

Transformative
Pathways



Project Update

April 2024

Indigenous peoples and local communities leading and scaling up conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

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Country Partners



Global Partners



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Transformative Pathways project promoters from the Andean Quechua community, Ayacucho, Peru.
Credit Agata Pilarz, FPP

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This Project Update April 2024 reports from the partners on their key activities and work undertaken since the start of the project in 2022.



Phoebe Ndiema (CIPDP, Kenya) and her group discuss biodiversity monitoring protocols at Oxford University. Photo: Frances Jenner, FPP

“We want to show the world that indigenous knowledge can coexist with nature without harming it, so we are not evicted in the name of conservation.”

Phoebe Ndiema, CIPDP

Indigenous peoples and local communities conserve a significant amount of the Earth's biodiversity through their cultural practices, especially where their rights over their traditional lands, waters, resources, and knowledge are recognised and respected. Their lands cover at least a quarter of the globe and overlap significantly with biodiversity-rich areas.

However, their current and potential contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are not sufficiently recognised or supported despite being crucial to the fulfilment of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to achieving global biodiversity and climate goals.

There is enormous potential to scale up support for these contributions and to embed them into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

This project recognises this and works with established, engaged networks of indigenous peoples' organisations and allies to address the biodiversity crisis more effectively, at the local, sub-national, national, and global levels. Working with governments in Peru, Kenya, the Philippines, and Thailand, we recognise that sustained change requires further development and implementation of national laws and policies, as well as support from institutional and financial mechanisms at all levels.

About the Project

Launched in the second half of 2022, Transformative Pathways is a joint initiative led by indigenous organisations in the involved countries. Our collective aim is to support improved conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by recognising, supporting and expanding contributions by indigenous peoples.

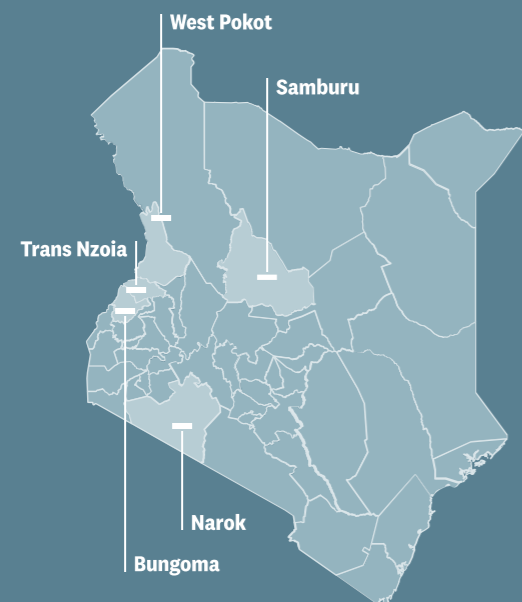
The project directly supports collective actions towards self-determined land and resource governance, biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods. It co-develops community-owned monitoring frameworks so that involved communities can collect, use and present evidence and demonstrate the outcomes of their actions.

On a wider scale, the project works with national governments and other key actors to develop mechanisms that allow full and equitable participation in national biodiversity-related policy and planning.

As this action is carefully designed to complement and engage with wider networks, we expect the impacts from project activities to extend well beyond both the project timeframe and the countries involved.



The Ogiek community of Mt. Elgon, Kenya marking World Indigenous Day 2023 with song and dance. Credit CIPDP



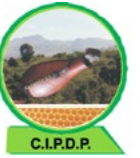
Focus Areas

In Kenya, the project is designed to build a collaborative framework for supporting the national implementation of the CBD. It will do this through embedding local community and indigenous contributions into national strategies and reporting.



Jubilant Ogiek women celebrating World Indigenous Day 2023, Mt. Elgon, Kenya, November 2023. Credit CIPDP

CHEPKITALE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



Chepkitale Indigenous Peoples Development Project (CIPDP) is working with the Ogiek community of Mt. Elgon and local communities around their territories.

