

Strengthening the collective land and territory rights of Indigenous People



The project advanced titling of **223,500** hectares in four territories and resolved 18 tenure conflicts over 1,200 hectares – in 20 months

Project duration
30 June 2015
to 30 April 2017

Indigenous People's rights to land are enshrined in Panama's constitution. The threats to the land rights of Indigenous Peoples come not from the law, but from increasing competition for access to lands that are claimed by Indigenous Peoples from the private sector, the landless poor, and government claims to protected areas. The national assembly affirmed the rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2008 when it passed Law No. 72 establishing the procedures for titling indigenous land, yet implementation of indigenous rights lags far behind Panama's aspirations. With the election of President Juan Carlos Varela in 2014 there appeared to be new political will in Panama to make significant advances. With Tenure Facility support, the National Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples in Panama (COONAPIP) accelerated titling of indigenous lands, but secure title has not yet been granted. The project resolved tenure conflicts, and developed legal and administrative capacity to protect indigenous land rights. It also build momentum for faster and more efficient titling by raising awareness of Indigenous Peoples' rights among government authorities, building relationships among relevant institutions and increasing the confidence of Indigenous Peoples in their power to effect change.





Results

- The project advanced titling of 223,500 hectares, including four territories, and resolved 18 tenure conflicts affecting communities.
- The project supported titling and registration of the Collective Territories of Bajo Lepe and Pijibasal, however, title has not yet been granted because the Ministry of Environment has not given its approval due to an overlap with land claimed by a protected area.
- The project advanced legal and administrative processes for the titling of the Territory of Maje Embera Drúam, however, title has not yet been granted because the Ministry of Environment has not given its approval due to an overlap with land claimed by a protected area.
- COONAPIP clarified the steps for titling indigenous lands, and advanced the titling processes in other communities.
- The project created 'Clinica Juridica' – a legal clinic that supports land titling.
- It trained 252 women, men and young people in indigenous rights and law, and established a diploma at the University of Panama's Faculty of Law to broaden understanding of Indigenous Peoples' legal rights.
- The project strengthened COONAPIP's administrative and technical skills and capacity to support the process for titling indigenous lands.

For the full story, visit
thetenurefacility.org/projects/panama

With training, Indigenous Peoples' communities used geographic positioning systems to map the boundaries of their territories. The project also trained more than 250 women, men and young people in indigenous rights and law.





'We have been fighting the titling of our territory for more than 40 years. In the last year, with the support of COONAPIP's PDCT project, we have advanced more than in the previous 40 years.'

— Lazaro Mecha, Regional chief, Majé Emberá Drüa collective territory



the
**TENURE
FACILITY**

The Tenure Facility is the first and only international, multi-stakeholder institution exclusively focused on securing land and forest rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It provides grants to implement tenure reform within existing government and international structures and shares the knowledge, innovations and tools that emerge. Launched in 2014 by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), the Tenure Facility is dedicated to scaling up recognition of collective land and forest rights globally. The Tenure Facility is an international foundation registered in Sweden.

www.thetenurefacility.org

The Tenure Facility is supported by several donors, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Ford Foundation and Norad.



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