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|  | **A black background with red and blue text  AI-generated content may be incorrect.** |  |
|  | **Output 4.3: Indigenous and local solutions scaled up and supported** |  |
|  | **UN-REDD Multiyear Programming Document 2026–2030 Illustrative Support Overview** |  |
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|  | **Prepared by UN-REDD Programme**  **June 2025** |  |
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|  | *This brief has been prepared by the UN-REDD Programme team based on preliminary analysis, internal assessments, and strategic insights from prior engagements and consultations. It is intended to provide illustrative information on potential areas of UN-REDD support for the 2026–2030 period. The content, including indicative budgets and activities, is for donor engagement purposes only and has not yet been discussed or consulted with the respective country authorities. As such, it does not represent an official position or commitment from the country concerned or from the UN-REDD Programme.* |  |

# Output 4.3: Indigenous and local solutions scaled up and supported

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| **This is one of four outputs forming Outcome 4: Enhancing Actions to Address Drivers of Deforestation***:* Linking and leveraging actions and actors to address deforestation drivers. Strengthening and aligning policies, governance, and incentives within the forest sector and across relevant land use sectors and stakeholders towards protection of forests and reduction in forest emissions. Promoting appropriate solutions towards transformative change that address and respect safeguards. and support rural and smallholder producers, engage private sector actors, and foster cross-sector collaboration. UN-REDD will promote solutions that support transformative change, aligning mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity agendas, and strengthening access to upfront finance to enable implementation of these solutions  *O*utput 4.3: *This output will work to support Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities to strengthen, formalise or protect their rights to forests, lands, and natural resources within the context of REDD+ policy processes and implementation as well as catalysing access to finance through existing and innovative mechanisms. This includes support to strengthen social forestry.* |

Indigenous Peoples and local communities are critical actors in the global fight against climate change and biodiversity loss. Managing [approximately 25 percent](https://report.territoriesoflife.org/global-analysis/) of the world's land, they safeguard a significant portion of Earth's biodiversity and carbon reserves. Notably, they steward [about 36 percent](https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/fee.2148) of the planet's intact forests, which are crucial for carbon sequestration and ecological balance. Given their unparalleled expertise to steward forests and protect ecosystems, rooted in generations of traditional knowledge, their leadership is essential to ensure that solutions to fight climate change and biodiversity loss are locally relevant, culturally informed and inherently sustainable.

As such, the heart of climate action and forest and ecosystem conservation lies in prioritizing the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as [leaders and architects of solutions](https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol26/iss3/art19/). The international community has made commitments to support their efforts directly. At COP26, nations including the UK, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA, along with 17 other funders, [pledged US$1.7 billion](https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/news-and-press/news/governments-and-private-funders-announce-historic-us1-7-billion-pledge-at-cop26-in-support-of-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities/) to strengthen the initiatives and actions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to prevent deforestation and contribute to climate solutions. An important aspect of this funding was ensuring that financial resources reach these communities directly and that they have a decisive voice in shaping climate programmes and financial mechanisms. While financial support is essential, it should be seen as a means to enable Indigenous Peoples and local communities to drive their own initiatives, amplify their voices and reinforce their sovereignty over their territories. As of 2023, [$1.34 billion of this pledge was disbursed](https://landportal.org/library/resources/indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-forest-tenure-pledge-annual-report-2023), although only 10.6% reached Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ organizations directly.

The UN-REDD Programme is committed to facilitating direct access to climate finance for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. By promoting social equity and recognizing their rights and traditional knowledge, UN-REDD ensures that forest-based climate solutions meaningfully contribute to national climate commitments and advance sustainable development goals. This commitment underscores the need to place Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the front and center of national climate and nature solutions, scaling them up and linking them to national policy frameworks including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Unlike traditional funding models that may impose external agendas, this approach provides Indigenous Peoples and local communities with the autonomy to identify their priorities, design and implement solutions rooted in their cultural and environmental knowledge. By investing in Indigenous and local climate action directly, UN-REDDP aims to foster innovation, resilience and biodiversity conservation while respecting Indigenous Peoples’ rights and sovereignty. Direct grants build trust, strengthen partnerships and support sustainable climate leadership, ensuring that those most connected to the land can protect it for future generations. Supporting the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities ensures a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

# The challenge

Deforestation is driven by a complex web of drivers, both direct and indirect, and primarily linked to the extraction of resources from forested areas and changes in land use of the production of agricultural commodities. Despite the progress made, the full implementation of policies and measures to halt deforestation in many jurisdictions is still lagging.

Sub-optimal implementation is linked to a range of factors. A key factor that is linked to sub-optimal implementation is linked to a failure to recognize, protect or reward Indigenous Peoples, and local communities for their role in protecting and defending forest areas under their control. Lack of clear tenure rights, limited voice and influence over decision-making and insufficient financial and capacity support are key challenges that many forest communities continue to face.