Project updates from CIPDP

- Two members of CIPDP travelled to the UK to take part in a three-month Oxford University Fellowship.
- CIPDP staff and some community members trained on biodiversity monitoring methods.
- Carried out training on the documentation and publication of indigenous knowledge.
- Conducted community meetings to identify existing land use plans, sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity use and management structures on how they are conserved.
- Attended the Working Group on Article 8J in Geneva in November 2023, one of the CBD processes that focuses on Traditional Knowledge as a tool to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity.
- Attended the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSSTA-25) meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2023.
- CIPDP hosted two annual events: Indigenous Peoples' Day and World Mountain Day, which included on the ground activities and social media work.



Demonstration on quadrat method of data collection with CIPDP, November 2023. Credit CIPDP

INDIGENOUS INFORMATION NETWORK



The Indigenous Information Network (IIN) is working with six pastoral communities in Narok, Samburu and West Pokot counties.

Project updates from IIN

- Carried out training workshops for Narok, Samburu and West Pokot Counties on biodiversity and livelihoods, as well as community-level workshops and activities to define land-use planning, sustainable livelihoods, and participatory mapping.
- Carried out training workshops on the revitalisation of indigenous and local food systems, water, and livelihoods, leadership, rights on nature-based solutions and food sovereignty with a focus on women and youth in the three counties.
- Developed and managed community learning centers; “Knowledge centres”, where traditional knowledge will be preserved, developed, shared and used for the benefit of the concerned community’s lands: Narok (3), West & North Pokot (2), Samburu (1).
- Organised intergenerational knowledge sharing, education, and capacity-building with indigenous youth around the protection of traditional knowledge and land, including responding to contemporary socio-ecological challenges through dialogues. This also included documentation and sharing experiences on biodiversity and food sovereignty.
- Facilitated collaboration between communities, conservation agencies and policy makers, both at the local and national government levels through meetings and dialogues.
- Followed the processes on the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)



Samburu Indigenous Peoples doing Community Resource Mapping at Kiltamany. Photo by Indigenous Information Network (IIN)

Kenya

“Through the trainings we have done at the Resource Centres, the youth themselves are taking the initiative to restore the land.”

Daisy Chepkopus, IIN

Photo : Maasai Indigenous women carrying out restoration activity by nurturing their tree nursery in Transmara. Photo by Indigenous Information Network (IIN)



Focus Areas

Work in Peru focuses on strengthening indigenous people's initiatives for protecting biodiversity and governing their territories in the Andean-Amazon regions. This includes the application – and documentation – of traditional Andean-Amazonian agroecological approaches and territory-based provisioning systems.



Wampis assembly in Kankaim. Photo: Evaristo Pujapat, GTANW



GTANW

The Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation (GTANW) covers the Wampis territory in the Amazonas and Loreto regions, in Northern Amazon.

Project updates from GTANW

- In the Morona basin, Wampis Nation, five communities (San Francisco de Chiwaza, Sanchez Cerro, Puerto Juan, Nueva Alegria and San Juan) have been involved in the repopulation and management of freshwater turtles, the yellow-spotted river turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*) and the Arrau turtle (*Podocnemis expansa*).
- In 2023, 3,205 hatchlings of the yellow-spotted river turtle and 75 hatchlings of the Arrau turtle have been released in different bodies of water in the Morona Basin.
- Conservation and recovery of the Arrau turtle, a species listed as threatened in CITES II and endangered in Peru.
- A count of the species *Arapaima gigas* "paiche" (one of the largest freshwater fish in the world) has been carried out in the Shinguito oxbow lake, Puerto Juan Community, applying the method of Census by Buoys in Plots.
- As a result of the paiche count, 81 individuals were recorded in the Shinguito oxbow lake, with a total of 57 adults and 24 juveniles.
- In the Santiago basin, seven beneficiaries of the Pisciculture component have been supported with materials for refurbishment of fish ponds and 1 million of juvenile anchovies each.
- For the reforestation component in the Santiago basin, a diagnosis was carried out and three educational institutions have been identified for the implementation of biodiversity nurseries.

