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# **ACRONYM LIST**

**ACOFOP** Association of Forest Communities of Petén

ACT Amazon Conservation Team

AF Amazon Frontlines

AIDESEP Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest

**AMAHUTA** Securing the forests and land rights of indigenous peoples,

Papua project

AMAN Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago

APA Amerindian Peoples Association

APIB The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil

BRWA Ancestral Domain Registration Agency

**BUMMA** Indigenous Peoples Owned Enterprises

CEJIS Bolivian Centre of Judicial Studies and Social Research

**CAGDFT** Centre for the Support of Sustainable Management of

**Tropical Forests** 

CICOL Indigenous Organisation of the Native Communities of

Lomerío

CIPDP Chepkitale Indigenous Peoples Development Programme

CIPRED Centre for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development

**CFCL** Community Forest Concessions

**CLAN!** Community Land Action Now!

CLUA Climate and Land Use Alliance

CNAMIB National Confederation of Indigenous Women of Bolivia

**CNOP** National Coordination of Farmers Associations

CNTI National Commission of Indigenous Territories

COIAB Coordination of Indigenous Organisations of the Brazilian

Amazon

**CONAIE** Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador

CONAQ National Coordination for the Articulation of Rural Black

Quilombola Communities

**CONFENIAE** Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian

Amazon

COONAPIP National Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples of Panama

COP16 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on

**Biological Diversity** 

COP 30 30th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**FAO** Food and Agriculture Organisation

FBDH Brazilian Fund for Human Rights

FECOFUN Federation of Community Forestry Users of Nepal

FDA Forest Development Authority

FENAMAD Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and

**Tributaries** 

FOKER Papuan NGO Cooperation Forum

**FOSPA** The Pan-Amazonian Social Forum



FIMI International Indigenous Women Forum

FIRM The Forum for Indigenous Resource Management

**FPIC** Free Prior and Informed Consent

FUNAI National Indigenous Peoples Foundation

**GFN** Green Foundation Nepal

Geographic Information System

GTAA Awajún Autonomous Territorial Government

GTANW Wampis Nation's Autonomous Territorial Government

ICCN Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation

INCRA Land Reform Agency (Brazil)

INRA National Agrarian Reform Institute

ISB Indian School of Business

JCS Julian Cho Society

KPA Consortium for Agrarian Reform

MALUNGU Quilombola Movement of the State of Pará

MIQCB The Inter-State Movement of Babassu Coconut Breakers

ODTI Indigenous Territorial Rights Observatory

**ODTPI** Indigenous Peoples' Rights Observatory

OHADA Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in

Africa

OICA Cavineño Indigenous Organization

OPIAC National Organisation of the Indigenous Peoples of the

Colombian Amazon

PASDFF Supporting secure land and forest rights whilst

strengthening the resilience of indigenous populations and

local forest communities Project

PCN Black Communities' Process

PIDP Integrated Programme for the Development of the Pygmy

People

PODÁALI Brazilian Amazon Indigenous Fund

**PRODESO** Program for Social Promotion and Development

RENAPAC National Network of Indigenous Peoples of Congo

**RÉSEAU CREF** Network for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of Forest

Ecosystems

SDI Sustainable Development Institute

SRDC South Rupununi District Council

SRUTI Society for Rural, Urban, and Tribal Initiative

TAA Toledo Alcaldes Association

**TENFOREST** Platform of Land and Forest Champions

TIM Multi-Ethnic Indigenous Territory

**UACDDDD** Union of Associations and Coordination of Associations

for the Development and Defence of the Rights of the

Disadvantaged

**UEFA** Union for the Emancipation for Indigenous Women

VIDS Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname





Tenure Facility is a leading global financial mechanism supporting the recognition of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and community land rights and strengthening territorial governance to address interconnected challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality.

### THE FOUR PILLARS OF OUR APPROACH

Tenure Facility's theory of change is built around four interconnected pillars:

### SOURCE

Supporting Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and local community-led initiatives rooted in their traditions and priorities. Assistance is tailored to local needs, enabling scalable solutions and systemic change.

### **SUSTAIN**

Strengthening social cohesion, cultural identities, organisational capacity, territorial monitoring, traditional knowledge, and local economic development to help communities defend their land and forest rights.

### **SECURE**

Achieving recognition of land and forest rights through legal and administrative processes, participatory mapping, and conflict resolution. Inclusive decisionmaking ensures that women and youth play active roles.

### **SHARE**

Facilitating knowledge exchange and advocacy to amplify successes, influence policy narratives, and mobilise additional resources to scale impact.

Tenure Facility was established in 2017. It is registered as a non-profit organisation in Sweden with an international flexible team present in the countries in which we work across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Tenure Facility also has a fundraising and fiscal sponsorship presence in the United States: Tenure Facility Fund.



# **OUR VISION**

Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendant Peoples, and local communities thrive in their ancestral territories with full recognition of their right to own, manage, and develop their traditional lands, territories, and resources.

# **OUR MISSION**

To work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendant Peoples, and local communities to strengthen their tenure and ability to preserve, protect, and enjoy the benefits of their traditional lands, territories, and resources.

# **OUR VALUES**

We live the Tenure Facility organisational values within the team and in our collaboration with strategic allies, donors, and all other external stakeholders.

### RESPECT

For Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities; for our team and stakeholders; and for our planet.

### **RELIABILITY**

A culture of accountability, transparency, equity, and timeliness.

