

SHANDIA 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**Global
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of Territorial
Communities



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Introduction

COP30 marked the conclusion of an important chapter in the global struggle of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. After years of advocacy, political mobilization, and collective action, some of the demands long championed by our peoples are now reflected in international commitments related to forests, climate, and biodiversity. These achievements were neither accidental nor inevitable. They are the result of decades of organizing, resistance, and political engagement carried out by Indigenous Peoples and local communities across the world.

Yet COP30 also revealed a new reality: the challenge of ensuring that these commitments are translated into practice. This challenge goes far beyond the mobilization of additional resources. It requires revisiting the assumptions, procedures, risk frameworks, accountability systems, and governance arrangements that continue to shape how funding reaches territories. It requires building financial architectures capable of recognizing us, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, not as beneficiaries of projects, but as rights holders, decision-makers, and partners in the governance of resources.

If the last decade was largely dedicated to demonstrating why us Indigenous Peoples and local communities must be at the center of global efforts to protect forests and biodiversity, the next one will test whether governments, donors, and international institutions are willing to act on that recognition by transforming the systems through which resources flow.

With this understanding, the GATC launched the Peoples' Pledge as a contribution to the next phase of this global agenda. [The Peoples' Pledge](#) starts from a simple premise: if governments, donors, and international institutions are serious about implementing the commitments they have made, then the conversation must move beyond the volume of funding available. The focus must shift toward the conditions necessary for funding to be effective, accessible, rights-based, and aligned with territorial realities.

This includes expanding direct territorial finance channels, investing in Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' own institutions, strengthening territorial funds, supporting long-term organizational development, and reforming funding practices that continue to create unnecessary barriers for the very peoples and communities whose leadership is now widely recognized. At its core, however, this discussion requires a deeper shift in perspective. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are not simply stakeholders in global climate and biodiversity agendas. We are rights holders. Our governance systems, knowledge, institutions, and ways of life are not obstacles that need to be corrected in order to access funding. They are among the strongest foundations for addressing the climate, ecological, and social crises facing the world today.

It is within this broader transition—from commitments to implementation—that the Shandia Report 2025 is situated. The report documents the investments made by Shandia Platform territorial funds throughout 2025 while also examining the opportunities, challenges, and funding gaps that continue to shape the territorial finance landscape. For the first time, the report goes beyond tracking resources disbursed and presents information on the quality of funding received by territorial mechanisms. This includes the duration of funding commitments, the balance between institutional and project-restricted support, and the different categories of actors involved in financing territorial funds, including philanthropic, bilateral, multilateral, and intermediary organizations.

By bringing together these experiences and data, the report seeks to contribute both to transparency and to a broader understanding of the conditions required to make direct territorial funding a reality. Ultimately, it asks a simple but critical question: **what still needs to change for the commitments achieved at the global level to become meaningful, sustained support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities on the ground?**

Section 1.

Shandia Platform:

Consolidating Collective Action
in a Changing Landscape



The year 2025 marked an important transition for the Shandia Platform. While previous years were largely dedicated to building the platform's foundations, strengthening relationships among territorial funds, and developing a shared political vision, 2025 was characterized by a growing emphasis on collective action, political coordination, and strategic engagement with an increasingly dynamic global agenda on direct territorial finance.



The year unfolded amid a rapidly changing international context. On one hand, Indigenous Peoples and local communities gained greater visibility within global climate and biodiversity discussions. Processes such as the **Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment (ILTC) under the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP)**, discussions surrounding the **Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)**, and negotiations regarding a renewed **Forest Tenure Funders Group Pledge (FTFG 2.0)** reflected growing recognition of the importance of territorial rights, governance, and direct finance.

At the same time, significant uncertainties emerged regarding the future of international cooperation

and climate finance. The withdrawal or weakening of key actors within the funding ecosystem, concerns about long-term funding availability, and ongoing debates about the future direction of direct finance created a complex environment for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and territorial funds organizations. This combination of opportunity and uncertainty reinforced the importance of strengthening collective coordination and ensuring that territorial perspectives remained present within international decision-making processes.

Against this backdrop, Shandia organized its work around three strategic objectives: **strengthening territorial funds and mutual learning processes;**



Shandia Forum 2025: Launch of the Peoples' Pledge during COP30.



FTFGxGATC meeting NY 2025.

influencing international discussions on climate and biodiversity finance; and monitoring and analyzing financial flows directed to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

A central milestone of 2025 was the consolidation of the Shandia Learning Community as a strategic space for peer exchange, institutional strengthening, and collaboration among territorial funds, with support from TINTA. Throughout the year, the process combined participatory design, multilingual exchanges, virtual sessions, and practical discussions focused on institutional development, fundraising, sustainability, governance, and direct finance strategies.

The process began with a participatory design phase in Brazzaville and was officially launched during London Climate Action Week. It subsequently expanded through virtual sessions and activities linked to the **Shandia Forum in Belém during COP30**.

Beyond its technical dimensions, the Shandia Learning Community increasingly emerged as a space for building relationships, exchanging experiences, and strengthening collaboration among funds operating in very different political, institutional, and territorial contexts. Participants highlighted improvements in fundraising capacities, expanded engagement with donors, and stronger opportunities for collective reflection on shared challenges. At the same time, the process reinforced an import-

ant lesson: territorial funds operate under highly diverse realities, and any collective strategy must recognize these differences rather than assume a single pathway for institutional development.

A second major dimension of **Shandia's work in 2025 focused on engagement with key international processes shaping the future of direct territorial finance**. Within discussions surrounding the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), Shandia played an active role in debates related to the Dedicated Allocation Finance (DAF), helping bring territorial perspectives into conversations regarding the design and implementation of funding mechanisms intended to reach Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Within the ILTC process, the platform contributed to discussions on how commitments related to territorial rights and land tenure could move beyond political declarations and become embedded within practical implementation pathways. Similarly, Shandia played an important role in facilitating collective reflection and coordination around the future of the Forest Tenure Funders Group Pledge, particularly regarding accountability, direct funding, and mechanisms for monitoring progress.

While these processes differed significantly in scope and purpose, they shared a common challenge: ensuring that discussions taking place within international forums remained connected to the realities, priorities, and experiences of territories.



Indigenous Peoples-led Funds Partnering with the Land Tenure Pledge and Beyond. NYCW 2025.



TFFF Global Steering Committee Meeting LCAW 2025.



London 2.0 Indigenous Peoples-led Funds Partnering with the Land Tenure Pledge and Beyond. LCAW 2025.



Shandia Learning Community at the Global Forest Basins Congress, Brazzaville 2025.



Learning community Lcaw.

“The Learning Community and donor engagement spaces were recognized as important contributions to linking political advocacy with institutional development.”

Throughout the year, Shandia increasingly served as a bridge between these two levels, helping bring territorial perspectives into global conversations while also creating opportunities for territorial funds to better understand and engage with emerging international processes.

Another important milestone was the organization of the **Shandia Forum and the launch of the Peoples' Pledge during COP30**. The Forum brought together territorial funds, Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations, donors, and partners to reflect on the future of direct finance and territorial governance. Beyond its political dimension, the Forum also created practical opportunities for collaboration through fundraising discussions, donor engagement sessions, and exchanges among territorial funds. These interactions reflected one of Shandia's defining characteristics: the ability to connect political advocacy, institutional strengthening, and practical collaboration within a single space.