CHIRAPAQ



CHIRAPAQ - The Centre of Indigenous Cultures of Peru engages with communities in the Yanessa territories (Selva Central) and in Quechua territories (Ayacucho) as well as through national level engagement in Lima.

Project updates from CHIRAPAQ

- In Ayacucho and the Selva Central, the Quechua and Yanessa communities have drawn up maps of their territories, identifying their natural resources and what endangers them, such as indiscriminate logging and soil erosion.
- As an alternative solution, they have cultivated native species in community nurseries that will be planted in 2024 in order to capture rainwater and recover the local flora and fauna.
- The exchange and conservation of native seeds that are resistant to the effects of climate change and were on the verge of extinction was promoted. These are being managed through community seed banks with the active participation of indigenous women.
- In all these communal territories, the cleaning of rivers and irrigation canals is being promoted as a strategy for indigenous families to access water suitable for consumption and irrigation.



Yanessa people grow vegetables in a family bio-garden. Unión de La Selva Native Community, district of Villa Rica, province of Oxapampa, Pasco region, Peru. Photo: Luisenrique Becerra Velarde, CHIRAPAQ.

Peru

“ Indigenous women, through observation and reflection alone, can monitor the changes in their environment. ”

Tarcila Rivera Zea, CHIRAPAQ

Photo: Yanessa woman spinning. Selva Central.

Photo: Bruno Takahashi, CHIRAPAQ.



Focus Areas

Activities in the Philippines focus on community-based learning, intergenerational transmission of knowledge and indigenisation of education across five key workstreams: food systems and traditional livelihoods; health and well-being; youth leadership; indigenous voices in arts and literature; and national and international engagement and policy advocacy.



An Ibaloy elder performs a traditional dance with Ikalahan community members during a cultural celebration held in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines.

Photo credit: Ella Carino, PIKP



Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP)

Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines (PIKP) work in Baguio City and the Cordillera region, concentrating on holistic support for inter-relationships of indigenous knowledge systems and values with nature.

Project updates from PIKP

- Conducted capacity-building activities based on indigenous knowledge and innovation which responded to community concerns about poor soil and pest infestation, as well as on the processing of organic feeds for animals.
- Organised a leader's forum with Indigenous Peoples representatives and the local government to improve their understanding of customary governance. This led to expressed interest to continue discussions and to ensure effective participation of Indigenous representatives in local plans.
- Ongoing development of a Baguio-Benguet network of urban gardeners to promote sharing of sustainable ways of gardening emphasizing indigenous values and practices. Seed-sharing of a rich variety of heirloom seeds took place among the network through various PIKP activities.
- Organised an Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity Youth Camp in 2023, where participants shared thoughts and experiences about cultural and biological diversity, issues on agriculture and industries that disregard Indigenous Peoples Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Inter-generational sharing of knowledge from elders are an integral component of all these activities.
- Data-gathering started in an ancestral land claim area in Baguio City as part of a community-based monitoring and information system (CBMIS) component of the project.
- Sharing of information relevant to indigenous knowledge and values has also come through publications and two soon to be published children's learning materials.
- Engaged in national policy review (the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan), through regional consultations with the Philippine government, webinars to ensure strong IP participation in the process and a roundtable discussion among Indigenous Peoples. Points raised from these actions will be discussed with the government in regional and national consultations.



Focus Areas

Work in Thailand focuses on generating diverse models of sustainable biodiversity management. This is based on dynamic interaction between traditional knowledge and innovative agroecological approaches.