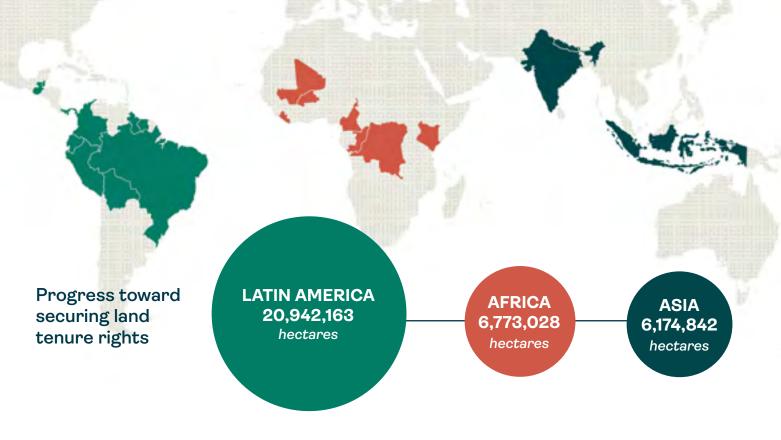
### **TRUST**

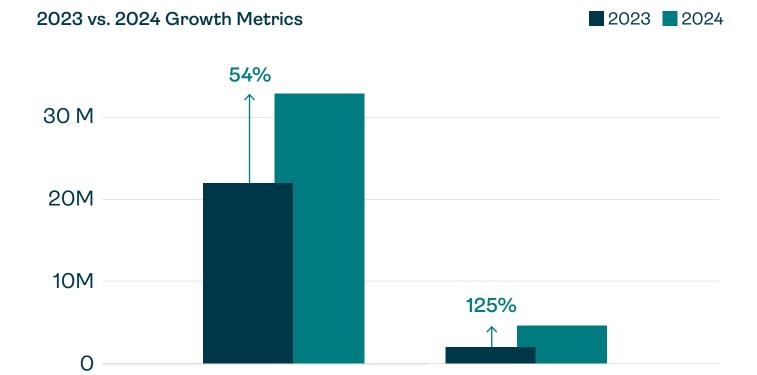
Nurturing trusting, responsible, and longstanding relationships with communities and their representative organisations, donors, and other stakeholders.



# **MEASURABLE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS** 33,890,034 HECTARES POSITIVELY IMPACTING Larger than the size of Italy 10,345 COMMUNITIES 4,586,235 HECTARES WITH TENURE RIGHTS SECURED POSITIVELY 1,624 IMPACTING COMMUNITIES **35 PROJECTS IN 18 COUNTRIES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024**

Figure 1 A LANDMARK YEAR. A LASTING IMPACT.





In 2024, Tenure Facility's partners drove deep-rooted transformation — securing formal recognition of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community land rights over 4.6 million hectares, and advancing tenure security and governance across almost 34 million hectares – an area larger than Italy. These achievements spanned three continents and impacted thousands of communities, bringing us closer to our Five-Year Target of strengthening tenure across 60 million hectares by 2027.

# COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS ARE A POWERFUL CLIMATE SOLUTION

Indigenous Peoples and other traditional communities play an important — but historically overlooked — role in the protection of biodiversity across the world, holding traditional knowledge that provides vital solutions for addressing the nature and climate crises. Yet, all too often their rights are not recognised and respected, and their lands are threatened by resource extraction and unchecked development.

That is why we need to keep scaling efforts to secure and sustain communities' land and forest tenure. For Tenure Facility, that means increasing large-scale, long-term support to local partners, while offering the resources they need to make the most of their strategies, skills, and drive.

## **MORE THAN MONEY**

In 2024, we disbursed close to US\$30 million to advance tenure rights and territorial governance in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

More than three quarters of this funding went to projects where the main partner was an Indigenous, Afro-descendant, or local community organisation. Overall, 89 percent of our budget was spent on project costs.

But our partnerships involve more than money. From financial training to knowledge-sharing with other organisations, we help partners access what they need to maximise their impact at scale. Last year, we co-organised or supported sixteen learning exchanges, encouraging peer-to-peer learning on territorial governance, financial sustainability, how carbon markets affect tenure rights, and women's leadership.



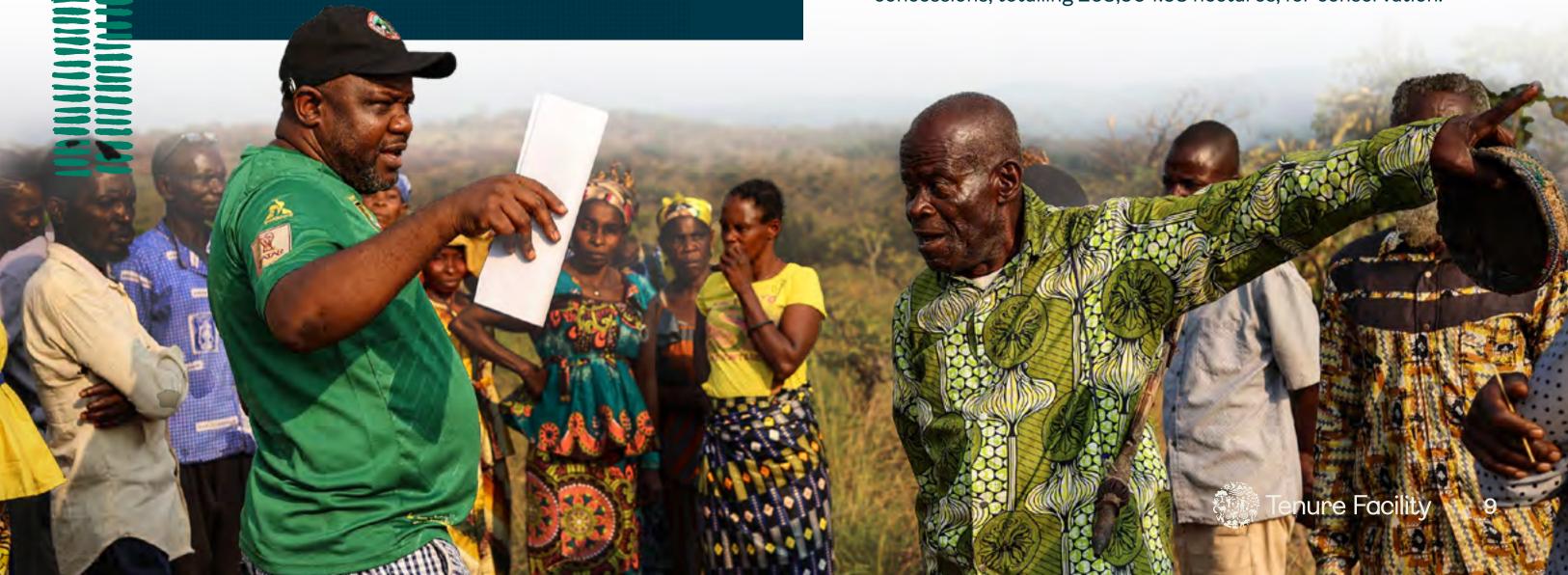
# **SOME 2024 SUCCESS STORIES**

By the end of 2024, we were supporting 35 active projects in 18 countries, while developing projects in two new countries.