The third pillar of Shandia's work in 2025 focused on generating and analyzing knowledge about financial flows directed to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, particularly through the Shandia Report process. The methodology combined collaborative data collection, bilateral interviews, field engagement, and dialogue with territorial funds. Beyond producing information, the process

contributed to ongoing discussions regarding how direct finance should be understood, monitored, and assessed from territorial perspectives. As debates on direct funding continued to evolve internationally, the report increasingly became a tool for collective reflection and political positioning among participating organizations.

Toward the end of the year, Shandia conducted an evaluation process involving GATC member organizations and territorial funds participating in the platform. The assessment provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements, identify challenges, and inform priorities for the next phase of work.

Participants highlighted several positive developments. These included the strengthening of a shared political agenda, increased international visibility for Shandia, growing recognition of territorial leadership within climate and biodiversity discussions, and stronger connections among territorial funds. The Peoples' Pledge was frequently identified as one of the year's most significant strategic achievements, while the Learning Community and donor engagement spaces were recognized as important contributions to linking political advocacy with institutional development.

At the same time, the evaluation revealed important challenges. Several organizations noted that,

“2025 confirmed that Shandia has become more than a network of territorial funds. It has evolved into a platform where territorial voices shape global conversations, strengthen collective action, and transform opportunities into pathways for direct territorial finance.”

despite increased access to high-level international spaces, territorial funds and Indigenous Peoples and local communities organizations continue to occupy unequal positions within the broader climate finance ecosystem. Concerns were also raised regarding the significant amount of political energy dedicated to the TFFF process throughout the year and the need to ensure that direct finance discussions do not overshadow other priorities within the broader GATC agenda.

Territorial funds also highlighted operational challenges associated with the platform’s own growth. As expectations regarding coordination, representation, technical support, and political engagement continue to expand, questions related to operational structure, internal roles, institutional sustainability, and coordination mechanisms have become increasingly important. Several organizations also emphasized the need to strengthen regional articulation, deepen communication with territorial constituencies, and ensure that international engagement remains firmly connected to territorial priorities.

Looking ahead, expectations for 2026 reflected an important shift in focus. While previous years were largely dedicated to opening political pathways for direct territorial finance, the next phase will increasingly require translating these opportunities into practical outcomes. Organizations emphasized the need to strengthen support for territorial funds in areas such as financial management systems, safeguards, fundraising, monitoring, institutional sustainability, and organizational development. There was also strong interest in advancing territorial approaches to accountability and monitoring that complement donor-driven frameworks.

In many respects, 2025 confirmed that Shandia has become more than a network of territorial funds. It has increasingly evolved into a platform through which territorial funds can articulate shared priorities, strengthen collective action, and engage with international processes from a position rooted in territorial experience. Sustaining and deepening this role will be central to the platform’s next chapter.



REPALEAC speed dating.



AMAN speed dating.

Section 2.

Shandia on the Ground

Overview of the State of Funding
for Territorial Mechanisms
Methodological Note



The analysis presented in this section seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions on the state of direct territorial funding and the conditions under which territorial mechanisms operate. The objective is to identify trends, opportunities, and persistent challenges emerging from the experiences of the funds that currently make up the Shandia Platform.

The findings are based on three complementary sources of information: (i) bilateral interviews conducted with each territorial fund during the preparation of this report; (ii) review of annual reports and institutional documents produced by the funds regarding their 2025 activities; and (iii) a quantitative survey focused on financial flows, funding sources, operational costs, funding quality, flexibility, and funding duration.

Taken together, these sources offer a unique perspective on how territorial mechanisms are accessing, managing, and redistributing resources, as well as the institutional conditions required to sustain and expand direct territorial funding.

Territorial Funds Continue to Operate with Extremely Lean Structures

Together, the Shandia funds disbursed approximately **USD 5.88 million during 2025¹**. On average, operational costs represented **25.2% of total budgets**. This figure deserves careful consideration. On one hand, it reflects a deliberate political choice made by the funds to maximize the proportion of resources reaching communities and territories. On the other, it highlights a persistent underinvestment in the institutional capacities required to sustain and expand territorial funding over time.

These operational resources should not be understood as administrative overhead. They finance governance

systems, monitoring and evaluation, safeguards, fundraising, financial management, territorial accompaniment, knowledge generation, accountability processes, and organizational development. In practice, they constitute the infrastructure that makes direct territorial funding possible.

As territorial funds are increasingly expected to play a central role in implementing global commitments related to climate, biodiversity, and territorial rights, strengthening these institutional capacities becomes a strategic investment in the broader territorial finance ecosystem.

¹ Readers comparing the total disbursement figures presented in this report with those published in the previous edition may notice apparent discrepancies. These differences are primarily the result of methodological adjustments and improvements in reporting practices, rather than a direct reduction in territorial investments. As the first Shandia Report was produced at the end of 2024, some funds reported investments that were approved or already committed for implementation during the first months of 2025. As a result, a portion of expenditures that effectively occurred in 2025 was already reflected in the figures presented in the previous report. In addition, because 2024 marked the first collective effort to consolidate financial information across the Shandia Platform, some inconsistencies emerged during the reporting process. In one case, a fund reported resources that had been committed but had not yet been disbursed or entered implementation. Following a review of the data, these figures have been corrected in the present report. In the interest of transparency, we believe it is important to explicitly acknowledge this adjustment. These experiences also informed an important methodological decision. Beginning in 2025, Shandia will publish its annual report in the middle of the following year, allowing sufficient time for financial data to be consolidated and verified, reducing the likelihood of overlaps between committed and disbursed resources. We recognize that monitoring Indigenous Peoples and community-led territorial funds through a common reporting framework remains a challenge. The funds operate across different regions, governance systems, reporting practices, impact measurement approaches, and institutional capacities. At the same time, building a shared evidence base that reflects this diversity is a central part of Shandia's mission. The adjustments presented in this report should therefore be understood as part of an ongoing effort to strengthen transparency, consistency, and collective learning across the platform.

Flexibility Remains the Exception Rather Than the Rule



None of the funds reported receiving predominantly long-term funding. Only one fund identified a long-term funding source within its portfolio. Overall, funding remains concentrated in short- and medium-term grants.

In addition, **three of the funds reported receiving predominantly restricted funding linked to specific projects, activities, and pre-defined outputs.** Limited flexibility constrains the ability of funds to respond to emerging priorities, adapt to rapidly changing contexts, and support long-term territorial processes that rarely follow the timelines imposed by project-based funding.

Recent examples cited by the funds include the abrupt interruption of USAID funding in Central America and the impacts of ongoing humanitarian and health crises in the Congo Basin. In both cases, territorial organizations faced urgent challenges that could not easily be addressed through highly restricted funding arrangements.

Flexible Funding Expands the Range of Possible Funding Models

Two notable exceptions emerge from the analysis. Both Nusantara Fund and IPAS reported receiving fully flexible core support funding. Interestingly, these same funds are also the only ones that do not rely on open calls as a mechanism for allocating resources. Instead, funding decisions are made through governance structures and processes defined by the organizations and communities themselves.