Brainstorming session on resource management in the community. Photo by Sunaree, PASD



Pga K'Nyau Association for Sustainable Development (PASD)

PASD coordinates implementation of the project in 7 Karen communities (25 clusters) in Mae Suk Sub-district, Mae Chaem District in Chiang Mai province, northern Thailand

Project updates from PASD

- Collected data and explored biodiversity information at the project, village and community level.
- Facilitated training in natural dyes, collecting herbal garden data at Huai E Khang, and a visit to the biogas plant in Nong Tao Village
- Training on the Yawat language in Sazer-Mulae and Mae Hong Leng Subdistrict, Mae Chaem District
- Leadership training in natural resource and biodiversity and a visit to the Lad Luang Stone House
- Reforestation in Mae Satop and Maening Village
- Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping by the community, including a joint land use survey with Tambon Administration Organization (TAO), and land use survey support for Mae Suek Subdistrict
- Communication, photography, and media design training in Sukhothai Province
- Support for clean drinking water systems for consumption in Pa Aedu and Mae Satop.
- Vocational pilot projects for youth in Mae Yot, Maening, Mae Satop, Pa Aedu
- Members of PASD attended international meetings in six countries, including the IPBES meeting in Germany and a Japan Biodiversity Fund exhibition.



Baan Pa Kluai Project Meeting. Photo by Sunaree, PASD

Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand (IMPECT)



IMPECT coordinates the implementation of the project in 15 villages in two sub-districts of Mae Suai district in Chiang Rai province, northern Thailand, promoting traditional knowledge based approaches to Natural Resources Management (NRM) and strengthening local community organizations and networks.

Project updates from IMPECT

- National forum on international agreements on biodiversity, climate change and ethnic groups and local communities at the Parliament, organised with PASD, FPP and the Indigenous Peoples Foundation (IPF). Discussions called for progress in the adoption of a new law on the rights of indigenous peoples and for mechanisms to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the implementation of biodiversity and climate change policies in Thailand.
- Representatives from AIPP, PASD and IMPECT attended a national consultation on the 5th National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for Thailand, despite not being invited to it. They have now been assured participation in the next stages of the process.
- Workshop with the Akha community in Mae Tam that explored data gathering that would best describe the key areas of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to support the community's strategic, advocacy and internal objectives.



Using Maps to address the issue of Expanding Farming Areas, Thailand. Photo by IMPECT

Thailand

“ We think that it is important for indigenous peoples to push for our rights to land. You cannot work with just one community, but all the communities in the area, to strengthen indigenous organisations and networks. ”

Mee Nittaya Earkanna, IMPECT

The Transformative Pathways project brings together a unique set of global collaborative partners. They assist, support and expand work done on a national level and ensure the project's global impact and knowledge transfer.

Working with these partners gives the project access to valuable global networks, through which successful initiatives could be scaled up significantly. As this project is carefully designed to complement and engage with wider networks, we expect the impacts from project activities to extend well beyond both the project period and the countries involved.



Stephanie Brittain of ICCS exploring biodiversity of Mt. Elgon, Kenya. November 2023. Photo by CIPDP.

University of Oxford's Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science (ICCS)



ICCS provides on-the-ground support in planning, implementing and monitor conservation strategies, and supports communities in developing appropriate local biodiversity indicators. Working directly with local and national partners, they also support the reporting of outcomes, and work with conservation actors to highlight the potential of community-led conservation initiatives.

- Biodiversity Fellowships: ICCS Hosted Phoebe and Elijah from CIPDP as Biodiversity Fellows in Oxford for 3 months: knowledge exchange to start planning the community-based monitoring, drawing on and building a network of contacts across Oxford.
- Biodiversity monitoring support: Facilitated two workshops and two community-based workshops in Kenya with CIPDP and in Thailand with IMPECT and PASD on community-based biodiversity monitoring and mapping, to identify local motivations and priorities for monitoring, ensure wider community consent and trial some possible monitoring methods.
- Outreach: Attended the International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB) in Kigali. Presented on the Transformative Pathways project and work with CIPDP so far to over 80 conservation researchers and practitioners.
- Publications: ICCS and FPP published the Conservation and Human rights special issue of Oryx in May 2023. We are finalising two guidance documents on community-based monitoring of biodiversity and sustainable use. We have submitted two academic papers related to conservation and human rights: one on participation in conservation and another on the enabling conditions for positive conservation outcomes in IP&LC lands.
- Supervision and teaching: Supervising a student intern carrying out a literature review of the common narratives around the Ogiek and conservation to help debunk myths and misconceptions (soon to pick up again after a pause in her work). Ongoing lecturing of undergraduate and MSc students at Oxford on conservation, human-rights and participation, linking in the Transformative Pathways project as a case study.