This report is full of our partners' stories – their struggles and achievements, and the leaders driving their work forward. Below are some 2024 highlights (but you will find plenty more stories throughout the report and in the appendix).

# PROTECTING FORESTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC):

The legal recognition and management planning of Community Forest Concessions — forest areas that are collectively managed and owned by these communities — in the DRC is racing ahead, with Indigenous and local communities playing a growing role in land governance and conservation efforts. Led by partners including the Centre for the Support of Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests (CAGDFT), simple management plans for 12 community forest concessions covering 387,260 hectares were established, validated by communities, and submitted to the provincial authority, with three already approved by the end of the year. The management plans designated 70 percent of the forest area across the 12 concessions, totalling 268,504.58 hectares, for conservation.



### NEW PROTECTIONS FOR UNCONTACTED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN COLOMBIA AND PERU:

The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) in Colombia secured provisional protection for the 1.4-million-hectare territory of the Yuri-Passé People, who live in voluntary isolation in a crucial ecological corridor in the Amazon. In Peru, the government officially established the Sierra del Divisor Occidental Reserve for Indigenous Peoples in Isolation and Initial Contact, covering 515,115 hectares in the Amazon and protecting three different cultural groups. This achievement came after years of advocacy by multiple Tenure Facility partners. And in Brazil, partners worked with government agencies to remove intruders from the 152,000-hectare territory of the Ituna-Itatá People.

# HISTORIC RECOGNITION OF YEI TRIBE TERRITORY IN PAPUA:

In 2024, the Papuan NGO Cooperation Forum (FOKER LSM Papua, also simply known as FOKER) made historic progress when the government formally recognised territory of the Yei Tribe. At 445,255 hectares, this is the largest area of Indigenous lands to have been recognised in Indonesian Papua to date. FOKER also supported the Yei Tribe to map their transboundary customary territory of 278,106 hectares within neighbouring Papua New Guinea, ensuring clearer land boundaries through a participatory process.



# THE RISE OF AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA:

Over the past year, partners have supported Indigenous autonomous authorities in Bolivia to move towards formal recognition as Autonomous Indigenous Territorial Governments over almost 1.4 million hectares of land. In Peru, the Matsigenka and Harakbut Indigenous Nations established greater control over almost 4.7 million hectares, while the Wampís Nation's Indigenous guard took action to evict illegal miners and secure state recognition as an official "self-defence" body. And the Mataní Indigenous Territorial Council obtained recognition of its authority to govern its territory of 887,898 hectares of intact forest in the Colombian Amazon.





# COLOMBIA'S U'WA WIN AT INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of the U'wa people in a case brought against the Colombian state for the historical violation of their territorial rights. Supported by the National Commission of Indigenous Territories (CNTI), the case set an important precedent in favour of the defence of Indigenous Peoples' territorial rights and the ecosystems they steward in Latin America.

### FOREST RIGHTS RECOGNITION FOR PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS IN INDIA:

The Odisha State Government formally recognised the Habitat Rights of seven Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, securing 875,680 hectares of forest land for 547 communities across eight districts. This included landmark recognitions within protected areas such as the Siilipal Tiger Reserve, and marked a significant step toward safeguarding the cultural, territorial, and livelihood rights of Odisha's most vulnerable Indigenous groups. Vasundhara played a key role in supporting these claims and documenting the communities' heritage.

# WHAT ELSE HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

Interwoven with our efforts to advance tenure rights, 2024 saw our partners make an impact on national and international policy while stepping up our efforts to scale fit-for-purpose funding for land tenure globally, as well as strengthening their territorial funds and promoting inclusive leadership.

Amplifying Indigenous and Afro-descendant voices on the international stage in October, the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16) was held in Colombia. This was a big opportunity for our Latin American partners to influence national, regional, and global policy - and they rose to the challenge. The National Organisation of the Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC), CNTI, and the Black Communities' Process worked with the Colombian government to develop Colombia's biodiversity policies and organised two pre-COP16 events, helping to lay the groundwork for cementing Indigenous and Afro-descendant representation in global biodiversity governance.



For Indigenous People, poverty is thought about in broader, more spiritual terms — not just how much money you have but whether you can access resources. So, if you want to resolve poverty for Indigenous People you must address their tenure rights and their access to the land upon which everything is based."

DR. ALBERT BARUME, OUTGOING TENURE FACILITY BOARD MEMBER & SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-LED FINANCE

We are working with our partners to put funding directly in the hands of those protecting their lands and livelihoods. Territorial funds — financial mechanisms managed by grassroots organisations representing communities — are an essential piece of the puzzle. In 2024, they launched two new territorial funds (the Jaguatá Fund, established by the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, and the Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund in Asia) with our support, while strengthening existing funds in Brazil and contributing to growing global momentum around community-led finance.

# WOMEN AND YOUTH GET A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Our collective impact is strongest when every voice can speak up and be heard. We support an ever-growing number of projects led by women, as well as working with partners to promote greater gender equality and youth inclusion across communities, policies, and within access to land rights and natural resources. For example, in the DRC, we partner with the Union for the Emancipation of Indigenous Women (UEFA), an Indigenous-led organisation enabling women and youth to participate in governance and forest management. UEFA identified 289 women leaders and integrated them into Community Forest Concession governing bodies, significantly increased female representation in local forest governance structures. In Brazil, Malungu – the Pará affiliate of the National Coordination for the Articulation of Rural Black Quilombola Communities (CONAQ) - organised the first Quilombola Youth Seminar, a platform for young people to discuss the importance of youth engagement in the Quilombola movement<sup>1</sup> for legal recognition and territorial autonomy.



# LANDS, FORESTS, AND SEA

We launched a partnership with Turning Tides, a new initiative focusing on protecting the tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and small-scale fishers and fish workers across various aquatic environments, including oceans, rivers, lakes, coasts, and shorelines. Our US-based subsidiary, Tenure Facility Fund, acts as a fiscal sponsor, working with Turning Tides to strengthen coordination between land and marine tenure efforts.

# FROM TENURE FACILITY TO THE UN

Outgoing Tenure Facility Board member Dr. Albert Barume was appointed as Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in December 2024. With over 25 years' experience working on Indigenous Peoples' rights at national, regional, and international levels, Albert has invaluable expertise to offer, and although we will miss his voice on our Board, we are delighted to support part of the costs of his mandate.