While it is not possible to establish a direct causal relationship, the experiences of these funds suggest that greater flexibility at the donor level can significantly expand the range of funding modalities available at the territorial level. The quality of funding received appears closely connected to the ability of territorial mechanisms to experiment with approaches that are more responsive to community priorities and territorial realities.

Territorial Funds Are Offering Communities Conditions They Do Not Receive Themselves

One of the most striking findings of this assessment is that **territorial funds frequently attempt to provide communities with greater flexibility than they themselves receive from donors**. Despite operating under highly restricted funding conditions, the funds have developed a range of innovative approaches to better align funding with territorial realities. **Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano (FTM)** has expanded co-implementation models with territorial organizations. **Podáali Fund** combines open calls, Indigenous Peoples prizes, and invitation-based support mechanisms. The **Amazonia Por la Vida (FAV)** develops investments through participatory planning and assembly-based decision-making. **REPALEAC Funds** has experimented with reverse open calls, where organizations actively seek out community priorities rather than waiting for communities to compete for resources.

These experiences illustrate the role territorial funds increasingly play as cultural translators between the requirements of the international funding architecture and the realities of Indigenous and community territories.

Territorial Demand Continues to Exceed Available Resources

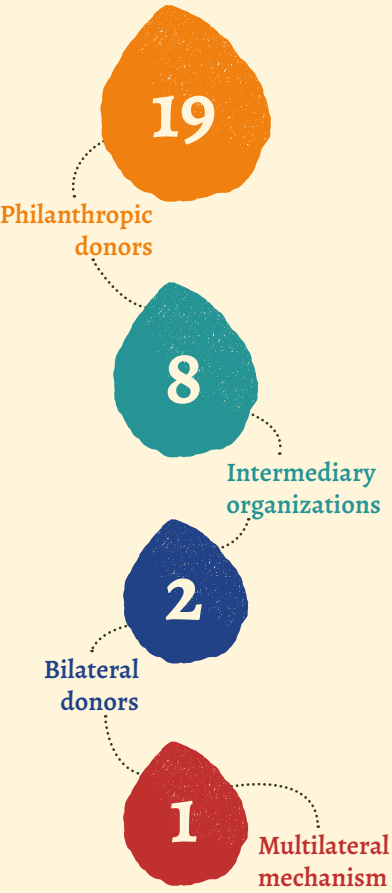
Across the different funds, one message emerged consistently: **the primary limitation is not the absence of initiatives, leadership, or territorial capacity, but the lack of sufficient resources to respond to existing demand**.

Evidence gathered through interviews and institutional reports suggests that **up to one-third of initiatives considered eligible for support are ultimately not funded** due to resource constraints. This points to a significant level of unmet territorial demand and reinforces a conclusion repeatedly emphasized by fund leaders: communities are presenting viable proposals, priorities are clearly identified, and implementation capacity exists. **What remains insufficient is the volume of resources available to support them**.



Philanthropy Remains the Primary Driver of Territorial Funding

During 2025, the funds reported relationships with:



Although these figures do not reveal the proportion of funding provided by each category, they clearly indicate the central role currently played by philanthropy and intermediary organizations within the territorial funding ecosystem.

At the same time, the predominance of philanthropic actors has not necessarily translated into more flexible funding. Most funds continue to report short- and medium-term grants linked to specific projects and activities. This suggests that significant opportunities remain for philanthropic organizations to further align funding practices with the realities of territorial processes by expanding long-term and unrestricted support.

Significant Impact Despite Structural Constraints

Despite operating under these conditions, territorial funds continue to generate meaningful impacts across diverse regions and contexts.

In 2025, the funds collectively supported approximately 707 initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. These initiatives addressed territorial protection, Indigenous Peoples governance, women’s leadership, youth participation, traditional knowledge systems, livelihoods, food sovereignty, organizational strengthening, climate resilience, and emergency response.

Beyond the number of projects supported, the evidence gathered through this report highlights a broader contribution. Territorial funds are helping strengthen Indigenous Peoples and local community institutions, build leadership, sustain territorial governance systems, and create pathways through which communities can define and implement their own priorities.

The funds collectively supported approximately 707 initiatives

The Next Frontier: Bilateral and Multilateral Funding

The participation of bilateral and multilateral actors remains limited. This reinforces the need to simplify accreditation processes, fiduciary requirements, and access procedures that continue to represent significant barriers for territorial mechanisms.

At the same time, several funds are actively investing in the capacities required to access these funding sources directly. Progress made during 2025 suggests that this trend may accelerate in the coming years, particularly as territorial funds continue strengthening their governance systems, safeguards, monitoring frameworks, and financial management capacities.

Concluding Reflection

Although consolidated FTFG data for 2025 are not yet available, trends observed in previous years remain highly relevant. **The 2024 FTFG report documented a substantial increase in direct funding from philanthropic donors, rising from 3.8% in 2021 to 34% in 2024.** During the same period, direct funding from **bilateral donors declined from 4% in 2023 to just 1.6% in 2024.**

The findings presented here point in a similar direction. **The challenge is no longer simply to increase the volume of resources** reaching Indigenous Peoples and local communities. **The quality of funding** — its flexibility, duration, accessibility, and capacity to strengthen territorial institutions — **is becoming equally important.**

Importantly, this transformation cannot depend solely on territorial funds. Indigenous Peoples and local communities have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to build institutions, manage resources, govern territories, and generate lasting impacts. The responsibility now also lies with donors, governments, and emerging funding mechanisms. Advancing direct territorial funding requires not only stronger territorial institutions, but also funding systems willing to adapt their own practices, invest in long-term capacities, and create pathways that genuinely respond to territorial realities.



Fondo Amazonía por la Vida



From Political Proposal to an Amazonian Territorial Instrument

When we presented the **Fondo Amazônia por la Vida (FAV)** in the 2024 Shandia Report, it primarily represented a political commitment by COICA and Amazonian Indigenous Peoples organizations to turn direct access to climate finance into a reality for the Amazon Basin. At that time, the challenge was to open a pathway. In 2025, the challenge became a different one: building the institutional, technical, and territorial conditions needed to walk it.

The year's most significant achievement was not necessarily reflected in the volume of resources disbursed, but in **the transformation of the fund into an operational mechanism capable of connecting international finance with territorial priorities under Indigenous Peoples leadership**. Throughout 2025, the regional portfolio was structured, the first projects advanced toward implementation, and the process of building a dedicated legal architecture to support the mechanism was initiated. In practice, the **FAVs** moved beyond being a proposal advocated for in international forums and began demonstrating how direct access can function when Indigenous Peoples organizations themselves design, govern, and implement the process.

One of the fund's key commitments in 2025 was recognizing that **institutional strengthening should not be viewed as a prerequisite for accessing resources, but rather as a central component of the fund's work itself**. As highlighted by the fund, international cooperation systems have historically relied on external intermediaries to manage resources intended for Indigenous Peoples, leaving many territorial organizations excluded from opportunities to develop the administrative, financial, and fiduciary capacities required to directly manage large-scale investments.

A significant portion of **FAV's** efforts throughout 2025 was therefore dedicated to changing this reality. The opening of dedicated bank accounts, the registration of authorized signatories, the establishment of administrative and accounting systems, the structuring of technical teams, and the development of project portfolios were all understood as strategic investments in territorial autonomy. From the fund's perspective, **strengthening the institutional capacities of grassroots organizations is just as important as financing the activities foreseen within individual projects**.