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)



Using their established knowledge-sharing networks, AIPP promote and support regional learning and capacity building in Asia, acting as a regional hub for Asian partners in the project and supporting project outcomes being shared more widely in the region. AIPP are also supporting global engagement in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) processes.

- Operationalised a regional learning hub for Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Women, Indigenous Youth, and Indigenous Persons with Disabilities through the organization of an annual conference focusing on biodiversity, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Developed and strengthened the capacity of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Women, Indigenous Youth, and Indigenous Persons with Disabilities to actively participate in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)
- Amplified the collective policy asks of Indigenous Peoples on biodiversity, climate change, and pollution through declarations such as the E-Sak Ka Ou Declaration
- Facilitated support and fostering solidarity for the global engagement of Indigenous Peoples in the CBD through the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)
- Monitored the engagement of Indigenous Peoples in the revision, implementation, and reporting of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Shared the regional experiences and perspectives of Asian Indigenous Peoples in the CBD and the UNFCCC through side events



Group photo of the Krabi Conference participants. The Conference participants adopted the E-Sak Ka Ou Declaration. October 2023. Photo By: AIPP

UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)



Bringing their expertise on biodiversity indicators into the project, UNEP-WCMC supports national development of indicators that are part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. They also ensure synergies with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP), a global initiative that promotes the development and delivery of biodiversity indicators.

- Supported the development and use of relevant indicators to evidence the role that Indigenous Peoples and local communities play in the realisation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Drafted an indicator methodology to measure the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making related to conservation. The indicator methodology attempts to address a current gap in global indicators to monitor progress toward Target 22 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Ensured alignment with the work led by key groups working under the Convention on Biological Diversity, such as the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators, and the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Explored options to ensure alignment with the biodiversity module of the Indigenous Navigator
- Identified opportunities to engage with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, a global initiative that supports the development and use of national and global biodiversity indicators since 2007, and whose secretariat is housed at UNEP-WCMC.



Indigenous Leaders in Geneva before a workshop on the Indigenous Navigator. November 2023. Photo by: Katherine Despot-Belmonte, UNEP-WCMC

LifeMosaic



LifeMosaic works with partners across the project to produce community training and policy advocacy videos to support capacity building, helping to amplify IPs and LCs contributions to biodiversity use and conservation. They also offer workshops for all project partners to plan and prepare dissemination for maximum impact.

- Worked with Transformative Pathways partners and local and indigenous filmmakers to translate and dub the film *Facing Extinction, Defending Life* into English, Swahili, Indonesian, Spanish, Portuguese, Maa (Maasai), Ilocano and Thai.
- *Facing Extinction, Defending Life* is a film for indigenous peoples which covers the causes and impacts of climate change, global biological and cultural diversity loss, sharing the latest science and facts as well as drawing on first-hand indigenous perspectives and experiences. The video aims to help to relate the urgency of the collective global effort to defend Mother Earth, to the decisions that indigenous peoples are taking in their territories in terms of maintaining, sustaining and promoting their diverse and resilient cultures and territories.
- Disseminated *Facing Extinction, Defending Life* to hundreds of IPs and LCs organisations, communities and leaders, including but not limited to Transformative Pathways partners and their networks.
- Produced a film on Mapping and Monitoring: Working with Transformative Pathways partners and local and indigenous filmmakers to make an introductory film about participatory biodiversity mapping and monitoring, designed to raise community awareness of the history and current context of mapping and monitoring, as well as to share useful information on how to best to map and monitor in practice.
- Planned and consulted on two upcoming films on 'Autonomous Governance' and 'Food Sovereignty.'
- Supported the Transformative Pathways partners and their wider networks with video- / podcast-making advice.



