechanisms was officially launched during the London Climate Action Week. The launch brought together regional delegates, representatives of territorial funds, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and strategic allies such as donors and technical support organizations. Through presentations, interactive group work, and collaborative dialogue, the session presented the results of the participatory diagnostic carried out at the Brazzaville Congress, validated priority thematic and operational axes, and co-designed the initial roadmap and next steps for the Learning Community.

Following the launch, two virtual sessions have been conducted to continue building the Learning Community and advance knowledge exchange. The first virtual session, “Direct Financing Pathways: Strategies for the Sustainability of Territorial Mechanisms within Shandia” (September 2, 2025) featured cross-regional participants from Cen-



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tral America, Brazil, Congo, and Indonesia, with simultaneous interpretation in Spanish, English, Indonesian, French, and Portuguese. This session showcased the case studies of Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM) and the Timbira Fund (Brazil) highlighting challenges and lessons learned, and identifying strategies for financial sustainability. An international expert provided a global perspective, linking local experiences to emerging trends and opportunities in climate and biodiversity finance. Participants engaged in discussions on operationalization and strategic planning for the Shandia Forum at COP30.

The second virtual session, titled “From New York to Belém: Shaping Direct Financing Agendas to-

wards COP30” (October 21, 2025) reflected on the learnings from recent negotiations, introduced the People’s Pledge, and prepared participants for strategic engagement at the Shandia Forum in COP30.

A key pillar of the Learning Community is the establishment of a structured systematization and documentation process, to organize, preserve, synthesize, and share knowledge, while also producing learning and communication material such as reports, case studies, and guides, facilitating access to information for members and external stakeholders, and developing a dedicated repository or learning platform linked to the Shandia website. Four learning products have been developed to date:

1. Indigenous Peoples Funds and Learning from the Brazilian Territories – documenting experiences and lessons shared by Podáali, Jaguatá, Maracá, Ruti, and Timbira Funds during the London session (June 23, 2025).
2. Financial Sustainability in Adverse Political Contexts – capturing insights from the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM) and the Indigenous Peoples' Solidarity Fund in Asia (IPAS) presented during the same London session.
3. Direct Financing Pathways: Learning from Territorial Funds – resulting from the first virtual session (September 2, 2025), including experiences of FTM and Timbira Fund, and an expert perspective from Deborah Sánchez (CLARIFI).
4. Strategic Recommendations to Strengthen Territorial Direct Financing Mechanisms – also produced from the September 2, 2025 session, highlighting lessons learned, challenges, and recommendations for advancing financial sustainability.

Shandia Learning Community (2025)



Together, these milestones—Brazzaville's participatory design, London's formal launch, virtual exchanges, and the production of learning materials—have positioned the Shandia Learning Community as a dynamic and collaborative platform. It now serves as a strategic space for sharing knowledge, building capacities, and advancing sustainable financing models that enhance the autonomy and visibility of Indigenous Peoples and local communities within global climate, biodiversity, and human rights agendas.



Section 3.

Shandia on the ground

This section presents how Shandia's vision of direct territorial funding takes shape on the ground. It brings together the concrete impacts achieved by the territorial funds between 2024 and 2025 — told through data, voices, and stories from the territories. The analysis is based on reports and survey results on funding flows and impacts, as well as in-depth interviews of about one hour with each of the funds, complemented by the ongoing work carried out within the Shandia Platform.

We open and close this section with two stories that illustrate the tangible effects of territorial financing — part of Shandia's broader effort to document and share **success stories across the five regions of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC)**. These stories were built through fieldwork and relationships of trust, offering grounded insights into how resources translate into life, governance, and ecological restoration in the territories.

In addition to these narratives, this section highlights the **collective impact measures** observed across our network of funds and explores **what makes each mechanism unique** — revealing not only the diversity of approaches but also the shared principles that guide Indigenous Peoples- and community-led territorial financing worldwide.



Lessons from the Anawá River: time, forest, and the collective work of the Wai Wai strengthened by direct funding (Brazil)

Along the banks of the Anawá River, in the Brazilian state of Roraima, lives the Wai Wai community, a people who have built a profound relationship of coexistence with the forest. Since 1976, when they first met Brazil nut collectors, and especially after the demarcation of their lands in 1978, the Wai Wai have incorporated the harvest of the Amazon nut as an essential part of their lives. Navigation, once carried out in paddle canoes through strong currents and volcanic rocks, is now done in motorboats—yet the guiding principle remains the same: respect for nature and collective work.



Mr. Geraldo Wai Wai, a local leader, shares how the community was established 54 years ago and how their current territory celebrates three decades of collective organization. Every year, between March and May, families travel upriver and spend two to three months in the Brazil nut groves, where they build their collection “bases.” During this period, the work is also a moment of identity strengthening and knowledge transmission, marked by the use of the mother tongue and intergenerational sharing of wisdom.

The Wai Wai way of life embodies the principles of self-determination and community governance. Brazil nut harvesting is an act of cultural, spiritual, and ecological resistance, uniting the economic, educational spheres, and the protection of life. Their relationship with the territory reflects an integrated worldview: to work, to care, and to live are inseparable dimensions.

In 2025, the community faced a smaller harvest, attributed to changes in rainfall and temperature cycles that have been common in the last years. Elders report that “the river has been drying earlier than before” and that rains have become irregular — clear signs of climate change impacts on

the territory. Still, through the Wai Wai practices supported by the Rutî Fund, they observed many flowering Brazil nut trees, a symbol of renewal and hope for the next cycle.

The experience in the Wai Wai community illustrates how direct funding strengthens territorial autonomy and highlights something essential: the recognition, by the families themselves, of the importance of having Indigenous people engaged in resource mobilization and in the follow-up of community projects. This narrative reinforces that the strengthening of direct funding goes beyond theoretical debate and takes shape when territorial mechanisms are built from the needs of the communities, tailoring access to resources according to their realities and ways of life.

This is how the discourse sustained in global arenas in defense of direct funding for Indigenous Peoples becomes tangible in practice: when communities are directly supported and their initiatives are recognized, generating not only financial results but also social and cultural impacts that ensure the continuity of traditional practices, local forms of organization, and sustainable, territory-based development.

Overview on the state of funds of our territorial mechanisms



Shandia's ongoing work is centered on **strengthening the ecosystem of Indigenous Peoples- and LC-led funds** while also increasing **transparency and accountability** within our network. The platform has undertaken a collective effort to systematize the distinct metrics used by each fund, aiming to demonstrate our overall impact and shared responsibility toward both communities and donors. This is not a simple task — each fund has its own context-specific systems of reporting, monitoring, and evaluation, as it should be, reflecting the diversity of governance models and realities across territories.

In the preparation of this report, some funds had not yet systematized their 2025 data — their reports will be released in the coming months. Others, meanwhile, only began their operations in 2025, as noted in the following pages. Shandia is currently coordinating the creation of an online continuous monitoring platform, designed to consolidate data from all member funds on a quarterly basis. This platform will be launched in 2026 on Shandia's official website.