The progress achieved in 2025 also began to materialize within territories. **In Peru**, the fund advanced the identification and selection of twenty-five bioeconomy enterprises across nine Amazonian regions, organized around seven value chains linked to Indigenous Peoples economies. **In Venezuela**,

territorial assessments, a georeferenced study, and four restoration plans developed by Indigenous Peoples organizations themselves were completed. **In Colombia**, work began on the territorial model of Living Cultural Houses across six departments, strengthening spaces dedicated to knowledge transmission, community governance, and the protection of collective memory. Although much of the portfolio remained in the early stages of implementation, these initiatives established the first concrete foundations for an Amazon-wide direct finance agenda designed from Indigenous Peoples own Life Plans.

This work unfolded alongside another equally important challenge: building transparency and accountability mechanisms that strengthen organizational autonomy rather than constrain it. Throughout 2025, a significant part of **FAV's** efforts focused on translating donor requirements into Amazonian territorial realities, creating bridges between financial reporting systems and Indigenous Peoples governance structures.

This process was not without tensions. One of the principal challenges encountered during the year was reconciling assembly-based decision-making timelines with the schedules and procedures required by donors. While this challenge is not unique to FAV, the diversity of peoples, territories, and forest contexts across the Amazon Basin adds additional layers of complexity. Operational



"Perhaps one of the most important lessons learned by the FAV in 2025 was that the strength of the fund depends on its ability to listen and adapt based on guidance from territorial constituencies themselves."



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difficulties also emerged. In several countries, opening bank accounts took longer than expected, while fiduciary procedures required multiple rounds of review and adaptation. In some cases, changes in leadership resulting from internal elections required adjustments to administrative procedures in order to ensure continuity without compromising the political autonomy of participating organizations. In the implementation of bioeconomy initiatives, logistical obstacles related to transportation, infrastructure, and access to appropriate markets for Indigenous Peoples products also persisted.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons learned by the **FAV** in 2025 was that **the strength of the fund depends on its ability to listen and adapt based on guidance from territorial constituencies themselves**. Throughout the year, participating organizations identified limitations in certain project designs

and called for adjustments to better respond to territorial priorities. Rather than being treated as obstacles, these critiques were incorporated as part of the mechanism's own strengthening process.

This experience has also highlighted another fundamental issue. International monitoring systems often excel at measuring what is administratively verifiable, yet struggle to capture what communities themselves consider most meaningful. Trust among organizations, the strengthening of self-governance, women's participation, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and social cohesion are all central dimensions of life for Amazonian peoples, yet they rarely appear within conventional evaluation frameworks. For this reason, the development of Indigenous Peoples and territorial well-being indicators has become a strategic priority for the fund. This work advanced throughout 2025 and will continue to be further developed in 2026.

Looking back, 2025 was, above all, a year of laying foundations for the Fondo Amazonia por la Vida. It was a year dedicated to building the capacities, systems, and institutional structures necessary to support the effective implementation of resources in the years ahead. Looking forward, 2026 is expected to focus on consolidating these efforts through the full implementation of the regional portfolio, the formalization of the trust structure, the strengthening of national and territorial funds, and the expansion of disbursements across the Amazon Basin.



Fundo Amazônia por la Vida in Numbers

The FAV is built on an initial contribution commitment of USD 10,000,000 to the Fund and its territorial implementation plans, originated from the Green Climate Fund and multi-donor mechanisms facilitated by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) acting as fiscal facilitator of the Fund.

During 2025 the regional portfolio committed approximately

USD 8,600,000

across ten national and regional projects.



FAV recieves mainly

medium-term funding

(2-4 years)

Actual disbursements in 2025 were still modest, since most projects were in pre-conditions or design stages. Concrete execution concentrated in **two** projects under implementation:

AIDSEP (Peru), with roughly

USD 118.000 executed

(12% of its project) and about **USD 140,000 further committed**

ORPIA (Venezuela), with roughly

USD 100.000 executed

(50% of its project) and about **USD 35,000 committed**



Total executed/disbursed in the period:

USD 218,000

Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano



Reinventing Itself to Support Territories

In the 2024 Shandia Report, we highlighted how regional inequalities in climate finance affect Mesoamerica, drawing on both the findings of the FTFG Annual Report and, more importantly, the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples and local communities across the region. What **Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano** experienced in 2025 was even more challenging.

The abrupt withdrawal of USAID represented a major blow for the fund and for many Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations throughout the region. More than an isolated event, this process clearly reflected broader geopolitical shifts and their direct impacts on financing for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. As the fund itself summarized, “This was a difficult year.” **The reduction in direct investments—from USD 895,000 in 2024 to USD 280,000 in 2025—**reflects both the challenges of the broader context and the remarkable capacity of territorial organizations to adapt and reinvent themselves.

In response to this crisis, **Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano** initiated an important process of institutional and financial reorganization, seeking to diversify its funding sources and strengthen its operational capacities. According to the **FTM**, the international alliances



© Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano

fostered through Shandia and the GATC were fundamental during this period, helping sustain the mechanism's minimum operational capacity during the most critical months following the closure of USAID.

Throughout 2025, all resources received by the fund were short-term in nature. Twenty percent corresponded to core support, while eighty percent consisted of project-restricted funding. This reality highlights one of the major dilemmas currently facing territorial funds: **how can strong institutional capacities be built in a context characterized by short-term, uncertain, and highly conditional funding?** How can teams, governance systems, monitoring processes, and territorial accompaniment be sustained when resources arrive in fragmented ways and

under administrative logics that often fail to align with territorial realities and timelines?

Despite these challenges, the fund made significant progress in expanding partnerships and securing new sources of financing. **One of the most important achievements of 2025 was the signing of its first agreement with official European Union cooperation through AECID**, enabling support for seven projects under the Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica Program for 2026–2027. At the same time, **FTM** was selected in new multilateral funding processes, including the **Heart of Conservation Initiative (HCI)** and **GEF-8**. In the latter case, **Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano** successfully navigated a highly competitive process involving more than 800 applicants before ultimately being approved.



© FTM, César Arroyo

The **FTM** particularly emphasizes the importance of these new funding streams including dedicated resources for staff responsible for meeting the administrative and fiduciary requirements associated with multilateral mechanisms. Its experience once again highlights a central issue in discussions on direct finance: access to large-scale international resources also requires real investments in operational, administrative, and management capacities.

Among the fund's most important advances in 2025 was the institutionalization of its work with

women and youth. Agreements developed alongside the Mesoamerican Territorial Women's Leaders Coordination (CMLT) strengthened the dedicated financing window for women and young people, formalized through the Panama Act of October 20th, 2025. According to the fund, this process has generated collective benefits across the broader territorial structure: when women advance, everyone advances.

Another strategic milestone was the design and implementation of the AMECLA System, alongside



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AMPB becoming a legally registered organization. This process represents a concrete opportunity to gradually reduce dependence on fiscal sponsors, lowering transfer costs while strengthening internal operational capacities. However, the fund emphasizes that this is a medium- to long-term process that still requires additional institutional steps. Fiscal sponsors will likely remain necessary for some of the more complex funding streams, particularly those originating from bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.