<sup>1</sup> Quilombolas are Afro-Brazilians that are descended from people who escaped slavery and formed communities known as quilombos. Their collective rights to territory are enshrined in Brazil's constitution.

# ABOUT TENURE FACILITY

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

### **FUNDING MILESTONES AND RISING CHALLENGES**

2024 brought exciting funding milestones — including a grant which will see the UK Government invest up to GB£94 million over six years to strengthen communal tenure security across the Amazon Basin, and US\$12 million from an anonymous donor to expand our projects across Asia. But these milestones took place against the backdrop of fading government funding for climate and biodiversity, making our donors' generosity more important than ever.

### THE ROAD TO CLIMATE COP30

The 30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) takes place in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025. Over the months ahead, we will prioritise supporting strong community-led convenings with government and other national and regional allies. These meetings with amplify their calls for a new funding pledge for to secure their rights (a renewal of the pledge made at climate COP26 in Glasgow, when 22 donors committed a collective US\$1.7 billion, from 2021 to 2025, to support forest tenure), for forest tenure to be integrated into national climate action plans, and for Indigenous and community voices to be present and heard in the places where decisions about the future of their homes are made.



# NONETTE'S MESSAGE: REACHING FOR THE SKY

In the tropical rainforests of Southeast Asia, towering hardwood trees stretch upwards and spread outwards, forming a dense canopy. Even in the most challenging environments, they are supported by buttress roots that jut from the forest floor, making up the heart of a thriving ecosystem.

In the same way, trust forms the buttress roots that enable community tenure, governance, and stewardship to flourish and reach for the sky. And when Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendant Peoples and local communities serve as guardians of their own lands and forests, the world is a safer, healthier, more biodiverse place for us all.

For the last seven years, Tenure Facility has worked alongside allies and partners in the ecosystem to secure and expand traditional communities' tenure and governance over millions of hectares, benefitting thousands of communities across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

We are proud of our partners' progress and scale to date. We work hard to help them strengthen their abilities to sustain meaningful, long-term impacts on biodiversity, climate, justice, and equity goals.

So, how do we do that? It all comes back to trust — our trust in our partners and their increasing trust in themselves, bridged by our donors' trust in us, for which we are deeply grateful.

2024 was a year of consolidating and deepening that trust. During the last quarter of the year, I visited our remote Batwa community partner in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The journey was long and arduous, yet deeply memorable. Young people cheered and ran alongside our motorbikes, and women sang of their realities and hardships, giving our work a heightened sense of urgency. During visits like this, relationships intensify and transform. Like family, we were honest about our challenges, expectations, complexities, and vulnerabilities. And, like family, we each felt a deep need to keep the other safe.

Trust is also essential when it comes to collaborating with other actors, from governments to community organisations or NGOs. Becoming a true 'go-between' means we need to equip partners with the ability to handle future funding for themselves: we enable large or governmental donors to become familiar with and meet the needs of traditional communities while satisfying their own needs for due diligence.

Mature organisations also require inclusive, intergenerational leadership. Over the past year, we have supported some partners and challenged others to increase women and young people's representation in governance — something which has had a transformative impact on community decision-making.

Sustainable growth must be underpinned by the right tools and processes. We are committed to supporting partners not only to build up financial management systems but also set up their own territorial funds so they can access greater funding at scale. Technology has a vital role to play, not only in mapping and monitoring Indigenous land and forest but also in offering quality data to governments and providing concrete evidence of the importance of Indigenous territories for conservation.

Beyond our partners, our team also has deep trust in each other. Together, we act with our hearts while staying focused on our mission. While much of 2024 was about maturing and laying the groundwork for the next phase of growth, we also saw tangible results. Together with our partners, we made measurable progress towards tenure rights for just under 34 million hectares of land, across 10,345 communities globally, making substantial progress towards our Five-Year Target of securing 60 million hectares by 2027.

And, while Indigenous voices can often be lost in the tumult of global conversation, this year our partners were heard loud and clear on the world stage, influencing national and international biodiversity and climate agendas. Their work to put Indigenous rights at the heart of discussions at the COP16 and COP29 biodiversity and climate conferences culminated in resounding victories — not least the historic pledge from the UK Government to support forest tenure rights for Indigenous and local communities across the Amazon Basin. And, at COP16, partners finally secured formal recognition for Afro-descendant Peoples in global biodiversity governance.

At a time of geopolitical upheaval and <u>declining</u> trust in democratic institutions, securing land and forest tenure is more vital than ever. We are proud that our work strengthens democracy and puts decision-making in the hands of communities. Many of our partners are grassroots, member-based organisations that democratically elect their leadership, thus strengthening project transparency and governance.

As we look towards 2030 and beyond, we stand with communities facing threats like mining, cattle ranching, logging, and other illegal exploitation growing at a rapid pace. We need to not only help expand Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community land rights but also to understand what it takes to maintain those rights for the long-term. We remind ourselves that traditional peoples have been performing their resilient and regenerative practices for many years and that, with secure tenure and strong governance, they will not only protect their land and forests; they will also help us achieve global climate targets.

For that reason, and so many more, tenure is not a gift for governments to bestow; it is a fundamental right, and one that benefits us all.

Executive Director, Tenure Facility



Every change begins with a seed that must be watered, nurtured, and given space to grow. In this part, you can learn about our journey so far, the seeds we are planting, and the ancient wisdom that is transforming them into a flourishing forest.



# WEAVING A TAPESTRY OF TENURE RIGHTS

Imagine a vast tapestry with colourful threads woven together to form intricate patterns. That is how we see the Tenure Facility's journey: our work sits within a larger, historical narrative of Indigenous and tribal culture, stewardship, and resilience, winding back into the past and stretching far into the future. But just as a tapestry can be torn or frayed, Indigenous and community lands continue to be threatened by the consequences of climate change, unchecked development, forest crime, and conflict.

Each project we support is a new thread strengthening that tapestry. Our partners' work shows how traditional knowledge and practices can be wound together with fresh mindsets and modern approaches to maximise positive impact.