The figures we present here, however, are already impressive. Despite a context of limited direct funding, **funds in our network collectively mobilized at least USD 26 million across 2024 and 2025.**

- At least 351 initiatives were supported;
- 93 of these (26.5%) were led by women, and 82 (23.36%) by youth, showing that the commitment to historically under-represented groups is not rhetorical, but a lived practice within our mechanisms;
- These initiatives took place in at least 20 countries.

We emphasize that these numbers could be much higher if funding truly reached our mechanisms. The funds in our network embody the very commitments being discussed at COP-30 — and they already have the operational capacity to scale their impact across territories if adequately supported. The following sections present a detailed breakdown of the data and impacts from each of the funds in our network.



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Fondo Amazonia por la Vida - Towards an Indigenous Model of Bioeconomy and Direct Funding

The **Amazon for Life Fund** emerged as a **strategic initiative of the Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA)** to strengthen the **Indigenous Peoples Amazonian economy** and consolidate **direct access for Indigenous Peoples to climate and biodiversity finance**.

Its creation responds to a **collective mandate** issued during the **Pan-Amazonian Forum on Bioeconomy**, convened with the support of the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**. In this space for dialogue, COICA's leaders and grassroots organizations defined the **core principles of an Indigenous Peoples Amazonian bioeconomy**, outlining a **roadmap toward an economic model that upholds cultural diversity, territorial sovereignty, and ecosystem conservation**.

During the Forum, the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin agreed on a **shared mandate for Indigenous Peoples bioeconomy**, establishing what should — and should not — be included in

bioeconomy policies and investments. Out of this process came the idea of the **Amazon for Life Fund**, officially presented at **COP28 (Dubai, 2023)** as an effort to **channel resources directly to Indigenous Peoples organizations**, without intermediaries, to **strengthen governance structures and sustain Indigenous Peoples-led conservation and territorial development initiatives**.

The Fund began with an **initial contribution of USD 10 million from the IDB**, sourced from the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**. These resources are distributed among Amazon Basin countries through COICA's base organizations, with projects currently in various stages of implementation.

Operating as a **COICA umbrella fund in technical and financial partnership with the IDB**, the Amazon for Life Fund advanced in **2025** toward the **formalization of its own trust fund**, enabling it to channel future contributions and consolidate financial autonomy. This

mechanism is complemented by the establishment of an **institutional Back Office**, designed to **facilitate access for Indigenous Peoples organizations and movements** that still lack robust formal structures, providing **technical, fiduciary, and administrative support** under COICA's political leadership.

Currently, the Fund is in full implementation: **Peru** leads the first projects; in **Venezuela** and **Ecuador**, processes continue despite complex political contexts; **Brazil** implements actions with **COIAB** and **UMIAB**; and in **Colombia**, dialogues have resumed with **OPIAC** to begin activities in **2026**.

Among its main achievements are:

- The **consolidation of a strong COICA-IDB alliance**, pioneering a partnership for Indigenous Peoples direct finance.
- The **creation of a legal and operational governance model** that serves as a reference for other territorial mechanisms.
- The **articulation of a regional process** recognizing the **autonomy and diversity**

However, the process also faces **structural challenges**, such as the **slow administrative procedures of multilateral banks** and the **need for more agile legal frameworks** for implementation.

Fondo Amazonia por la Vida in numbers

In **2024**, the **Amazon for Life Fund** received **USD 10 million** from the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**, making it the **only territorial mechanism in this report to receive contributions from a multilateral institution** whose resources come from **bilateral donations, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations**.

Among the activities financed by the **Amazon for Life Fund** are those related to **Indigenous Peoples Economies, Capacity Building and Governance, and Conservation and Restoration Actions**. Due to its co-creation process with the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, the Fund currently uses the **GCF and IDB indicator frameworks**, but it is already moving toward developing its **own set of indicators with an Indigenous Peoples and Amazonian approach**.

Project implementation portfolios have been opened in **Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela**.

What makes
Fondo Amazonía por la Vida
unique is:

The Amazon for Life Fund is unique because it has opened a pathway for Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon to access multilateral investment mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, known for their high administrative requirements. The institutional capacities developed through this process will also enable access to other funding sources in the near future.



Mesoamerican Territorial Fund: Promoting Direct Investment for the Living Forests of Mesoamerica

The 2024 Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) Report provides, in figures, what the peoples of Mesoamerican forests have long felt in their daily lives. While it is true that climate finance resources reach Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs&LCs) only marginally worldwide, some regions suffer this inequity more acutely than others. In 2024, 58% of the resources from the FTFG Pledge were allocated to Latin America, but of that total, 88% went to the Amazon Basin. This pattern perpetuates a historical process of exclusion that sidelines rich and biodiverse regions such as Mesoamerica, whose forests are home to a vast diversity of peoples, flora, and fauna. To confront this structural imbalance, the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM) was created.



Launched in 2022, the FTM seeks to promote direct, rights-based, efficient, and transparent investment in key territories across Mesoamerica, ensuring lower transaction costs and accountable management of funds. Its governance structure includes seven board members—four representing the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) and three external members approved by the Alliance.

Between 2023 and 2024, the Fund focused on operationalization, moving beyond its initial political vision to become a fully functional mechanism. During this period, it developed key operational documents such as the Procedures Manual and Operations Manual, and established a Proposal Selection Committee to broaden its reach beyond AMPB's direct membership.

The FTM stands as the only regional fund in Mesoamerica for IPs&LCs with such a strong territorial governance model. It operates in close coordination with the AMPB, a platform connecting more than 250 Indigenous Peoples and local communities organizations across the region. Through this vast network, the Fund functions as both a mediator of scales—linking communities, grassroots organizations, and member platforms—and a cultural mediator, translating between territorial needs and donor requirements.

Funding Modalities

1. Open Calls for Proposals – These are directed to AMPB member organizations. Proposals are evaluated by an ad hoc Selection Committee composed of three board members and four external technical experts, using a matrix of social and technical criteria. The calls are widely disseminated among grassroots organizations and published on the FTM's website. Because project formulation can be challenging, the Fund provides technical support to strengthen proposals—helping define objectives, indicators, and budgets, and translating community visions into fundable initiatives. Institutional strengthening is a cornerstone of the FTM's work. The technical team supports organizations in planning, simple reporting, and developing culturally adapted indicators. For example, while a donor may wish to measure reforested hectares, communities may prioritize the recovery of rivers, flora, or fauna. The FTM ensures that both dimensions are reflected, integrating environmental results with the cultural values of the territory.

2. Closed Calls – These are financed by donors with predefined themes or geographic areas. In these cases, organizations are selected based on their location, management capacity, and experience, and act as co-implementers from the outset, without the need for competition.