In this regard, the fund also draws attention to an issue that is often overlooked in international discussions. Fiscal sponsors fulfill an important financial and administrative function, but territorial implementation, monitoring, political accompaniment, and organizational strengthening require something different entirely: structures that are deeply rooted in territories and capable of responding to their specific realities and dynamics.

For this reason, investing in the capacities of **Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano** means far more

than strengthening a single institution. It means investing in the capacities of hundreds of Indigenous Peoples and local communities throughout Mesoamerica. The **FTM** operates as a genuine territorial multiplier, connecting organizations, building capacities, and creating bridges between international finance and community realities. In this context, flexible philanthropy continues to play an essential role, particularly in supporting long-term institutional processes that often struggle to find sufficient backing through large international funding mechanisms.

The resource mobilization efforts undertaken by the fund throughout 2025 demonstrate precisely this capacity for coordination, adaptation, and constant reinvention. At the same time, they offer an important lesson for the broader global debate on direct finance. International advances are essential, but they are only meaningful when territorial organizations are able to engage with them collectively. As the fund reflected: **“Alone we are invisible; together, through Shandia, we are seen.”**

Looking ahead, expectations for 2026 focus on beginning to harvest the results of this collective effort — one that was cultivated amid the difficulties of 2025 and sustained through persistence, coordination, and the remarkable capacity for reinvention demonstrated by the peoples and territories of Mesoamerica.

FTM in Numbers



USD 1.293 million

disbursed to territorial initiatives and community-led actions across Mesoamerica.



Funding portfolio composed of:

20%

core support

80%

restricted funding

Predominantly short-term funding

highlighting ongoing challenges for long-term planning and institutional sustainability

56,405

people reached directly through supported initiatives.

191,806

people reached indirectly across Mesoamerica.

4.38 million hectares

under community management and stewardship.



USD 550,000

disbursed to women-led initiatives.



USD 100,000

disbursed to youth-led initiatives.

Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund



From design to implementation

In the 2024 Shandia Report, we highlighted the emergence of the **IPAS Fund** as one of the newest territorial funding mechanisms within the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities. At that stage, the fund was still taking its first steps. The establishment of its bank account, the approval of its first grants, and the creation of six Country Steering Committees marked the beginning of an ambitious effort to build an Indigenous Peoples-led financing mechanism capable of responding to the realities and priorities of Indigenous Peoples across Asia.

If 2024 was the year of building the foundations, 2025 was the year of putting those foundations into practice. Throughout the year, the fund moved from design to implementation. Seven new Country Steering Committees were established, bringing the total to thirteen countries. Two grant cycles were completed, and more than 80 direct grants were approved across nine countries.



© IPAS



© IPAS

“IPAS reminds us that the effectiveness of direct funding cannot be measured solely by the volume of resources disbursed. Governance, legitimacy and trust matters”

Yet, **for IPAS**, the significance of **2025** cannot be measured only through the number of grants approved or countries engaged. The year **represented a crucial test of whether a governance model rooted in Indigenous Peoples leadership, collective decision-making, and territorial priorities could function effectively** across some of the most politically, culturally, and geographically diverse contexts in the world. The Country Steering Committees remain at the heart of this experiment.

Although the **IPAS** secretariat consists of only four staff members, the fund’s governance structure extends far beyond its formal organizational boundaries. **More than 120 Indigenous Peoples leaders participate directly in decision-making processes through the committees.** Their role goes beyond reviewing proposals or allocating resources. They help identify territorial priorities, define funding strategies, ensure inclusion criteria are respected, mediate local tensions, and maintain the connection between financial resources and community realities.

This model represents a deliberate departure from many conventional funding approaches. **IPAS** does not operate through open calls for proposals. Instead, funding decisions are made by the Country Steering Committees themselves. Composed of recognized Indigenous Peoples leaders, the committees apply criteria related to territorial balance, gender inclusion, youth participation, representa-

tion of persons with disabilities, and geographic distribution. The result is a process that seeks to place decision-making power as close as possible to communities themselves.

This approach also allows the fund to respond more effectively to realities that are often invisible to international donors. In some cases, grants must be physically delivered because recipient communities do not have access to banking services. In others, the Country Steering Committee decided to divide resources among several smaller initiatives rather than concentrate them in a single grant. From a conventional donor perspective, such decisions might appear inefficient. From the perspective of the communities themselves, however, they often represent more equitable and legitimate ways of distributing resources.

The realities faced by **IPAS** make its mission particularly complex. Asia is home to a diversity of Indigenous Peoples, political systems, legal frameworks, and historical experiences. The fund operates in countries where Indigenous Peoples rights enjoy different levels of recognition and protection, and where political conditions can vary dramatically. Building Country Steering Committees in such contexts is therefore mainly a deeply political process. In several countries, Indigenous Peoples organizations had never previously participated in territorial funding mechanisms of this kind. Committee members have had to develop governance practices,



decision-making procedures, and accountability systems while simultaneously navigating existing political tensions and historical divisions.

For this reason, capacity strengthening occupies a central place within the **IPAS** strategy. Unlike many international funding initiatives that treat that as a secondary activity, **IPAS** considers it an essential investment in the future of Indigenous Peoples-led financing. Significant effort has been dedicated to strengthening the capacities of Country Steering Committee members in areas such as proposal development, reporting, governance, financial management, and strategic planning.

Another distinctive feature of **the fund is its commitment to inclusion**. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities have specific funding windows in the

grants disbursed by **IPAS**. Particularly noteworthy is the attention given to persons with disabilities. **Dedicated grants have been established to support their participation and initiatives, addressing a dimension of inclusion that remains largely absent from most international climate, conservation, and Indigenous Peoples rights funding mechanisms.**

IPAS recognizes the need to expand the operational capacities of the fund. Yet, the fund has a clear path for doing so, understanding growth should not come at the expense of its principles. At a time when international discussions increasingly focus on scaling up climate and biodiversity finance, **IPAS** reminds us that the effectiveness of direct funding cannot be measured solely by the volume of resources disbursed. Governance, legitimacy and trust matters. **“We start small, but we start right.”**

IPAS in Numbers

107

Initiatives supported

13

Countries

USD 747,000

disbursed across Asia.

USD 845,000

allocated across country and sectoral funding windows, including dedicated support for **women, youth, and persons with disabilities.**

6 Grants

USD 35,000

awarded directly through the **Women’s Sectoral Committee.**

5 Grants

USD 33,000

awarded directly through the **Youth Sectoral Committee**

100% of funding

received as core support, providing significant flexibility in allocation and implementation.

1-2 Years

Funding received predominantly through **short-term grants**

Fundo Jaguatá



Building the Foundations of a New Indigenous Financing Mechanism in Brazil

For the **Fundo Jaguatá**, 2025 marked the transition into a new phase. While previous years had been dedicated to developing the political vision of the initiative within the framework of the Indigenous Peoples movement and through the national and international advocacy efforts of APIB, 2025 was **focused on building the institutional foundations necessary for the fund to become operational**.

In November, the fund formally **appointed its first Executive Board**, marking an important milestone in the consolidation of an initiative **born not only from the recognition of the inequalities Indigenous Peoples face in accessing climate finance, but also from the unequal distribution of resources within Brazil itself**. As a country with a vast, diverse, and geographically dispersed Indigenous Peoples population, Brazil continues to experience significant disparities in how funding reaches Indigenous Peoples territories, often depending on the biome in which communities are located. **Fundo Jaguatá was created in response to this reality**, with the ambition of becoming a mechanism capable of promoting a more balanced distribution of resources through an integrated vision of Indigenous Peoples and their territories.