In 2024, we wove a new colour into the fabric, contributing to systemic change. We supported our partners to influence national, regional, and international processes and policies, organised inter-partner learning exchanges and helped them access new funding sources. As we scale our work hand in hand with our partners, the tapestry is getting bigger, stronger, and more difficult to ignore. Across this report, you will learn about why traditional community land rights and territorial governance are a powerful climate and biodiversity solution, and you will get to know more about Tenure Facility's evolution and what makes our funding approach unique. You will hear about our partners' incredible work across the world — what they did and why, the challenges they faced and the impact on communities on the ground. And we lift the lid on our grant-making and operations, sharing how we keep our values at the heart of every decision we make, and how you can get involved in our plans for 2025 and beyond.

# STEWARDING THE EARTH FOR OUR SHARED FUTURE: WHY COMMUNITY LAND AND FOREST RIGHTS MATTER TO US ALL

The fate of our planet is entwined with Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' prosperity, autonomy, and governance over their lands. As frontline stewards of nature, their wellbeing — and ours — depends on securing the lands they have protected for generations.

Traditional communities' wisdom stretches back over thousands of years and is deeply entwined with the lands in which they reside. Once these communities lose the rights to their land, they also risk losing their ancestral cultures and cosmologies reciprocal knowledge and practices which are vital to ecological and human health and are passed down through folklore and oral traditions. When protected through secure land rights, these knowledge systems and philosophies (such as an emphasis on the interconnectedness of humans and nature), can offer climate solutions that modern approaches often overlook. Securing community land rights thus becomes not just a matter of justice, but a practical strategy for achieving our most urgent climate goals.

Take the region of Papua (also known as Western New Guinea): sharing a huge island with the nation of Papua New Guinea but part of Indonesia since 1962, Papua been both blessed and cursed by its natural riches. Its blessings include not just unique marine ecosystems but also forests that are among the most carbon-rich and biodiverse in the world. Indigenous Peoples, who make up most of Papua's population, can find everything they need in these forests, from clean water to food to herbal medicines for preventing malaria. They safeguard and manage these resources for future generations with rules that are based on centuries of ancestral wisdom.





But Papua's forests are also a target for extractive industries such as logging, mining, and large-scale agriculture, including government-backed sugarcane plantations. If these forests continue to be cleared, it will have a devastating effect not only on the Indigenous Peoples of Papua and their descendants but also on biodiversity in the region — as well as the global climate.

While forest loss has dropped in some countries, it has risen sharply in others, and, overall, deforestation and degradation rates remain alarmingly high (in 2024 we lost a record 6.7 million hectares of primary tropical forest - an area almost the size of Panama). With threats to traditional communities' lands continuing to grow — including the almost 60 percent of Indigenous Peoples' lands which are threatened by industrial development — it is more urgent than ever to scale efforts to strengthen tenure security.

But while threats exist, so does collective action to combat them — something we are seeing in Papua, where Indigenous leaders from across Indonesia are coming together to push for change. In 2024, Tenure Facility's partners in Papua achieved governmental recognition of over 500,000 hectares of Indigenous land. Similar projects are taking place across the world, led by Indigenous Peoples and other traditional peoples and communities — the best protectors of their own territories, and the ecosystems whole health our future depends on.

Those of us who benefit from their wisdom bear a duty to support and amplify their efforts.



# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "SECURING TENURE"?

For us — and the organisations we work with — achieving tenure security means adopting multi-pronged strategies that are designed to support each community's efforts to strengthen and sustain rights to their traditional lands, territories, and resources. Some communities seek formal government recognition of their rights as part of their strategies, while others look to exercise control over their territories without seeking formal recognition. In both cases, achieving and maintaining secure tenure will often include activities such as mapping, resolving conflicts, establishing strong territorial governance structures, and defending land from outside threats.

### SCALING LAND AND FOREST RIGHTS AS A SOLUTION FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

For generations, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendant Peoples and other traditional communities have lived in and conserved forests, grasslands, wetlands, and arid and semi-arid lands across the world - ecosystems which are essential for absorbing and storing carbon, regulating water cycles, and acting as habitats for diverse species. More than a third of intact forest landscapes globally are in Indigenous Peoples' lands. But these precious ecosystems — and the communities that steward them — are increasingly threatened by resource extraction and unsustainable development. Protecting traditional communities' rights to their ancestral territories is not only crucial for preserving their economic livelihoods, cultural identity, spiritual practices, and social systems but can also increase carbon stocks and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

To take tenure rights to a level that will be meaningful for the world's climate and nature conservation, as well as for the wellbeing of traditional communities, we need tailor-made financial mechanisms that meet the specific needs of those communities, with respect and trust at their core.

PART ONE: SEEDS TAKE HOLD



Before, Indigenous Peoples protected nature without finance. But times have changed. We need to move faster: travel, organise. We cannot wait for slow government processes. The climate is changing; we need to act fast. We need less talk, more action."

LEMMEL BENSON THOMAS, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERINDIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION IN GUYANA



Our Five-Year Target (to 2027) is to strengthen Indigenous Peoples', Afro-descendant Peoples', and local communities' tenure over 60 million hectares of lands and forests, benefitting 15 million people. Achieving this goal means increasing large-scale support and ensuring continued, predictable funding flows to the organisations working on the ground to secure land tenure. It also means assisting grassroots organisations that represent these communities to develop their own internal structures and processes, as well as catalysing partnerships and ongoing learning.

Where we have increased investment in countries, the results are tangible. From the DRC to Colombia, our partners have made major advances in securing land tenure, working with governments to implement protections for traditional territories, supporting inclusive leadership within local communities, and sharing their learnings with other organisations across the world. By bringing together people, capital, and resources, we can catalyse change at scale.

### Figure 2

THREADS IN THE TENURE TAPESTRY: TENURE FACILITY'S EVOLUTION SO FAR

PART ONE: SEEDS TAKE HOLD

Tenure Facility's journey to date is woven from the different threads of the ambitions, activities, and achievements of our partners, and ourselves. The funding we raise and channel to Indigenous and community organisations acts as a critical enabler of their projects on the ground. In turn, the communities they represent are better equipped to secure their rights and protect their lands. International awareness

of these wins - and the benefits for people, planet, and the more-than-humans we share it with – in turn catalyses funding growth, helping partners to scale their efforts and impacts.

In this way, the threads of change intertwine, reinforcing one another, beginning to form a tapestry that can withstand even the harshest elements.