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The FTM's technical team currently includes four staff members (management, administration, and monitoring), though there is a recognized need to expand capacity for stronger technical and operational support. In 2024, the Fund financed 15 initiatives across different countries.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

In 2025, the Fund faced significant challenges due to the reduction of international funds following the closure of USAID activities in the region, a shift that deeply impacted local organizations and demanded strong coordination among partners to mitigate negative impacts in a context where Mesoamerica remains underfunded. The lack of legal personality, combined with the rigid bureaucracy of some donors, continues to be an operational limitation.

Nevertheless, the FTM successfully diversified its funding sources and, for the first time, secured

European financing. A major milestone was the approval of a €700,000 (approx. USD 812,000) grant from AECID for 2025, ensuring financial sustainability for the period and, more importantly, demonstrating the possibility of new collaborative approaches with donors.

This achievement represents a structural shift in how priorities are defined, positioning the FTM as a key regional actor in strategic planning and territorial action design, while advancing toward greater financial autonomy through new partnerships with multilateral cooperation and other sectors.

The Mesoamerican Territorial Fund thus consolidates itself as a territorial and structural response to historical inequalities in access to climate finance—a fund born from the peoples themselves, with its own governance, collective vision, and a living practice of mediation between the languages of the territories and those of international cooperation.

FTM in numbers

To date, the FTM has financed 32 projects across six countries, benefiting 17,000 direct participants and more than 40,000 indirect beneficiaries, and has mobilized a total of USD 1.8 million since 2021.

2024 Highlights

- Total funds received: **USD 1,173,400**
- Main sources: **CLUA, CLARIFI, USAID, and CS Fund**

Resource distribution:

- **76%** allocated to direct territorial funding
 - **USD 894,400**
- **24%** allocated to operations – **USD 278,960**

Beneficiaries:

- **Direct: 19,182 people**
- **Indirect: 255,423 people** (of whom 40% are youth and 20% are women)

Territorial coverage:

- **Managed area: 3,984,610 hectares**
- **Total projects supported: 16 projects** focused on strengthening territorial capacities, Indigenous Peoples and community governance, sustainable natural resource management, and the promotion of women's and youth leadership.

Beneficiary organizations:

- **10 AMPB member organizations**
- **6 non-member organizations**, including:
 - 5 women's organizations
 - 1 youth organization

Institutional Strengthening and Partnerships

The FTM has advanced strategies in communication, fundraising, and capacity building through its platform fondomesoamericano.org.

- **Memorandums** of Understanding signed with: *Re:wild* and *Conservation International*
- **New strategic alliances:** underway to expand regional reach and consolidate the Fund's sustainability.

Next Steps – Strategic Plan 2028

Looking ahead, the FTM Strategic Plan 2028 aims to:

- **Increase direct funding to an annual average of 30–40 grants**, with amounts starting at USD 50,000.
- **Expand geographic coverage** and priority territories, involving more strategic partners and broadening support to organizations beyond AMPB's membership base.

What makes FTM unique is:

The AMECLA System (Adapted and Culturally Appropriate Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System) represents one of the most distinctive and innovative elements of the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM). It is a pioneering model designed to provide accompaniment, monitoring, evaluation, collaboration, learning, and adaptation in a way that is culturally appropriate for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs&LC) in Mesoamerica. AMECLA combines participatory methodologies with accessible technologies — such as Google Drive, interactive forms, and real-time dashboards — to ensure inclusive, transparent, and culturally aligned implementation. Its main goal is to establish a shared accountability and learning mechanism for IPs&LCs organizations, one that truly reflects their territorial realities, governance structures, and development priorities. By addressing the current lack of adequate tools to track resource flows and demonstrate the real impact of investments in Indigenous Peoples territories, AMECLA enables transparent monitoring of the origin, use, and outcomes of funds. It strengthens accountability both to donors and to the communities themselves, while demonstrating how these investments translate into measurable change on the ground.



Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund - Strengthening the movement while building funding structures



The Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS Fund) is a regional funding mechanism created by and for the Indigenous Peoples of Asia, conceived during a regional workshop held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in July 2022. Since its inception, the fund has been designed with a dual purpose: to strengthen the Indigenous Peoples movement in Asia while building the institutional structures necessary for the direct disbursement of funds to territories.

The IPAS Fund emerged as a response to the historical challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples in the region—vast linguistic diversity, governmental restrictions, and limited access to international funding, despite Asia being home to more than one-third of the world's Indigenous Peoples population.

Governance and Structure

In 2023, the IPAS Fund Board of Directors was established, composed of 11 members regionally distributed, with representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Initially, the fund relied on AMAN (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusan-

tara) as its fiscal sponsor until it opened its own bank account in 2024.

During the second half of 2024, the IPAS Fund launched a pilot project in six countries, distributing 20 direct grants. In the same period, the first six Countries Steering Committees were formed—key governance bodies made up of about seven to eight members per country.

These committees play a decisive role: they define national funding priorities, ensure regional balance within each country, and guarantee the inclusion of initiatives led by women, youth, and persons with disabilities. In doing so, they not only guide how funds are applied but also strengthen Indigenous Peoples organizations at the national level, improving their management and accountability capacities.

Based on the lessons from the six pilot committees, the IPAS conducted a listening and review process. The leaders requested that the fund also support capacity-strengthening activities, which became a new strategic line for 2025.



Expansion and Operationalization

Also in 2024, the IPAS Fund developed a baseline study on the state of funding for Indigenous Peoples organizations in Asia, providing an analytical foundation for its expansion and revealing the significant funding gaps in the region. In 2025, the fund held another round of regional meetings to operationalize the decisions and define concrete targets: 80 direct grants across nine countries.

The Countries Steering Committees are the backbone of the IPAS Fund. Despite its small secretariat (four staff members), it can be said that at least 120 people work in close collaboration with IPAS to ensure that resources truly meet territorial needs.

Innovation in Challenging Contexts

The structure of the IPAS Fund is particularly relevant in light of the political complexities in Asia, where the rights of Indigenous Peoples are often unrecognized and where Indigenous Peoples organizations face criminalization, surveillance, and legal restrictions on receiving international funding. In such contexts, the IPAS operates with innovation and creativity, using alternative financial transfer mechanisms and trust-based, solidarity-driven practices.

Grounded in relationships of trust with movements and National Steering Committees, the fund does not operate through open calls. Decisions on grants are made by the committees themselves, composed of recognized and legitimate Indigenous Peoples leaders who apply specific inclusion and territorial balance criteria.

Language barriers and monitoring processes are shared responsibilities between the board members and the national committees, preventing excessive bureaucracy and lengthy reporting. The IPAS prioritizes culturally appropriate approaches to monitoring and evaluation, fostering community structures, strengthening collective work, and contributing to the growth of the Indigenous Peoples movements ecosystem across Asia.

The Road Ahead

The main challenges faced by the IPAS Fund include the authoritarian political contexts in several Asian countries, the lack of legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples, and, more recently, the difficulty in mobilizing new funding to expand its impact by 2026. To achieve the goals set by the leaders and committees, the IPAS Fund now depends on stronger financial commitments from donors, aligned with the vision of direct, solidarity-based, and movement-led financing for Indigenous Peoples in Asia.