Students drawing the learnings from their leadership training, one of 5 run over a year by LifeMosaic for the Shawi Leadership School in Peru. Photo by Mikey Watts, LifeMosaic

Forest Peoples Programme



FPP's role is to provide project management and strategic guidance for all activities conducted by the consortium and engage in global policy advocacy to ensure local-to-global links are created and maintained. This includes offering logistical and administrative support and thematic accompaniment for all workstreams.

The organisation provides technical and expert support for indigenous participation in the monitoring and reporting processes of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), with engagement with the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and global conservation policy work with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

- Provided financial and administrative oversight in all aspects of grant management.
- Launched the [Transformative Pathways project website](#) in collaboration with the consortium communications network.
- Published first three issues of the project Newsletter, across all project languages, and supported partners with capacity building and getting higher visibility of their activities and communications products.
- Led on developing the project baseline study with communities and partners in all project countries. Created Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning guidelines for the consortium.
- Provided on the ground technical and logistical support for Transformative Pathways partners who attended CBD meetings in 2023, such as WG8j-12 and SBSTTA-25, and facilitated their participation in indicator-related side-events at these meetings to showcase their work.
- Technical input into on-going CBD-linked processes included two FPP staff selected to be expert contributors into the development of the CBD monitoring framework to be adopted in the 16th Conference of the Parties of the CBD in 2024, and FPP staff selected to provide human rights inputs into the development of conservation initiatives under the CBD's new Global Biodiversity Framework. FPP attended and provided support for partners to attend the IPBES Plenary, and a staff person from FPP became an expert author for the next IPBES Assessment (on business and biodiversity, forthcoming in 2025).



FPP staff visit CHIRAPAQ partners in Ayacucho. Photo by Angela Paola Mera Mejía, FPP

Multiplier effect

Knowledge creation, management and sharing is a major pillar of this project. The project aims to work with partners to facilitate community-to-community support, at both a regional level and between regions. This takes place through a regional learning hub in Asia hosted by AIPP and key international meetings that bring partners together for knowledge exchange and to present results and documented successes of local conservation and sustainable use initiatives.

Working closely with partners, the project also engages with wider international and regional networks, including:

- The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)
- The ICCA Consortium and related ICCA Global Support Initiative
- The Human Rights and Biodiversity Working Group and the CBD Alliance
- International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES)
- Centres of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (CoD-ILK)

This allows for information sharing for supporting local solutions and methods for engaging national governments in the reporting and monitoring of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' (IPs and LCs) contributions to biodiversity.

Impacts from project activities are expected to extend well beyond the project period.

“ Rotational farming is strongly based on traditional knowledge, philosophy and spirituality. ”

Dr. Prasert Trakansuphakok, PASD

Outcome

The project aims to achieve the recognition, support and scaling up of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities by:

- strengthening land and resource governance at the territory level;
- improving enabling conditions to recognize indigenous and local knowledge at the national level;
- establishing or strengthening partnerships for participation in biodiversity planning and monitoring at the local, national and global levels, including CBD processes



GPS mapping survey, Thailand. Photo by IMPECT

“ The GTANW aims to maintain the potential of biodiversity and important ecosystems through the optimisation of a socio-territorial governance system. ”

GTANW community member

Working with national partners and global collaborators, the project is driving influence in global policy spaces. It targets monitoring and reporting within the CBD and reporting and analysis within IPBES in particular to embed the contributions of IPs and LCs within these processes.



Ogiek women engage in basketry. Bamboo baskets replace use of plastic materials in Chepkitale. Photo by Dickence, CIPDP



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