“The challenge ahead is to transform the principles that inspired the creation of the fund into concrete instruments capable of supporting Indigenous Peoples organizations, communities, and territories across Brazil. In doing so, Fundo Jaguatá will begin to demonstrate how an Indigenous Peoples-led financing mechanism can contribute not only to expanding access to resources, but also to strengthening solidarity, coordination, and territorial equity within the broader Indigenous Peoples movement.”

As part of its consolidation process, one of **the fund’s central discussions throughout 2025 focused on** defining the role Jaguatá intends to play within the broader Indigenous Peoples movement in Brazil. These reflections led to **the development of a mission, governance principles, and priority areas of action** centered on strengthening Indigenous Peoples organizations, supporting emergency responses, advancing collective rights mobilization, and fostering territorial economic initiatives.

A key principle guiding these discussions was the understanding that **Fundo Jaguatá does not emerge in isolation. Rather, it is part of a broader ecosystem of Indigenous Peoples funds and financing mechanisms that has been taking shape across Brazil in recent years.** From its inception, the fund has sought to position itself as a complementary actor within this ecosystem, contributing to the development of Indigenous Peoples-led financial infrastructure while strengthening collaboration with existing initiatives. In this sense, supporting other Indigenous Peoples funds and building

relationships based on complementarity rather than competition became a defining principle of its institutional design.

If 2025 was primarily a year of institutional construction, 2026 is expected to mark the beginning of implementation. The coming year will see the launch of the fund’s first support mechanisms and provide an opportunity to test, in practice, the governance arrangements, funding criteria, and operational systems developed throughout this formative period.

The challenge ahead is to transform the principles that inspired the creation of the fund into concrete instruments capable of supporting Indigenous Peoples organizations, communities, and territories across Brazil. In doing so, **Fundo Jaguatá** will begin to demonstrate how an Indigenous Peoples-led financing mechanism can contribute not only to expanding access to resources, but also to strengthening solidarity, coordination, and territorial equity within the broader Indigenous Peoples movement.



Nusantara Fund



Learning from practice

If 2024 marked the first full year of **Nusantara Fund's** operations, **2025 became a year of assessment and adaptation**. Rather than focusing primarily on expansion, the fund dedicated significant effort to understanding the results of its first funding cycles and identifying the conditions that allow territorial initiatives to generate lasting impacts. In many ways, 2025 was a year of learning from practice.

Nusantara Fund occupies a particular place within the ecosystem of territorial funds. Unlike many financing mechanisms, **it does not operate through open calls for proposals**. Funding decisions are made collectively by its governing bodies, allowing resources to be directed more strategically toward priorities identified by Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisherfolk, women, and youth organizations that form the backbone of the fund. At the same time, **approximately 15% of funding was allocated to organizations beyond the founding membership**, creating opportunities to expand support while maintaining a strong connection to the movements that gave origin to the fund.

A central milestone of 2025 was the completion of a comprehensive assessment of the fund's first cycle of implementation. Developed collectively through a multi-stage process involving the three founding organizations, the assessment sought to understand the impacts generated by supported initiatives through ecological, political, and

economic lenses. More importantly, **it created a shared framework for discussing what meaningful impact actually looks like in territorial contexts.**

The process generated an important insight. **While financial reports and activity outputs remain necessary, they often fail to capture the transformations that communities themselves consider most significant.** Across different territories, some of the most important results were linked not to physical infrastructure or project deliverables, but to the strengthening of social processes within communities.

Leadership development, generational renewal, the active participation of women and youth, stronger organizational governance, and the preservation of local knowledge emerged as key elements explaining why certain initiatives continued generating results beyond their original scope. In communities where these social processes were stronger, projects frequently evolved into new collective actions, creating broader social and economic benefits than initially anticipated.

These findings led the fund to reflect not only on how impacts are measured, but also on how support is structured. One of the most concrete outcomes of the assessment was the decision to revise the duration of funding cycles. Previous implementation periods often required organizations to adapt their work to relatively short funding timelines. The evaluation demonstrated that communities were capable of managing longer implementation periods and that many of the processes supported

by the fund required time to mature. As a result, Nusantara Fund moved toward a one-year implementation model, allowing partner organizations greater flexibility to develop activities, respond to changing circumstances, and strengthen the social processes that underpin long-term impacts.

The assessment also generated a series of broader lessons for future programming. First, support should extend beyond technical activities and project delivery. Investments in leadership development, cadre formation, governance structures, and organizational strengthening are essential if initiatives are to survive beyond the involvement of particular individuals. Second, flexible funding mechanisms remain critical. Territorial realities are shaped by conflicts, environmental changes, shifting political conditions, and unexpected opportunities, requiring organizations to adapt their strategies while remaining focused on their long-term objectives.

Third, the active participation of women and youth emerged as a decisive factor in the sustainability of initiatives. Across multiple territories, women and younger generations played central roles in collective economic activities, community education processes, territorial defense, and advocacy efforts. Fourth, the documentation of local knowledge, territorial histories, natural resource management practices, and community experiences proved to be far more than an administrative exercise. These processes strengthened collective identity, supported advocacy efforts, and created important learning resources for future generations.



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Finally, the evaluation highlighted the importance of solidarity networks. Exchanges among communities, partnerships with supporting organizations, and collaboration across sectors consistently strengthened local initiatives and increased their capacity to respond to increasingly complex external pressures.

The assessment process was accompanied by efforts to institutionalize learning. During 2025, Nusantara Fund developed a common impact monitoring and evaluation protocol shared across the three founding organizations. A new knowledge management system was also established and integrated into the fund’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework. Throughout the year, monitoring activities were conducted with 31 key partners, focusing on implementation progress, challenges encountered, participation of women and youth, and transparency in the use of resources. Together, these systems aim to ensure that future learning is not generated only at the end of funding cycles, but continuously throughout implementation.

Accountability also remained a central priority. Between May and July 2025, Nusantara Fund conducted an independent audit of its 2024 financial management. The audit reviewed financial flows, partner reporting, and institutional assets, serving both as an accountability mechanism toward communities and as a demonstration of transparency to the wider public. The audit concluded that the

fund’s financial management met a “fair” standard, reinforcing the institution’s commitment to responsible stewardship of resources.

Alongside this process of reflection and consolidation, 2025 was also a year of significant fundraising achievements. By the end of the year, Nusantara Fund had secured commitments totaling more than USD 10 million from a diverse group of philanthropic partners. Existing donors expanded their support, new partnerships were established, and the fund secured a major commitment from Forests, People, Climate (FPC) to support future work beginning in 2026. The year also saw continued growth of the fund’s endowment mechanism, which reached USD 1.5 million and is expected to play an increasingly important role in ensuring long-term sustainability.

Looking back, 2025 was a year dedicated to understanding what had been learned during the fund’s first years of implementation and adapting its systems accordingly. The challenge for 2026 will be to carry these lessons forward while continuing to expand support. With stronger monitoring systems, longer implementation periods, growing financial commitments, and a clearer understanding of what communities themselves consider meaningful change, Nusantara Fund enters its next phase with a stronger foundation to keep on supporting Indigenous Peoples communities in Indonesia.