### 2021 2012-2017 2018-2020 2022 2023 **2024 & BEYOND** LAYING THE GROUNDWORK **PROOF OF CONCEPT BREAKTHROUGH GATHERING PACE ACCELERATING STEADILY MOMENTUM BUILDS** 2012 2018-2019 13 projects 14 projects, 29 projects, 35 projects, \$30 million \$5M Grants is disbursed \$12M grants \$26M grants **Rights and Resources** First grant is awarded **Initiative begins** and work expands to consultations on a financial three new countries mechanism to support communities to strengthen their tenure rights 2015 2017 2020 Becomes a **Becomes a Bezos** \$5.6M is disbursed Six pilot **Tenure Facility TED Audacious Earth Fund ROOTS** framework projects are is formally across 12 partners grantee grantee becomes operational launched founded as an UK invests £94 million independent **TED Talk &** in Amazon Catalyst 2023-2027 NGO **COP26** boosts Strategic framework is Measurable progress towards global visibility launched with a goal to 34 million hectares secure 60M ha of land New teams are established (Development Unit) and existing ones are strengthened (Human Resources, Finance). The Advisory Group is relaunched.

Threads continue to scale, support, and deepen partnerships to meet our 2027 target.

### Figure 3

# WHERE DO WE WORK: TENURE FACILITY'S GLOBAL FOOTPRINT IN 2024

As of December 31, 2024, Tenure Facility supported 35 active projects across 18 countries and had provided project preparation grants for three additional projects in Cameroon, Peru, and Republic of Congo. This map highlights where Tenure Facility is funding projects, expanding operations, and assessing future engagement — illustrating our growing global presence.

### **HOW TO READ THIS MAP:**

- Active project countries (implementation phase in 2024)
- Countries where additional projects began implementation in 2024
- Countries we began working in for the first time in 2024
- Countries where projects are being prepared
- Countries under assessment for future projects

The number next to country name indicates how many active projects are in that country and the map reflects the status as of December 31, 2024.



### WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

Tenure Facility was established to support Indigenous Peoples and other traditional local communities<sup>2</sup> to secure effective and legal tenure over their traditional lands, territories, and resources. Guided by our Indigenous Peoples and local communities policy, we are committed to supporting each of these groups while acknowledging and being guided by their distinct identities and statuses under national and international laws.

Tenure Facility partners with many of the largest and most influential Indigenous, Afrodescendant, and local community organisations across the regions where we work. The majority of these are grassroots, memberbased organisations formed by communities to represent their interests. Many operate at the national level, some at the local level and others at both. Most of these organisations are directly accountable to their members — typically Indigenous and community leaders at village, district, or provincial level.

Our other Indigenous and community partners include Indigenous NGOs such as Guyana's Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) and Belize's Julian Cho Society as well as territorial funds such as Brazil's Podáali Fund and Fundo

This includes Afro-descendant Peoples, as well as other Tribal Peoples and local communities that have collective, customary tenure systems and associated laws and long-standing, culturally constitutive relations to their traditional lands and resources, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions.



Babaçu, which enable movements to channel finance to their constituents on the ground.

In areas where there are limited community-representative organisations with the capacity and scale to implement the kinds of large, long-term projects we fund, we work with allied NGOs which, while not directly representing communities, work closely with them to advance their rights. Examples include the Centre for the Support of Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests (CAGDFT), an NGO that focuses on

community forest advocacy in the DRC (see page 66) for a closer look at the work they do) and the Indian School of Business (ISB), which helps communities earn income from traditional livelihoods.<sup>3</sup> In 2024, just over a fifth of our disbursements went to these kinds of organisations.

Throughout this report, when we refer to an organisation and its achievements, we are referencing our partners unless otherwise specified.

Organisations in India need to have a Foreign Contributions Regulations Act (FRCA) certificate to receive foreign funds — and many small, grassroots organisations do not have the capacity to secure one. That's why, there, we work with other types of groups supporting traditional communities, including the Indian School of Business (ISB).



# WHEN NATURAL DISASTERS DISRUPT AND REINFORCE OUR MISSION



In the past year, our partners across Bolivia, Belize, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Nepal have faced unprecedented challenges from climate-related disasters, particularly devastating forest fires. In each case, we work with them to adapt their projects to address these threats as they emerge.

As our partners work with communities to design responses to these challenges, we are humbled by the incredible creativity and strength they demonstrate. In Belize, the Toledo Alcaldes Association collaborated with the Forest Department to develop a community-led Fire Permit system, improving both fire management and emergency response capabilities. And in Guatemala, five Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP) member groups monitored and protected 117,492 hectares of forest using a combination of satellite technology, drones, and foot patrols. They also cleared 33.5 kilometres of

fire breaks, enhancing forest preservation and community resilience.

Climate emergencies require us to be flexible and responsive in our support, rescheduling planned projects and redirecting funds to where they are most needed. For example, we directed a US\$50,000 grant towards supporting fire relief, prevention and restoration in Toledo's Maya Villages and are collaborating with the Julian Cho Society in Belize to develop a climate adaptation and resilience concept note for the Green Climate Fund (the world's largest climate fund).

Traditional communities' lands are often at the frontlines of climate change impacts, yet these same lands, when properly managed under these communities' governance, represent one of our best hopes for climate resilience and carbon sequestration.

PART ONE: SEEDS TAKE HOLD

# To women in my community, the forest is like home – like family."

JAYANTI BURUDA, WOMAN COMMUNITY LEADER STRENGTHENING FOREST RIGHTS IN INDIA



# THE WOMEN COMMUNITY LEADERS STRENGTHENING FOREST RIGHTS IN INDIA

Jayanti Buruda and Augustina Soreng are both leaders in their communities in India, working with ISB to both promote gender equality and secure forest rights – two areas which are deeply linked.

The relationship between tribal women and forests represents a complex web of cultural, emotional, and practical connections passed down through generations. Jayanti and Augustina describe how women in their communities turn to the forest for both sustenance and solace, while their harvesting practices reveal an innate understanding of ecological balance. The forest also functions as a social space where women can gather and share their problems, creating a community support system that strengthens their role as environmental stewards. "To [women in my community], the forest is like home – like family," says Jayanti.