IPAS in Numbers

Between September 2024 and August 2025, IPAS supported a total of **95 initiatives** across Asia, reflecting its commitment to advancing Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' priorities through diverse and context-specific actions. These initiatives covered a wide range of scopes:

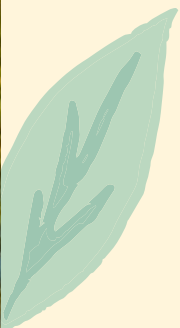
- 5 focused on capacity strengthening,
- 13 addressed emergencies,
- 43 were grassroots projects,
- 4 operated at the national level,
- 2 at the regional level,
- 8 were sectoral initiatives,
- 20 were sub-national efforts.

By November 2025, IPAS had achieved **96% of its initial financial target for 2025**, disbursing a total of **USD 664,098** across **nine countries**: Bangladesh (4 initiatives), Cambodia (10), mainland India (10), Malaysia (13), Myanmar (10), Northeast India (7), Nepal (14), the Philippines (13), and Thailand (13).

Dedicated support was also provided to **women-led (5 projects, USD 25,000)** and **youth-led initiatives (3 projects, USD 25,000)**, underscoring the fund's commitment to inclusive leadership and intergenerational equity within Indigenous Peoples movements.

What Makes **IPAS** Unique

The greatest distinction of the IPAS Fund lies in the creation and functioning of the Countries Steering Committees, which make the fund a living space for movement-building and territorial response. This structure also ensures agile emergency response capacity, with systems already in place to meet unforeseen needs — a reflection of its deep territorial grounding and the political strength of Indigenous Peoples movements across Asia.



Fundo Jaguatá: autonomy for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil

The year 2025 marked a decisive advance in the consolidation of the Jaguatá Fund as an instrument of financial and political autonomy for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil.

During the meetings held throughout the first semester, the Fund strengthened its identity within the Shandia Platform ecosystem, positioning itself as an Indigenous Peoples-led governance structure focused on the mobilization and direct redistribution of international resources to grassroots organizations.

These meetings also served as spaces for strategic reflection on how the Jaguatá Fund should present itself to the world — not as an intermediary, but as a political mechanism of financial self-determination, capable of connecting community demands directly to global donors without external mediation.

“It’s not just about presenting the fund; it’s about deciding how the Jaguatá Fund wants to show itself to Brazil and to the world.”

The creation of the Jaguatá Fund represents a project of Indigenous Peoples financial sovereignty,

grounded in building real bridges for direct funding to territorial organizations, upholding respect for their own protocols, and proposing customized formats for agreements and partnerships.

Discussions clarified that the Fund does not aim to replace existing mechanisms — such as the Podáali Fund — nor larger structures like the Amazon Fund, but rather to complement and strengthen them, ensuring that regional funds such as Rutî and FIRN maintain full autonomy.

“When funding reaches the territories, it should go directly to the grassroots funds. Jaguatá exists to guide, create frameworks, and expand reach — not to mediate.”

The Jaguatá Fund secured two strategic partnerships in 2025: one with the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA), focused on institutional and legal structuring, and another with the Tenure Facility, centered on national political articulation.

With CLUA’s support, the Fund was able to develop its strategic plan, design its organizational structure, and create tools for access and accountability (such as forms, budget templates, and financial

reporting systems), as well as a communication strategy to build a strong institutional identity. This preparatory phase consolidated Jaguatá's public profile, distinguishing it from other national mechanisms within global networks.

The support from the Tenure Facility is propelling a broad technical and political dialogue among Brazil's Indigenous Peoples funds and with regional Indigenous Peoples organizations connected to them. The goal is to develop shared technical positions on issues that affect Indigenous Peoples funding mechanisms, such as the Indigenous Peoples Financing Mechanism (MFI) and the proposed Tropical Forests Forever Fund (TFFF) being designed by the Brazilian government. The aim is to ensure that these mechanisms operate under Indigenous Peoples autonomy, with adequate resource allocation and an Indigenous Peoples technical and deliberative chamber within their structures.

"We want these structures to have an official and decision-making character, composed of representatives from Indigenous Peoples funds."

The actions developed in 2025 reinforced the five pillars of the Jaguatá Fund:

- Governance and financial autonomy: institutional and legal structuring;
- Direct funding: expansion and diversification of financial sources;
- Political articulation: advocacy in decision-making spaces related to direct funding and strengthening grassroots funds;

- Management and transparency: creation of standardized monitoring and accountability processes;
- Strategic communication: strengthening institutional identity and narrative coherence.

These processes reaffirm Jaguatá's role as a national "platform" for resource redistribution to Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that international financing reaches communities and local organizations directly.

The developments of 2025 marked a maturity leap in the construction of the Jaguatá Fund as a symbol of Indigenous Peoples financial self-determination. A solid political structure and technical framework — combined with strong national advocacy — reinforce the vision that excellence in resource management is itself an exercise of power.

Among the key lessons learned are:

- The importance of coordination among national and regional funds;
- The challenge of balancing administrative standardization with cultural flexibility;
- And the central role of strategic communication in affirming Jaguatá as a tool of the Indigenous Peoples movement, not merely a financial entity.

"The Jaguatá Fund represents a concrete advancement in governance, decision-making, and financial autonomy — proof that Indigenous Peoples can govern their own future."

What makes Jaguatá Fund's unique:

The Jaguatá Fund is unique because it represents a new model of Indigenous Peoples financial sovereignty in Brazil, created by and for Indigenous Peoples to manage their own resources and priorities. Rather than acting as an intermediary, Jaguatá positions itself as a political mechanism of financial self-determination, connecting community demands directly with international donors. Fully grounded in Indigenous Peoples governance, it complements and strengthens existing funds such as Podáali, Rutî, and FIRN, while ensuring that territorial funds maintain full autonomy. Through its dual focus on governance and legal structuring, direct funding, political advocacy, transparency, and communication, Jaguatá stands as a national platform for the redistribution of resources, proving that financial management can itself be an exercise of power and a concrete expression of Indigenous Peoples autonomy.



Nusantara: the movements supporting system

The Nusantara Fund (Dana Nusantara) is a joint initiative between AMAN – Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara, KPA – Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria, and WALHI – Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia. The fund was created to be “the movement supporting system”, by implementing their initiatives directly on the ground. It exists not as a separate institution, but as a structure built to serve and strengthen the actions of these movements and the communities they represent.

From the beginning, Nusantara has been a continuous learning process, especially in finding new ways to reach communities and understand their times, rhythms, and needs. The fund was born in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, out of an urgent concern: how to respond to the impacts of the crisis in the communities, how to distribute essential inputs, support their economies, and coordinate logistics among the three organizations.

In 2022, a pilot project was launched in thirty locations, guided by a trial-and-error approach. The results were remarkable and revealed the real

needs of the partners. In 2023, the direct funding was officially launched, a working team was established, and disbursements began in 2024.