Nusantara in Numbers



USD 1.147 million

disbursed through regranting to Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisherfolk, women, and youth-led initiatives.



The only

Shandia fund reporting access to a long-term funding source.



100%

of funding received as general support, with allocation decisions determined through Nusantara Fund’s governance structures

1.01 million

hectares of territories mapped.

1.39 million

hectares of territories formally recognized or registered.

3.7 million

hectares under restoration and rehabilitation initiatives.

183 community enterprises supported

generating an estimated economic value of IDR 742 billion.

144 community

education and movement-strengthening centers supported, generating impacts estimated to reach 5.5 million people.



30% of total annual regranting

allocated to women-led initiatives.



20% of total annual regranting

allocated to youth-led initiatives.

Podáali Fund

Connecting Global Opportunities to Territorial Priorities

For the Podáali Fund, 2025 was a year of both expansion and consolidation. In a context shaped by the hosting of COP30 in the Brazilian Amazon, the fund assumed an increasingly active role in connecting global climate and biodiversity agendas with the priorities defined by Indigenous Peoples in their territories. More than simply participating in international debates, the challenge was to transform these discussions into concrete opportunities to strengthen territorial protection, Indigenous Peoples governance, and direct access to resources across the Brazilian Amazon.

Throughout the year, **Podáali Fund** was directly involved in several key preparatory processes leading up to COP30. The fund participated in Brazil's National Indigenous Peoples Pre-COP, which brought together Indigenous Peoples representatives from across the country and the international G9 coalition of the Amazon Basin to develop an Indigenous Peoples NDC proposal, presenting concrete climate actions for incorporation into national commitments. It also participated in the Amazon Community Funds Network Pre-COP, which resulted in a political declaration highlighting the urgency of

“If 2025 was the year in which the fund expanded its presence within global discussions, it was also the year in which it demonstrated, in practice, that political advocacy only becomes meaningful when it translates into more resources, stronger rights, and greater capacity for action within Indigenous Peoples territories.”

the climate crisis and the risks associated with the Amazon reaching a point of no return. Meanwhile, the Amazon Basin Indigenous Peoples Pre-COP served as an important space for political alignment among Indigenous Peoples organizations across the region, strengthening shared positions for engagement in global climate negotiations.

This work was closely connected to other strategic processes followed by the fund throughout the year, including discussions surrounding the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), initiatives led by the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC), and joint efforts with COICA. At a time when climate finance debates increasingly recognized the importance of direct funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, **Podáali Fund** worked to ensure that these discussions remained firmly connected to the concrete demands emerging from Indigenous Peoples territories.

The results of this strategy became increasingly visible throughout 2025. **While mobilizing approximately BRL 9.2 million to support its**

activities during the year, the fund also secured around BRL 22 million for implementation in future funding cycles, demonstrating a significant expansion in its fundraising capacity. The period was also marked by the renewal of eight institutional partnerships and the formalization of eight additional strategic alliances.

Among the most important achievements was Podáali's Fund selection as one of the recipients of the Heart of Conservation Initiative (GEF/WWF), becoming the only Brazilian organization among the ten initiatives selected globally. The fund also advanced to the final stage of the International Climate Initiative (IKI Small Grants), expanded its engagement with multilateral climate finance mechanisms, and **announced a new partnership with The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, Re:wild, and Rainforest Foundation Norway, with implementation scheduled to begin in 2026.**

The expansion of the fund's operations required corresponding investments in institutional strength-



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ening. Throughout the year, **Podáali Fund expanded its team** to fifteen staff members and continued improving its internal systems and procedures. An important milestone was the **development of the Secretariat's Internal Manual**, designed to strengthen institutional continuity, administrative organization, and the fund's ability to respond to growing operational demands. The experience accumulated during the year also reinforced the importance of strengthening monitoring systems, improving internal coordination across departments, expanding follow-up mechanisms for supported initiatives, and continuing to invest in staff development and technical capacities.

This institutional strengthening responds to two interconnected realities. On one hand, **access to new funding opportunities**—particularly through multilateral mechanisms—requires increasingly sophisticated governance, accountability, and administrative systems. On the other hand, **expanding Podáali's Fund operational capacity** also means increasing its ability to respond to the growing demands coming from Indigenous Peoples territories, which continue to far exceed currently available resources. As the fund's team notes, each funding call receives and approves significantly more proposals than can ultimately be supported, highlighting both the relevance of the mechanism and the urgent need to expand the volume of resources available for direct financing.

At the same time, **2025 was also a year of intense territorial engagement.** The project Ensuring the Territorial Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Brazilian Amazon continued supporting strategic processes related to territorial recognition and protection. **Among the most significant outcomes were the formal recognition of the Kaxuyana-Tunayana Indigenous Peoples Territory**, announced during COP30; **progress in the Kapyra-Kanakury Indigenous Peoples Territory through the completion of land tenure surveys and the Circumstantial Identification and Delimitation Report (RCID); approval of the RCID for the Riozinho do Iaco Indigenous Peoples Territory; advances in studies related to the Taquaritiua Indigenous Peoples Territory; and the continuation of territorial protection actions in the Ituna-Itatá Indigenous Peoples Territory.**

The year was also marked by the continuation and expansion of direct support mechanisms. The second edition of the Indigenous Peoples Amazon Resists calls for proposals formally **supporting forty initiatives across different territories of the Brazilian Amazon.** At the same time, the fund launched Guardians of the Amazon: Indigenous Peoples Women Defending Life and Climate Justice, its **first funding initiative dedicated exclusively to projects led by Indigenous Peoples women. In total, forty-three initiatives received support**, strengthening women's leadership in territorial protection, climate justice, and the defense of collective rights.

“More than simply participating in international debates, the challenge was to transform these discussions into concrete opportunities to strengthen territorial protection, Indigenous Peoples governance, and direct access to resources across the Brazilian Amazon.”

More than an isolated initiative, **this funding window represented a concrete response to one of the persistent challenges within climate finance: ensuring that Indigenous Peoples women have direct access to resources and are able to define their own investment priorities.** In this sense, **Podáali Fund** sought to translate into practice discussions that are frequently present in international forums but still insufficiently reflected in the actual distribution of resources.

Another important achievement was the continued strengthening of initiatives dedicated to valuing Indigenous Peoples knowledge systems. The Indigenous Peoples Sciences Award: Ancestral Solutions for the Climate, the Amazon, and All Life received 170 applications and significantly expanded its reach during the year. Through the mobilization of additional resources, **the number of supported initiatives increased from forty-seven to sixty-seven**, including projects focused on territorial protection, food sovereignty, Indigenous communication, territorial monitoring, community fire brigades, and organizational strengthening. The fund also supported the A’ÚWĒ UPTABI MÃ DA’U’ÖBÖ Xavante Award, developed in partnership with Xavante leaders and Indigenous Peoples organizations in Mato

Grosso, strengthening collective initiatives across twelve ethno-regions.

Through these diverse efforts, **Podáali Fund** continued to consolidate its work across multiple fronts: territorial protection, organizational strengthening, Indigenous Peoples sciences, women’s leadership, and climate finance. If 2025 was the year in which the fund expanded its presence within global discussions, it was also the year in which it demonstrated, in practice, that political advocacy only becomes meaningful when it translates into more resources, stronger rights, and greater capacity for action within Indigenous Peoples territories.