Governments must fully recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples, provide them with direct access to climate finance and capacity building, and integrate Indigenous knowledge into climate policy. Only by involving Indigenous Peoples as key players in planning and implementation, is it possible to develop more contextually relevant and effective local solutions, fostering innovation, enhancing local ownership and ensuring a larger impact of climate initiatives.

Indigenous Peoples’ rights to their ancestral lands, territories and resources, their way of life, and to self-determination must be respected and included across climate policies and actions. It is impossible to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement without full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and their free, prior and informed consent.

Local communities should also be supported to fulfil their role of local climate actors and forest stewards through community-based forestry process, including enabling factors such as secure land/forest rights, strong local governance, enabling regulatory frameworks and adequate knowledge and capacities. Social forestry is gaining prominence across multiple regions, however, persistent challenges remain for it to realise its potential as a local forest climate solution with benefits for livelihoods, biodiversity and ecosystems. Some of these challenges include balancing costs and benefits put on local communities to deliver social forestry, governance issues such as illegal logging and unclear tenure, and a lack of knowledge exchange and learning in countries on the frontline.

# The value proposition

This output aims to ensure that Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, including equitably women and youth among them, are provided with the capacity, resourcing, legal rights and enabling environment to effectively manage and protect forests. This is in line with recent international moves to recognize and reward the unique role that Indigenous Peoples, and local communities play in forest conservation and protection.

Building on decades of experience supporting local sustainable development solutions, UN-REDD has piloted innovative approaches to support Indigenous and local community climate leadership through direct grants. The Community-based REDD+ (CBR+) Pilot Project, implemented by UN-REDD in partnership with the Small Grants Programme, provided $3.3 million in direct grants (up to $50,000 each) to over 100 indigenous and local communities in six countries (Cambodia, DRC, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay and Sri Lanka) to implement different aspects of REDD+, from land use planning to benefit sharing methodologies. Most recently, informed by UN-REDD's CBR+ model, with funding from the UK Government, UNDP has provided 51 grants to 42 Indigenous communities in Ecuador, Colombia, Kenya and Cambodia with grants worth a total of $1.8 million to enhance climate resilience and safeguard critical ecosystems.

UN-REDD has played a pivotal role in advancing the integration of social forestry 1 into NDCs, to increase its prominence as a local forest climate solution with significant economic and environmental co-benefits. Recent UN-REDD support through the ASEAN Social Forestry Initiative has advanced climate mitigation assessments for social forestry in Indonesia, Cambodia and Lao PDR, addressing critical data gaps for its recognition in NDCs. Beyond NDCs, UN-REDD's work has strengthened technical capacities for social and community forestry, such a through the development of upcoming E-learning courses on community forestry and supporting subregional practitioners' workshops to disseminate best practice across the West African region. Moreover, UN-REDD has advanced the business case for social forestry through the development of replicable climate-aligned forest management and business models for enterprises in the ASEAN region, linked to incubation work in Output 4.4. Advancing the contribution, and recognising the impact, of social forestry as a viable local climate solution is a major comparative advantage of UN-REDD. Implementation of technical assistance and capacity development in this work area is strengthened through strong regional and country partnerships, including RECOFTC, NTFP EP and the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC).

To advance indigenous and local solutions, UN-REDD works with a wide array of Indigenous representational and civil society groups, both working internationally and at the local level including GATC, IIPFCCC, LCIPP, AIPP, CLUA, Forest Trends, Rainforest Foundation US, World Bank, FCLP, Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG), Equator Initiative, Confluence Philanthropy, Forest Peoples Programme, Rights and Resources Initiative, Tenure Facility, among others.

# Scenarios

This output will work to support Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities to strengthen, formalise or protect their rights to forests, lands, and natural resources within the context of REDD+ policy processes and implementation as well as catalysing access to finance through existing and innovative mechanisms.

Recognizing the essential role of Indigenous Peoples and other forest dependent communities in protecting and sustainably managing forests, requires i) tenure security as a key trigger for deep, systemic changes in forest landscapes and ii) access to direct finance, as well as an enabling regulatory framework, strong governance and adequate technical knowledge. There is strong evidence that deforestation is lower on Indigenous Peoples’ and local community lands, given the right incentives. Accelerating the formalization of customary and collective rights is crucial for protecting forests and mobilizing resources for development. This output will work to support Indigenous Peoples and other forest-dependent communities to strengthen, formalise or protect their rights to forests, lands, and natural resources within the context of REDD+ policy processes and implementation as well as catalysing access to finance through existing and innovative mechanisms. Key deliverables may include:

* **Securing land and forest tenure through policy and legal reforms:** Supporting legal processes to secure and strengthen the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples over forest land and natural resources. Particular attention will be paid to securing the rights of women, either by supporting women heads of households to acquire sole proprietorship or through support for joint titling (husband and wife both having 100% ownership rights). The [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure](https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/416990/%22%20/l%20%22:~:text=%2F%20Guidelines%20%26%20methodologies-,Voluntary%20Guidelines%20on%20the%20Responsible%20Governance%20of%20Tenure%20of%20Land,be%20prepared%20through%20intergovernmental%20negotiations.) should continue to serve as a go-to source of guidance for land tenure reform processes.
* **Promoting of Indigenous Peoples rights and knowledge:** Advocating for the recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples and their rights to land, resources, and self-determination in REDD+ policies and projects (including Free, Prior and Informed Consent) and promoting the integration of ecological traditional knowledge into subnational and national REDD+ implementation to enhance forest conservation and management practices.
* **Strengthening the full and effective engagement of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities,** including women and youth among them, in policy and decision-making processes relating to NDC’s forest target implementation, NBSAPs, as well as REDD+ programs, land and forest management.
* **Supporting Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities to access to financing** to conserve forests, support sustainable forest management and forest enterprises.
* **Supporting the management and restoration of forests by indigenous peoples and Forest-dependent communities** through community-based forestry processes and related capacity development (complementarity to output 4.1)**.**
* **Strengthening safeguards and accountability for Indigenous Peoples rights:** Improve monitoring and enforcement of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and safeguards in REDD+ projects.

| **Deliverables** | **Types of Activities** |
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| 1. Securing land and forest tenure through policy and legal reforms | 1. Support national legal reforms that recognize tenure rights, customary land rights; This can include the Development of model legislation or policy frameworks that countries can adopt to formally recognize and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to their lands, territories, and resources. 2. Provide technical assistance to governments to implement these legal frameworks effectively, including support for land demarcation, titling, and registration processes. 3. Provide Capacity building for Indigenous Peoples to navigate legal systems and advocate for tenure security. 4. Support field registry and recording of tenure through tools (e.g. Open Tenure) |
| 1. Develop and strengthen financial mechanisms that provide direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities for forest conservation. | 1. Create mechanisms to simplify and expedite the process for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to access climate finance, including direct funding and support for developing project proposals. 2. Advocate for simplified application processes for Indigenous-led projects in climate finance mechanisms (e.g., Green Climate Fund, Loss and Damage Fund). 3. Support the development of Indigenous-managed financial funds for community-based forestry, conservation and sustainable livelihoods. 4. Work with donors to ensure that at least 30% of REDD+ funds reach Indigenous-led initiatives. 5. Promote innovative upfront financing mechanisms that recognize the value of traditional knowledge and ecosystem services provided by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. 6. Support the development of community-based forest enterprises that generate income while promoting sustainable forest management. |
| 1. Supporting Indigenous Peoples and forest-dependent communities to access to financing to conserve forests, support sustainable forest management and forest enterprises. | 1. Facilitate dialogues between Indigenous Peoples and donors or investors. 2. Capacity building on financial and program management. 3. Strengthen Indigenous governance structures for community forest monitoring (e.g., participatory MRV systems). 4. Promote sustainable Indigenous Forest economies (e.g., non-timber forest products, agroforestry). 5. Facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges among Indigenous leaders on best practices in forest conservation. |
| 1. Promoting of Indigenous Peoples rights and knowledge | 1. Establish platforms for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to share their knowledge, experiences, and best practices related to forest management and REDD+. 2. Facilitate collaboration between Indigenous Peoples, local communities, governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector to promote integrated approaches to forest conservation and sustainable development. 3. Continuing documentation and promotion of best practices on indigenous and traditional knowledge systems and practices |
| 1. Improve monitoring and enforcement of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and safeguards in REDD+ projects | 1. Develop culturally appropriate indicators and monitoring systems to assess the effectiveness of REDD+ programs in protecting the rights and promoting the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. 2. Ensure that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of REDD+ projects and programs, and that their feedback is used to improve implementation. 3. Establish independent Indigenous-led grievance mechanisms for REDD+ and forest-related initiatives. 4. Train government and private sector actors on Indigenous Peoples’ rights and FPIC compliance. |
| 1. Strengthen social forestry and community-based forest management by improving local monitoring, planning, and governance capacities, with a focus on IPLC stewardship and accountability in forest use. | 1. Build capacity for community-based forest monitoring linked to management objectives (e.g., restoration, fire prevention, NTFP use) 2. Provide tools and training for local forest planning, boundary setting, and community rules enforcement 3. Support participatory governance platforms between communities and forest authorities 4. Promote IPLC-led forest management plans that incorporate traditional knowledge, monitoring, and sustainable use 5. Link local monitoring outcomes to adaptive forest governance and benefit-sharing decisions |
| 1. Promote sustainable production practices for forestry and agriculture with indigenous peoples, community groups, smallholders | 1. Promote small-holder production of forest-friendly commodities (shade grown coffee, cocoa), ensuring smallholders are not excluded from emerging market requirements (e.g. EUDR) and provide technical assistance and value chain development support for community-based enterprises/cooperatives. 2. Support to social forestry, community forest management, and indigenous management of indigenous territories 3. Capacity building on community-based forestry, social forestry and agroforestry practices |