The disbursement model of the Nusantara Fund is deliberately simple, designed to uphold accountability while facilitating access. In this Direct Funding scheme, communities are not program “objects,” but active subjects who design and implement initiatives to address their own unique problems, urgencies, and situations, ensuring that resources directly benefit the grassroots level.

Nusantara Fund itself does not decide where the money goes. This responsibility lies with the board composed of the three member organizations, precisely because the purpose of Nusantara is to strengthen the movements. The board meets every six months to review results and adjust strategies. During these meetings, the Nusantara team presents detailed impact reports, combining qualitative and quantitative data—ecological, economic, and social indicators connected to the affected populations.

Because of this governance model, Nusantara does not operate through open calls for proposals. Each of the three organizations determines the activities and communities that will receive funding. Nusantara then collects the necessary information, processes the disbursements, and reports back to the board. Monitoring is conducted by each organization, with 10% of the total fund allocated for that activity, distributed among the three partners. An additional 3% is reserved for emergency response, managed directly by KNPA. All these mechanisms are part of a ten-year strategic plan aimed at supporting 30 million people and securing 30 million hectares of land across Indonesia.

Funds are distributed following the board's decisions, and the flexibility of the system allows communities to receive support even without formal bank accounts—they can use personal or supporting-organization accounts, as long as transparency is ensured. Because the funding comes primarily from philanthropic sources and is provided as unrestricted general support, the Fund can be flexible in responding to community realities. This same flexibility, however, poses a challenge for bilateral and multilateral donors, who must find ways to adapt if they wish to truly meet community demands. Nusantara Fund is targeting US\$20 million in philanthropic funding during 2024–2026, primarily as unrestricted general

support (including contributions to endowment), to expand and accelerate direct funding reach across Indonesia.

Although it is a fund rooted in the movements, the board decided to allocate 15% of its resources to non-affiliated Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, expanding the reach and inclusiveness of its support.

Today, the Nusantara team includes 15 members, and between 2024 and 2025, it has supported over 449 community initiatives. One of the main lessons learned has been the importance of developing simple and flexible management systems that can guarantee accountability without creating barriers. After the first year of operation, the fund underwent an internal evaluation and implemented several improvements in close dialogue with the three organizations.

Nusantara operates with a high level of creativity, always under the direction of its founding movements. Every initiative must align with their collective movement vision. Acting as a multi-cultural mediator, Nusantara constantly translates and harmonizes between the realities of communities and the structures of organizations. This ongoing translation is what allows Nusantara Fund to truly be the movement supporting system.



Nusantara in Numbers

During 2024–2025, Nusantara Fund received US\$10.1 million in unrestricted general support from philanthropic sources, including US\$1.5 million for endowment. Nusantara Fund applies the same unrestricted approach to onward direct funding, delivering quick, flexible, trust-based support to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' top priorities. Learn more about our [Nusantara Fund](#).

The financed activities included the following priorities: **(1)** Increased mapping and registration of Indigenous Peoples' territories, community-managed areas, and priority agrarian reform sites **(2)** Protection and recognition of Indigenous Peoples' territories, community-managed areas, and priority agrarian reform sites **(3)** Land rehabilitation and restoration **(4)** Establishment of sustainable models of production, distribution, and consumption **(5)** Creation of Popular Education centers to revitalize, restore, innovate, and collaborate in order to enhance knowledge, the quality of learning, and skills for protecting and managing land, territories, and agrarian resources.

- Mapping activities have covered an area of 759,000 hectares of Indigenous Peoples Territories, Community-Managed Areas, and Priority Agrarian Reform Sites. Initiatives under this target have had socio-political impacts on 873,256 people, consisting of 342,438 men, 314,128 women, and 216,690 youth.

- A total of 1.3 million hectares of territories belonging to Indigenous Peoples, farmers, fishers, women, and youth have been proposed for social and/or formal recognition of ownership over Indigenous Peoples lands, community-managed areas, and priority agrarian reform sites. This has impacted 1,146,681 people, consisting of 421,219 women, 445,208 men, and 280,254 youth.
- A total of 3.2 million hectares of land have undergone rehabilitation and restoration of degraded areas. Programs under this target have generated ecological impacts by restoring forest ecosystems and water sources, through the planting of endemic trees, fruit trees, and
- A total of 144 collective economic units have been established across 30 provinces. The implementation of these initiatives has had social impacts on 3.6 million people, generating and economic value of IDR 732 billion through long-term crops such as coffee, avocado, sugar palm, vanilla, nutmeg, clove, cocoa, fruits, betel nut, coconut, rambutan, benzoin, rattan, and bamboo (3–5-year production cycles).
- A total of 89 people's education center initiatives have been established in the form of Indigenous Peoples schools, True Agrarian Reform Academies, and Ecological Academies across Indonesia, with socio-political impacts on 5.2 million people.

Nusantara is unique because:

What makes the Nusantara Fund unique is that it was created not as a separate institution but as “the movement supporting system” — a structure built from within Indonesia’s territorial Adapted and Culturally Appropriate Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System movements (AMAN, KPA, and WALHI) to implement their own initiatives on the ground. Its governance and funding model keep decision-making power in the hands of the movements, ensuring that communities remain active subjects of the process. With simple and flexible mechanisms that combine accountability and accessibility, Nusantara directs unrestricted resources to where they are most needed, even allowing support without formal bank accounts. Acting as a cultural and institutional bridge, it translates between community realities and organizational structures, proving that financing can be both efficient and deeply grounded in collective struggle and self-determination.



Podáali: to give without expecting anything in return.



The Podáali Fund, the Indigenous Peoples Fund of the Brazilian Amazon, was officially launched in April, 2019 and formally established in January, 2020 after more than one decade of collective planning within the Indigenous Peoples movement in Brazil. Created by Indigenous Peoples, for Indigenous Peoples, and managed by Indigenous Peoples, it stands as the first Amazon-wide Indigenous Peoples-led funding mechanism for raising and redistributing financial resources directly to Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations across the Brazilian Amazon.

The word “Podáali”, from the language of the Baniwa people, means “to give without expecting anything in return.” This concept captures the essence of the Fund’s mission—an act of reciprocity, generosity, and care deeply rooted in Indigenous Peoples worldviews. Podáali was born from a long-standing dream of the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB) and its partner Union of Indigenous Women of the Brazilian Amazon (UMIAB) to achieve financial autonomy and self-determined territorial management. The proposal took shape during the Meeting of Indigenous Peoples Leaders of the Brazilian Amazon in 2011 in São Gabriel da

Cachoeira and was officially launched in celebration of COIAB’s 30th anniversary.

The entire governance structure of the Fund is Indigenous Peoples. The Deliberative Council, its highest decision-making body, is composed of 22 Indigenous Peoples leaders — one main and one alternate representative from each of the nine Amazonian Brazilian states, plus representatives from COIAB and UMIAB. The General Assembly, Fiscal Council, and Executive Board are likewise composed exclusively of Indigenous Peoples members, ensuring that Podáali remains fully accountable to the peoples it serves.