Looking ahead, the fund’s priorities include the development of its next three-year strategic plan, the creation of a demand-driven funding mechanism, the strengthening of monitoring and self-monitoring systems for supported initiatives, and deeper engagement with multilateral climate finance mechanisms. Particular attention is also being given to the first steps toward accreditation with the Green Climate Fund, reinforcing **Podáali’s Fund** commitment to expanding its autonomy and strengthening its ability to connect global resources with the priorities defined by Indigenous Peoples of the Brazilian Amazon.

Podáali in Numbers



USD 2.48 million

mobilized to support Indigenous-led initiatives and territorial protection across the Brazilian Amazon.

40 projects supported

through second *Amazônia Indígena Resiste* call.

43 Indigenous women-led initiatives

selected through the first *Guardiãs da Amazônia* call, dedicated exclusively to women-led projects.



67 Indigenous initiatives awarded

through the Indigenous Peoples Sciences Prize, expanded from an initial target of 47 awards due to successful resource mobilization.



14 initiatives supported

through the Xavante Award, benefiting all 12 ethnoregions of the Xavante people.



5 Indigenous territories supported

through territorial rights and protection actions, including advances in demarcation, territorial studies, legal recognition processes, and territorial protection measures.



New territorial expansion approved

for the Cué-Cué Marabitanas Territory, including the engagement of two new implementing organizations.

Repaleac Fund



From political vision to territorial practice

For the REPALEAC Fund, 2025 was a year of construction. Unlike more mature territorial funds that are already focused on scaling investments or expanding grant portfolios, much of **REPALEAC's Fund effort during the year was dedicated to building the foundations** necessary for Indigenous Peoples-led financing **to operate across the Congo Basin.** This meant strengthening institutions, consolidating governance systems, testing financing approaches, and creating the conditions for resources to eventually reach communities through mechanisms designed and governed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities themselves.

The work took place in a context where the need for direct financing remains particularly acute. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are among the principal stewards of the Congo Basin forests, yet continue to receive only a small fraction of international climate and biodiversity funding. **For the REPALEAC Fund, the challenge is therefore not only to increase the volume of resources reaching communities, but also to build the institutional infrastructure capable of managing those resources in ways that are accountable both to communities and to external partners.** The fund is conceived as a central instrument for implementing REPALEAC's broader strategic vision

“The work undertaken by REPALEAC during 2025 can be understood not simply as administrative preparation, but as part of a broader effort to build Indigenous Peoples-controlled institutional capacity within the Congo Basin.”

for 2025–2030, linking territorial governance, institutional strengthening, climate action, biodiversity conservation, and Indigenous rights.

One important dimension of this work involved strengthening political capacity and collective leadership across the region. Throughout 2025, REPALEAC organized exchanges, consultations, meetings, and learning processes involving national platforms and Indigenous organizations from across Central Africa. These efforts were reinforced by the First Global Congress of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from the Forest Basins, held in Brazzaville.

More than a conference, the Congress **represented an effort to connect the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from all GATC regions and member organizations, around a shared political agenda.** The resulting Brazzaville Declaration reaffirmed the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as central actors in protecting tropical forests and called for financing systems that are accessible, equitable, and responsive to territorial priorities. For many participants, **the Congress also helped situate the Congo Basin within a broader global movement seeking to**

transform how climate and biodiversity finance is governed and distributed.

A second dimension of the work focused on institutional consolidation. Throughout 2025, **REPAL-EAC developed and approved a significant body of operational and governance documents that will guide the future functioning of the fund.** Governance structures were defined, financing windows established, operational procedures drafted, and systems for transparency, accountability, monitoring, fiduciary oversight, and risk management developed. Environmental and social safeguard policies were also elaborated, alongside mechanisms addressing gender equality, social inclusion, grievance redress, community accountability, and learning systems.

While these processes may appear highly technical, they respond to a challenge faced by many Indigenous Peoples-led financing mechanisms around the world. Accessing larger and more diverse sources of funding increasingly requires institutions to demonstrate fiduciary capacity, safeguard compliance, monitoring systems, and financial controls. Historically, these functions





have often been concentrated in external intermediaries rather than Indigenous Peoples organizations themselves, especially in a continent that suffered simultaneously the greater violence of human history: the colonial appropriation of the land and the slavery. The work undertaken by REPALEAC during 2025 can therefore be understood not simply as administrative preparation, but as part of a broader effort to build Indigenous Peoples-controlled institutional capacity within the Congo Basin.

The development of safeguard systems illustrates this challenge particularly well. Throughout the year, **REPALEAC Fund** worked to establish policies capable of meeting international standards while remaining grounded in community realities and Indigenous Peoples governance systems.

Alongside this institutional work, 2025 also marked the beginning of practical experimentation with territorial financing. Through a partnership with **CLARIFI**, **REPALEAC Fund** supported a first portfolio of nine community initiatives led by women across the Congo Basin. Although these investments were not yet channelled through the fund's own financing structures, **the initiative functioned as an important learning laboratory for understanding community priorities, testing procedures, and identifying barriers to access.**

One of the most innovative aspects of the pilot was its use of what REPALEAC Fund describes as

a reverse open call. Instead of asking communities to compete for funding through complex proposal processes, organizations actively engaged with communities to identify their priorities, understand their needs, and jointly develop possible initiatives. This inversion of the traditional funding model generated important lessons about the realities faced by communities that are often excluded from conventional financing opportunities.

The process revealed both the diversity of territorial priorities and the extent to which many communities remain disconnected from existing funding systems. For a significant number of participants, this was the first experience engaging with any structured financing mechanism. The pilot therefore provided opportunities to understand how communities conceptualize their own priorities, what kinds of investments they consider most relevant, and what forms of support are needed to make financing truly accessible.

The experience also highlighted the importance of simplicity. Many conventional grantmaking systems rely on lengthy application forms, complex reporting requirements, and technical language that can become barriers to participation. **Through the pilot, REPALEAC Fund experimented with simplified approaches designed to be more accessible to communities, particularly women-led initiatives.** These experiences are expected to inform future funding windows and regranting procedures.



Another important outcome was the strengthening of women's participation in local governance processes. In several territories, the pilot contributed not only to supporting specific initiatives but also to creating new spaces for women to engage with local authorities, community leadership structures, and decision-making processes. As a result, the pilot generated lessons not only about financing, but also about governance, representation, and inclusion.

Taken together, these experiences helped **REPALEAC Fund** move beyond theoretical discussions about direct financing and begin testing what implementation might actually look like in practice. They also generated valuable information about community needs, operational challenges, and the kinds of institutional support required to accompany future investments.

Looking back, **2025 can be understood as a year that connected political vision, institutional preparation, and territorial learning.** The outlook for 2026 reflects this progression. The fund expects to begin redistributing resources through its own structures, including support for a new portfolio of community projects. **Partnerships under development with Forests, People, Climate (FPC) and the Tenure Facility, combined with REPALEAC's successful participation in the Heart of Conservation Initiative (HCI/GEF-8) process, provide an important foundation for the next phase of growth.** If 2025 was a year of building capacities, systems, and relationships, 2026 is expected to mark the beginning of full implementation, with resources increasingly reaching communities through mechanisms designed, governed, and managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities themselves.



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