ISB's recognition of this sacred relationship is one of the key reasons they have earned local communities' trust. "ISB leads with empathy for nature, the environment and the people living in the forest," says Augustina. "They joined us in this work as equals, not outsiders. The work they have done has been transformative, not only for us but also for the larger movement to protect the land and the rights of Indigenous Peoples."



From Papua to Panama, shoots of change are breaking through the soil. We begin this part by delving into the incredible progress communities made in securing their rights and strengthening governance over their ancestral territories, then branch into thematic stories of innovation, inclusion, resilience, and learning in action.



# ADVANCING THE TENURE STORY IN 2024

Across Latin America, Asia, and Africa, our partners are bringing together traditional wisdom with new ways of thinking to make a lasting impact on community tenure rights. Here is an insight into what they achieved in 2024.

# PROGRESS TOWARDS PROTECTING ANCESTRAL TERRITORIES IN 2024

From the dense rainforests of the Amazon to the vast communal lands of Africa and the sprawling forests of India, communities made historic strides in 2024 toward securing their land rights. Across Latin America, Africa, and Asia, Tenure Facility partners helped Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities achieve real, lasting change — often against overwhelming odds.

Together, they helped communities advance their rights and strengthen governance over nearly 34 million hectares of territory, an area larger than Italy. This included securing formal rights over 4.6 million hectares of land for the communities that steward it. These efforts benefitted more than 100,000 communities across three continents, moving us closer to our goal of strengthening tenure across 60 million hectares by 2027.

Behind these numbers are powerful stories of hard work, determination, and impact. The highlights below showcase a few of our strategic wins — chosen for their scale, groundbreaking nature, high-profile legal victories, or hard-won achievements born from years of tenacious persistence.

See Figure 1 for a visual representation of these results and how they compare to what we achieved last year.

# Hov mea

# How do we measure success?

Tracking the results of the projects we fund does not just enable us to ensure we are having the impact we intend. It also helps us capture and share knowledge on the tools, methods, and approaches our partners are using to secure land and forest tenure, as well as to keep learning and developing best practices.

What counts as success for one partner may be entirely different for another. For many, this involves pursuing formal government recognition. However, when formal recognition may not be possible or appropriate, our partners use alternative strategies tailored to the local context — and we adapt our support to meet their specific needs and realities.

That is why we take a broad view of what it means to advance tenure security. Our "spatial footprint" refers to the total hectares over which measurable progress was made in securing and defending land rights (both tenure and governance). This includes both formal recognition and other types of progress; for example, mapping, advancing formal recognition processes, establishing territorial governance structures, and defending land from outside threats.

Alongside tracking our spatial footprint, we also gather qualitative and quantitative data from our partners across a range of areas, from financial reporting to advocacy wins and inclusivity.



But data alone does not inspire action. Compelling narratives highlight the systemic and cultural shifts brought about by our work, illustrating the firsthand experience behind the numbers and bringing to life how Indigenous leadership and tenure security drive broader changes in conservation and climate action.

Indigenous Peoples have long relied on storytelling to pass down knowledge about land stewardship. We honour this tradition by embedding their voices into all our reporting and advocacy efforts – including this report. Over the coming pages, you will see that storytelling unfurl.

# ADVANCING THE TENURE STORY IN 2024 A NEW MAP OF POWER: INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE RISING IN LATIN AMERICA

# HOW AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENTS ARE FORGING NEW GROUND IN SELF-DETERMINATION

Across the Amazon, Tenure Facility partners are helping reshape governance from the ground up — anchored in Indigenous worldviews and community leadership. Driven by the urgent need to defend territory, biodiversity, and culture in areas where state presence is often largely absent, they are forming autonomous governments that are enabling them to assert greater control over their own ancestral lands and forests. And in 2024, they made significant strides. Here are some highlights.

In the remote northeastern and central Amazon regions of Peru, where government presence is almost absent and illegal logging and mining rife, the Awajún Autonomous Territorial Government and Wampís Nation's Autonomous Territorial Government are working to strengthen governance over their territories, which span an area of tropical forest larger than Switzerland (4.3 million hectares). In 2024, the Wampís Indigenous Guard took action to evict illegal miners, and secured recognition from the Peruvian state as an official 'self-defence' body.

### **4.3 MILLION HECTARES:**

Area over which the Matsigenka and Harakbut Nations in Peru advanced their territorial autonomy. The Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries (FENAMAD) supported the Matsigenka Nation in Peru in preparing a preliminary map of its ancestral territory, spanning **1.6 million hectares**, marking an important step for enabling it to defend its territory and preserve its cultural heritage. FENEMAD also supported 12 communities of the Harakbut Nation in Peru to develop a self-governance plan and refine the map of their 2.7 million hectares of ancestral land, with 182 Harakbut leaders, elders, youth, and women contributing to the process. These efforts have bolstered their position in negotiations with protected area authorities and others who previously acted without their Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

The National Confederation of Indigenous Women of Bolivia (CNAMIB) and the Centre for Legal Studies and Social Research supported Indigenous Peoples working to gain formal government recognition as Autonomous Indigenous Territorial Governments, a right



enshrined in Bolivia's Constitution. In 2024, three Autonomous Indigenous Territorial Governments — collectively covering approximately **1.4 million hectares** — made progress toward this goal by negotiating transitions with national authorities.

A 2018 legal reform in Colombia allowed Indigenous councils to gain formal government recognition as local governments. In 2024, the National Organisation of the Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC) supported the Mataní Indigenous Territorial Council in the Great Vaupés Reservation, covering 887,898 hectares of intact forest in the Colombian Amazon, to become recognised under this law. Meanwhile, the ACTIVA Indigenous Territory, representing eight communities, formed a new council and applied for official recognition.



# THE AMAZON'S HIDDEN STEWARDS: SECURING PIACI TERRITORIES

In the deepest reaches of the Amazon there are communities who have chosen to remain unseen. Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI, per the Spanish and Portuguese acronym) are among the world's most vulnerable stewards of nature. They live in some of the planet's most biodiverse, carbon-rich forests, stewarding and managing the land based on their traditional practices. Securing PIACI rights over these territories is crucial for protecting them from destructive activities such as mining and logging, which increasingly threaten their lands. In 2024, our partners made unprecedented progress in securing PIACI rights and territories — balancing non-interference with proactive measures.