Podáali’s mission is to promote and strengthen Indigenous Peoples autonomy, rights, and territorial and environmental governance, acting as a central mechanism for mobilizing, managing, and redistributing resources in ways that respect Indigenous Peoples organizational structures and cultural diversity. It supports life plans and community projects that advance self-determination, valorize traditional knowledge, strengthen sustainability, and promote the autonomous management of natural resources.

The Fund operates according to five guiding principles: respect, autonomy, equity, transparency, and dialogue. It upholds these values by ensuring fair and transparent project selection processes, culturally aligned resource management, and constant communication with its constituencies.

Strategic Vision and Global Role

Podáali aligns its priorities with COIAB's Action Plan, Brazil's National Policy for Environmental and Territorial Management in Indigenous Peoples Lands (PNGATI), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is increasingly recognized as a strategic actor in national and international climate and biodiversity dialogues, including through participation in the Indigenous Peoples Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) presented at the 2025 Bonn Climate Conference.

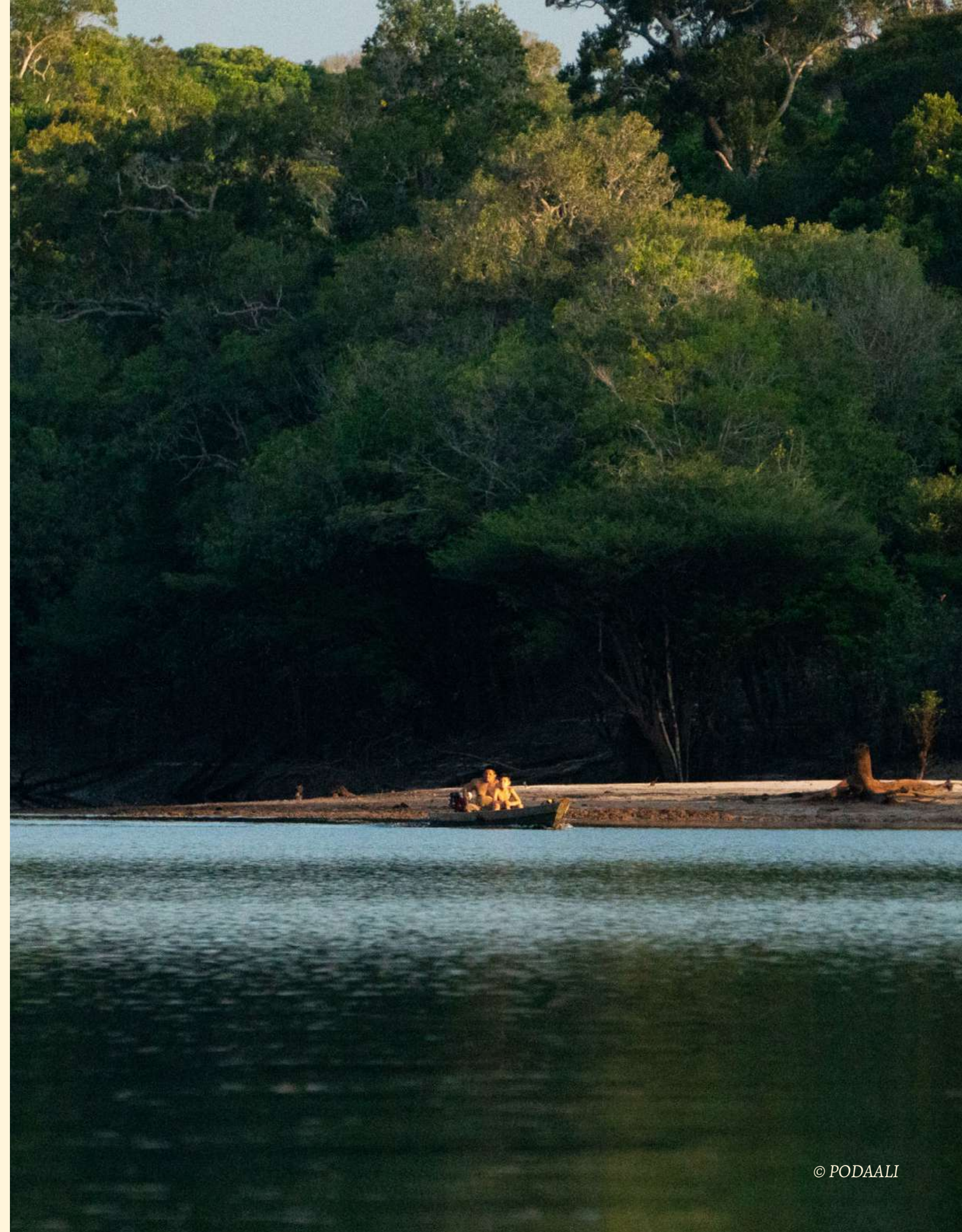
Podáali embodies what Indigenous Peoples-led finance looks like in practice — transparent, collective, intercultural, and grounded in reciprocity. Managed entirely by Indigenous Peoples and rooted in the governance of COIAB and UMIAB, it has become a living symbol of financial sovereignty and self-determination in the Brazilian Amazon.

Through Podáali, Indigenous Peoples are not only recipients of climate and biodiversity finance — they are its architects, stewards, and rightful leaders, ensuring that the act of giving, in the spirit of “podáali,” continues to nourish life, culture, and the future of the world's largest forest.

The Indigenous Sciences Award - 2025's highlight

The Indigenous Peoples Sciences Award, launched in 2025, was created to recognize, honor, and strengthen the collective initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations of the Brazilian Amazon who are on the frontlines of the climate crisis. More than an award, it is a public call to acknowledge the strength of the territories and the transformative power of solutions grounded in the Indigenous Peoples knowledge. The initiative is part of the Indigenous Peoples campaign “The Answer Is Us,” led by the Coordination of Indigenous Peoples Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB) — a mobilization that affirms that Indigenous Peoples are not only resisting, but actively leading the pathways toward the planet's future.

In its first edition, the Indigenous Peoples Sciences Award recognized 68 initiatives across the nine states of the Brazilian Amazon, revealing to Brazil and the world that Indigenous Peoples science is alive, diverse, and essential to the balance of life on Earth. The award also serves as a practical demonstration that direct, socially just, and less bureaucratic funding models are not only possible but effective — proving that accountability and flexibility can coexist. By valuing Indigenous Peoples-led mechanisms already operating on the ground, the Award reinforces that genuine support for climate and biodiversity solutions must begin with those who have been protecting the forest for generations.



Podáali in Numbers

Since its creation, Podáali has supported 174 Indigenous Peoples initiatives across the 52 base regions of COIAB, directly strengthening community autonomy and territorial governance. Of these, 74 initiatives were led by Indigenous women and 78 by youth, demonstrating the Fund's commitment to intergenerational leadership and gender equity.

