

About the Tenure Facility

The International Land and Forest Tenure Facility is the first and only international, multi-stakeholder financial mechanism exclusively focused on securing land and forest rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It provides grants to implement tenure rights under existing law and policy 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. This helps reduce conflict and further the achievement of global human rights, environment, and development goals. The Tenure Facility is an international foundation registered in Sweden.

Why us

At least 1.5 billion people from Indigenous Peoples and local communities live on and manage more than 50% of the world's land area in customary or traditional systems. Despite existing laws that secure their rights, they have formal legal ownership of just 10%. When their rights are not recognized by governments or are insecure, poverty, environmental degradation, and conflict result. Moreover, their rights are often contested, leading to human rights abuses and conflict between them, and with governments, companies, and immigrant settlers.

Securing the land and forest tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities benefits everyone by providing a foundation for achieving sustainable development, addressing climate goals and reducing conflict at a reasonable cost. Many initiatives and organizations provide some support. However, none provide the flexible and direct financial support to Indigenous Peoples and local organizations required to respond at the speed and scale necessary to secure the lives of the millions of people and hectares of forest that are at immediate risk. Moreover, there is no other international organization dedicated solely to financing projects to recognize Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land rights on the ground.

The unmet demand for financial and technical assistance hinders progress on human rights, sustainable development, agriculture, forest conservation, and climate change. Global leaders from all sectors are increasingly aware that tenure security is a prerequisite for achieving national and international goals for forest governance, food security, climate mitigation, economic development, and human rights. Governments understand that they face serious challenges as they implement tenure reform and titling and are asking the international community for support. Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations are also asking for support to clarify and protect their rights to land and resources. Many initiatives and organizations provide some support. However, none provide the flexible and direct support to Indigenous Peoples and local organizations required to respond at the speed and scale necessary to secure the lives of the millions of people and hectares of forest that are at immediate risk. Moreover, there is no one international organization dedicated to supporting Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' efforts to secure their rights, while complementing and collaborating with initiatives to advance recognition.

The Tenure Facility fills this gap by advancing and catalyzing implementation of local land and tenure rights. Our comparative advantages are speed, flexibility and singular focus on implementing land and forest tenure by releasing the power of local community and Indigenous Peoples' initiatives to secure tenure using on their strategies, skills, and energies.

Our goal

At the Tenure Facility, our goal is that Indigenous and local communities thrive and expand the sustainable management and protection of their forests and lands across the developing world — for the betterment of themselves and the global society. We aim to achieve two outcomes: 1) The land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are made more secure by governments in targeted developing countries; and 2) Practical approaches for implementing land and forest tenure reforms are shared and leveraged by practitioners and stakeholders to enable greater support and investment in securing the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Our services

The Tenure Facility provides grants and technical assistance directly to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations to support initiatives that:

- Scale up implementation of land and forest tenure reform policies and legislation by:
 - Providing support to establish legitimate tenure rights in areas where traditional communal rights are not formally recognized
 - Providing support for community mapping, demarcation, and registration efforts
 - Strengthening the capacity of national organizations to provide land tenure related services to reach disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- Enable governments and communities to test new models, strategies and approaches by:
 - Testing practical solutions to implementation challenges
 - Assisting governments and communities to overcome administrative obstacles to land rights recognition and titling
 - Building capacity of government agencies responsible for titling and protecting indigenous and community rights

Our approach

The Tenure Facility supports Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, and government institutions. It gives priority to areas where local peoples' rights are under threat and where there is a real opportunity to advance local tenure. The Tenure Facility works directly with the Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their allies that are leading the struggle to ensure laws on community rights are translated into rights recognition on the ground. It supports them to achieve formal legal recognition of their land and forest rights on maps, in laws, and in the plans and operations of governments and private investors. It works strategically with local, national, and international stakeholders to foster community-level partnership and joint action with governments and the private sector. The Tenure Facility generally operates within, or seeks to improve, existing government structures to ensure communities can assert their rights to the land they have maintained for generations. It works top-down to disseminate successful approaches and bottom-up to test tools at the local level and across cultures and ecosystems. The Tenure Facility shares innovations, learning and tools that evolve from its projects globally.

Governance

The Tenure Facility is governed by a Board of Directors that determines its strategy and direction. It also benefits from the expertise and influence of an international multi-stakeholder Advisory Group, which advises on program design and shares knowledge and learning. Both bodies have strong representation from Indigenous Peoples' organizations.

Our sponsors

The Tenure Facility is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Norad, the Ford Foundation, the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) and Acacia.

Projects

The Tenure Facility funds initiatives valued at US\$200,000 to US\$2,000,000 for up to three years. The project development process is rapid, flexible, and supported by technical experts. The Tenure Facility solicits project ideas from eligible proponents based on recommendations from networks working in the sector and on its own experience. When ideas meet its eligibility criteria, the Tenure Facility helps proponents develop a project concept. Concept development includes consulting with stakeholders, considering the broader landscape of initiatives, and identifying the best approaches for scaling up. The Tenure Facility reviews the concepts against selection criteria to ensure they deliver the promise of the initial idea and meet its environmental sustainability, human rights, gender, and conflict sensitivity standards. It then invites proponents of successful concepts to prepare a full proposal for appraisal, and either approves or rejects for financing.

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