In 2024, Podáali managed a total of approximately US \$3.8 million (R\$ 20,703,560.67), supported by 15 different donors. Of this total, 25% was allocated to fund operations, while the remaining resources were distributed across four key areas of action: Institutional Strengthening and Promotion of Rights; Sustainable Economy and Food Sovereignty; Territorial and Environmental Management and Protection; and Indigenous Peoples Education.

Through these initiatives, Podáali has advanced several impact indicators: strengthening its technical and operational capacities, reinforcing its governance structures, expanding political advocacy for Indigenous Peoples movements, and deepening efforts in territorial management and climate action. Its work continues to amplify sustainable economies, enhance Indigenous Peoples autonomy, and consolidate a model of direct, transparent, and culturally grounded Indigenous Peoples-led funding in the Brazilian Amazon.



What makes **Podáali** unique is

What makes Podáali unique is its distinctly Indigenous Peoples approach to selecting and supporting initiatives. Beyond conventional technical scoring, the Fund applies Indigenous Peoples sociopolitical criteria designed to ensure equity among peoples, regions, and historical contexts. This methodology guarantees a fairer distribution of resources and reflects the immense cultural and territorial diversity of the Amazon. By doing so, Podáali not only funds projects — it restores balance to how resources are accessed, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples priorities and worldviews guide investment decisions. Equally distinctive is Podáali's self-monitoring model, a participatory system in which supported organizations themselves track and evaluate the results of their initiatives through narrative and financial reports. Rather than relying solely on external audits, the Fund promotes collective accountability rooted in trust and Indigenous Peoples knowledge. This approach reinforces Podáali's identity as a fund "by Indigenous Peoples, for Indigenous Peoples, and with Indigenous Peoples management." By fostering self-governance and autonomy, Podáali transforms financing into a process of empowerment — strengthening the capacity of Indigenous Peoples organizations to plan, implement, and report according to their own ways of life and systems of thought.



Repaleac Fund: Financing the Transformation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Central Africa

The REPALEAC Fund started its process in 2019 to support the implementation of the REPALEAC Strategic Framework across eight countries: the Central African Republic, Gabon, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Chad, Rwanda, and Burundi. The creation of the Fund aims to facilitate the effective implementation of REPALEAC's Strategic Framework by providing direct access to financing for community-based organizations within the COMIFAC (Central African Forests Commission) region.

Far from being an external body, the Fund is fully integrated into REPALEAC's institutional structure, designed and managed by REPALEAC itself, serving as a key mechanism for mobilizing resources to ensure direct funding access for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

The REPALEAC Fund responds to an urgent need: to ensure that IPLCs are not only consulted, but empowered with resources to lead their own development. It directly finances community-driven



initiatives aligned with REPALEAC's Vision 2030, recognizing the vital role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in forest protection, biodiversity conservation, and climate regulation through their traditional knowledge and practices.

The fund's establishment was motivated by the global recognition of IPLCs' role as custodians of ecosystems, and by the need to address challenges such as land insecurity, limited access to financing, insufficient recognition of traditional knowledge, and the need to improve livelihoods.

Achievements to Date

- Development of the Fund's Orientation Document
- Official launch of the Fund in New York
- Exchange of experiences in Indonesia
- Learning and networking with other territorial funds
- Initial financial mobilization efforts

Key Milestones in the Fund’s Development



The pilot phase consisted of three main stages:

1. Pilot initiatives developed with GIZ in Chad and Cameroon.
2. Community project support through RRI – Bezos Project, with 16 community initiatives funded based on REPALEAC’s recommendations.
3. Nine microprojects granted to women in the eight COMIFAC member countries.

The Operationalization Workshop of the REPALEAC Fund established a roadmap for finalizing its governance and management structures. This process, including the development of governance tools, is supported by CLUA and the PANKAR Foundation, with ongoing discussions with the Tenure Facility representing another promising opportunity. The Fund has also strengthened its networking with territorial and operational funds across Central Africa and the Congo Basin.

Financial Outlook

The provisional budget for 2026–2030 is estimated at USD 150 million, to be mobilized progressively through partnerships, donor engagement, and regional cooperation. In essence, the REPALEAC Fund represents a transformative regional mechanism—rooted in Indigenous Peoples and local governance, built through collaboration, and designed to ensure that the peoples who protect the forests are also the ones who benefit directly from global environmental finance.

What makes REPALEAC’s fund unique is:

The REPALEAC Fund is unique because it is the first regional financing mechanism in Central Africa fully designed, governed, and managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities themselves. Integrated into REPALEAC’s institutional structure rather than operating as an external body, it functions as a political instrument of financial self-determination, directly channeling resources to community organizations across eight countries of the COMIFAC region. By aligning investments with the REPALEAC Vision 2030, the Fund bridges traditional knowledge and modern finance, ensuring that the peoples who protect forests and biodiversity are also the ones who decide how resources are used. Its embedded governance, regional scope, and emphasis on trust, participation, and cultural relevance make it a transformative model for direct funding and Indigenous Peoples-led climate action.



Rutî Fund: Financing the people who sustain the territories in Roraima



The Rutî Fund was created in 2024, during a General Assembly of the Indigenous Peoples Council of Roraima (CIR), as a department within the organization itself, rather than as an independent entity. This decision reflected the leadership’s understanding that creating a new institution would fragment efforts, while strengthening the already consolidated structure of the CIR would accelerate processes and ensure political and territorial coherence.

With 54 years of history, the CIR has accumulated extensive experience in legal, administrative, and political management. The Rutî Fund was therefore born by drawing on this existing technical structure—including its legal, financial, communications, and project departments—to give agility to its creation and operation. In this way, the fund became a tool at

the service of the movement, an organic extension of the CIR’s historical struggle for the protection of Indigenous Peoples and territories in Roraima.

The main demand that led to the creation of the Rutî Fund was the strengthening of sustainable productive activities in the territories, such as Indigenous Peoples sustainable cattle ranching, which emerged after land reoccupations and became a strategy for economic autonomy and territorial management. Thus, the fund was not created merely to attract resources, but to ensure that Indigenous Peoples remain connected to their territories, generating income and strengthening their own ways of life.

The governance of the Rutî Fund is shared, combining territorial leadership and the CIR’s technical team. Its Governing Council is composed of 13



members: technical staff from CIR's legal, financial, and communication departments; male, female, and youth leaders; and a representative from the Raposa Serra do Sol Indigenous Peoples Training Center. This deliberative council is responsible for defining thematic areas, public calls, funding amounts, and project selection.

The Fund's executive team currently includes seven people: one general coordinator, three staff responsible for articulation and monitoring in the territories—who support leaders, guide applicants through the calls, and ensure project implementation—and three assistants in administration, finance, and procurement. This structure ensures that the fund remains close to the communities, and that every decision is accompanied both technically and politically.

The Rutî Fund's support model is innovative in Brazil. Instead of transferring funds directly to communities or requiring legal personality, the fund purchases the goods and equipment requested by beneficiary families, communities, and regions. This model was developed based on local realities, recognizing that the CIR's foundation is its people and communities, rather than formal associations.

The public calls are defined and approved during CIR assemblies, and the proposals received are evaluated by an independent committee composed

of Indigenous and non-Indigenous reviewers with experience in the region. Each project is evaluated by two reviewers, anonymously, and the results are consolidated into a proprietary monitoring system that enables transparent, visual tracking of projects through maps and indicators.

Support amounts are defined according to scope: R\$ 25,000 for families, R\$ 100,000 for communities, and R\$ 150,000 for regions. In the first call, the fund received 145 proposals, of which 25 were selected, the majority being family-based initiatives. This focus on families reflects the fund's philosophy: it is people who sustain the territories.

The Rutî Fund began with financing from the Norwegian Embassy and currently receives support from seven funders, including Niatero, the Ford Foundation, Instituto Beja, and CLUA, among others. The diversification of funding sources has been a strategic step to guarantee autonomy and flexibility in resource management.

By functioning as a department of the Indigenous Peoples movement, the Rutî Fund combines technical agility and political legitimacy, promoting a model of direct funding grounded in Indigenous governance and ways of life. More than a financial mechanism, it embodies a distinct form of political practice, in which the management of resources is inseparable from the management of life and territory.

What makes Rutî unique:

The Rutî Fund is unique because it operates from within the Indigenous Peoples movement itself, as a department of the Indigenous Peoples Council of Roraima (CIR) rather than as an external or independent entity. This structure gives it political legitimacy, operational agility, and deep territorial roots, ensuring that funding decisions are directly guided by Indigenous Peoples governance and priorities. By relying on CIR's long-established institutional capacity, Rutî channels resources efficiently while maintaining coherence with the movement's historical struggle for autonomy and land protection. Its innovative support model—which purchases goods and equipment directly for families and communities instead of transferring cash—was designed to match local realities, reducing bureaucracy and strengthening collective accountability. With a strong focus on family-based initiatives, Rutî redefines direct funding as an act of self-determination, where financial management becomes a continuation of Indigenous Peoples political and territorial stewardship.



Forests Coming Back to Life in the Heart of Petén (Guatemala)

Communities that Care and Protect

The sun is just beginning to rise through the trees as Francisca and Luis Enrique prepare to leave La Técnica, a community in the municipality of La Cruz, Petén. Both are young environmental promoters trained with the support of the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM) through the Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP), a founding member of the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB).

Their work involves patrolling forest trails, advising families on their rights and responsibilities while living within the multiple-use zone of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, and strengthening environmental awareness in an area long affected by illegal logging and hunting. “Before, many people were arrested for cutting trees without knowing it was prohibited. Now, we understand and protect the forest,” says Francisca.

In total, 14 people from the cooperatives La Lucha, La Técnica, and La Unión Maya Itzá—all part of ACOFOP— have been trained as community promoters in environmental, labor, criminal, civil, and constitutional law, so they can support their communities in defending territorial rights.

“The workshop was designed to give a group of young people the tools to defend both their territorial and human rights—so they can understand what is legally allowed and what is not,” explains Yesenia López, the legal assistant who coordinated the training.

La Técnica is organized around its Cooperativa Integral Agropecuaria Técnica Petén R.L., made up of 42 members (22 women and 20 men). Through its assemblies, the community collectively decides how to manage the territory, production, and conservation, maintaining strong communal ties in an area constantly under pressure from deforestation.

Seeds of Hope

On the edge of a cornfield, Juan Carlos Ordoñez digs a small hole to plant a ramón tree seedling. He manages the nursery in Cruce La Colorada, a community of 110 families in the multiple-use zone of the Maya Biosphere, in San Andrés, Petén.

Last year, the nursery produced 14,000 seedlings of 21 different native species—including mahogany, cedar, ciricote, and copal. “We use the products, the fruit, and the flowers that help the bees and animals like birds, deer, coatis, and wild pigs,” says Juan Carlos.

This recovery did not happen overnight. It represents decades of work by the Integral Forest Association Cruce La Colorada (AFICC), a grassroots ACOFOP organization that has managed its forest concession for over 25 years.

In 2024, with FTM support, the community began restoring 14 hectares of forest degraded by illegal occupations prior to 2010. Although the government recovered these lands through the National Council for Protected Areas (CONAP), they suffered repeated fires and degradation.

FTM funding supported 2,610 meters of firebreak maintenance across 13 hectares (8 hectares restored in 2024 and 5 more planned for 2025). Today, men and women work side by side in the nurseries, replanting native species such as mahogany, ramón, copal, and manchiche. Where once there were only cattle pastures, young trees are growing again, and the sounds of birds, coatis, and deer have returned to the forest.

“We are happy to take part in this reforestation, because our children will also enjoy the forest we are planting today,” says Sandra, a nursery worker from Cruce La Colorada.





Community Tourism as a Conservation Strategy

Amid the forest-covered Mayan temples, Ángela Fajardo, a community leader and local guide, walks slowly as she tells visitors about the history of the ancient stelae. She pauses before Stela 9, the oldest yet discovered, dated to around 327 BCE. Her voice carries through the trees as she reminds visitors that this territory—once home to great civilizations—is still alive thanks to the care of its people.

In Uaxactún, just 24 kilometers from Tikal, the community surrounded by archaeological sites and wildlife has found in community tourism a way to protect the forest while sustaining its local economy. Since 2000, Uaxactún has managed a community forest concession that allows sustainable use of natural resources. While this model brings many benefits, it also comes with great responsibilities. Although a 25-year extension was recently granted, uncertainty remains about whether another renewal will come in the future.

To face this challenge, the community has diversified its income sources, developing community-based tourism as a sustainable alternative to forest extraction. Visitors are drawn by the archaeological remains and biodiversity, but what they value most

is the ancestral knowledge shared by local guides. “We don’t want mass tourism—we want sustainable tourism,” Ángela says. “We have a lot to protect and a lot of responsibility. People who visit us must be committed to the environment, the forest, the animals, and the culture—and that’s something that has been recognized.”

A Territory Flourishing through Self-Determination

The three communities—La Técnica, Cruce La Colorada, and Uaxactún—each embody different expressions of self-determination and community governance. In La Técnica, environmental education has transformed how people relate to the forest. In Cruce La Colorada, landscape restoration has brought wildlife back to life. In Uaxactún, community tourism has become a sustainable economic alternative.

Together, they show that direct territorial funding, when placed in community hands, strengthens local leadership, protects ecosystems, and nurtures hope.

The forest regrowing in Petén is not just the outcome of a project—it is the living expression of communities that have chosen to care for their common home.

Why Tell This Story?

This story offers a transformative example of the impact of direct funding in Mesoamerica — a region often overlooked by global philanthropy. These communities demonstrate that when resources flow directly to the territories, they do more than conserve forests: they regenerate relationships, knowledge, and futures.



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