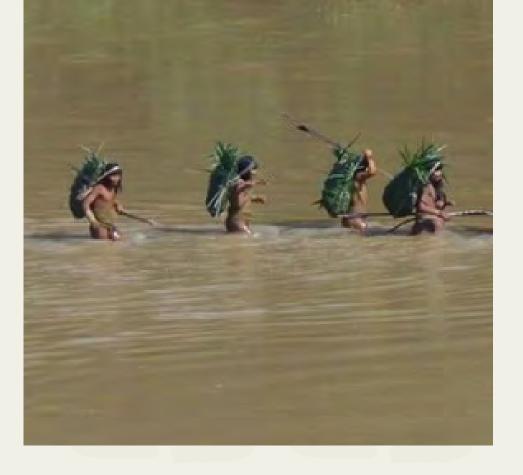
Following years of advocacy by multiple Tenure Facility partners, Peru's government officially established the Sierra del Divisor Occidental Indigenous Reserve. Spanning **515,114 hectares,** this protected area will serve as a refuge for three PIACI groups in the Amazon. This achievement is particularly remarkable given Peru's current political turbulence.

In Colombia, the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) secured the approval of provisional protection measures for the ancestral territories of the Yuri-Passé people, covering over **1.4 million hectares** – an area larger than Yellowstone National Park. These measures mark a critical step towards safeguarding this vital ecological corridor from illegal mining, logging, and drug trafficking.

### **1.4 MILLION HECTARES:**

Ancestral territories of the Yuri-Passé People now under provisional protection measures.

The Mashco Piro — believed to be the largest PIACI group on Earth — live unprotected in the Madre de Dios rainforests, despite a 2023 ruling by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordering Peru to safeguard their territory. In late 2024, the Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries



(FENAMAD) escalated the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. If the Court rules in favour of the Mashco Piro, it will become a binding decision, putting pressure on the Peruvian Government to comply.

The protection of the Ituna-Itatá land — home to a voluntarily uncontacted Indigenous People — advanced with the National Indigenous Peoples Foundation's (FUNAI) reissuance of the Use Restriction Ordinance, triggering a coordinated government effort to remove intruders from the 152,000-hectare territory. The Coordination of Indigenous Organisations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB) built alliances with civil society and Indigenous groups to support these measures, strengthening the area's territorial security.



## **RECLAIMING WHAT WAS TAKEN IN PANAMA**

Our partners in Panama made a great deal of progress this year, protecting land against illegal settlements and taking back land for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous territorial authorities across several regions physically demarcated and mapped their territories, covering a total of **873,243**hectares. And the Emberá Wounaan Comarca (an Indigenous administrative region equivalent to a province) worked with government authorities to evict illegal settlers as part of a broader strategy to remove unauthorised occupants and to prevent further illegal settlements that threaten the ecological and cultural integrity of Indigenous territories.

In early 2024, Indigenous Peoples marked another victory with the cancellation of a longstanding and controversial concession that had been granted to the Sinclair Oil Corporation, covering **341,000** hectares in the Darien region. This cancellation

### **341,000 HECTARES:**

Land previously granted to the Sinclair Oil Corporation in Panama returned to rightful Indigenous ownership. allowed seven collective territories and two comarcas recover **204,000 hectares** of Indigenous land. This achievement, led by the National Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples of Panama (COONAPIP), was made possible through collaborative working sessions with Panama's National Energy Secretariat and the Ministry of Government.

# INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES WIN RECOGNITION IN GUYANA

In Guyana, following support from the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA), eight villages in Karasabai, an Indigenous area in the South Pakaraimas district, were awarded a certificate of title covering **384,147 hectares** — an area nearly the size of Rhode Island. In the months leading up to the recognition, APA trained 14 local mappers, monitors, and knowledge holders to prepare for a government-led mapping exercise. Their work ensured that the boundaries were mapped accurately and that previous omissions of sacred sites, creeks, mountains, and hunting grounds were corrected — securing not just land, but cultural heritage for future generations.



# ADVANCING INDIGENOUS AND QUILOMBOLA RIGHTS IN BRAZIL

The Kaxauyana-Tunayana Indigenous territory in the Brazilian Amazon covers **2.18 million hectares** – an area the size of El Salvador. Securing title to this territory is highly strategic for efforts to protect the Amazon, as it represents a crucial gap in the broader

mosaics of Indigenous territories and protected areas, providing entry points for land invaders, illegal miners, loggers, and other external actors. While Brazil's Indigenous agency FUNAI has committed to physically demarcating the area, activities are yet to begin. In response to

### 2.18 MILLION HECTARES:

Area of Kaxauyana-Tunayana Indigenous territory in the Amazon safeguarded through border expeditions and territorial monitoring.

this inaction, COIAB spent 2024 working with local organisations to safeguard the through border expeditions and territorial monitoring, while engaging with FUNAI to kick-start the demarcation process.

The Kapira-Kanakury territory, also in Brazil's Amazon region, is another critical gap in existing mosaics of Indigenous and protected lands. Last year, COIAB worked with FUNAI to make important progress on the demarcation of the territory — which covers approximately **542,000 hectares** and benefits three communities — by establishing a Technical Working Group for Demarcation.

2024 also saw major victories for the Quilombola movement.<sup>4</sup> In response to advocacy and international litigation, Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva signed a conciliation agreement between Quilombolas and the Brazilian Air Force in Alcântara, just a few hundred kilometres south-east of Belém, host to the upcoming climate COP30. The agreement recognised 78,100 hectares of Quilombola territory, benefitting more than 152 communities and marking an end to a conflict that has spanned 44 years. Meanwhile, some 800 kilometres to the north-west, the Rosa Territory, covering 4,984 hectares, became the first Quilombola territory ever titled in the Brazilian state of Amapa.

4 Quilombolas are Afro-Brazilians that are descended from people who escaped slavery and formed communities known as quilombos. Their collective rights to territory are enshrined in Brazil's constitution.

Tenure Facility

### LEGAL VICTORIES FOR COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS IN 2024

For many communities trying to defend their land, the courtroom can be both a last resort and a powerful tool. Litigation is slow and costly — but when traditional communities win in court, they reshape legal norms, strengthen their autonomy, and inspire others worldwide. That is why we include these victories in our measures of success. Here are three highlights from 2024.



#### **VICTORY FOR THE U'WA PEOPLE**

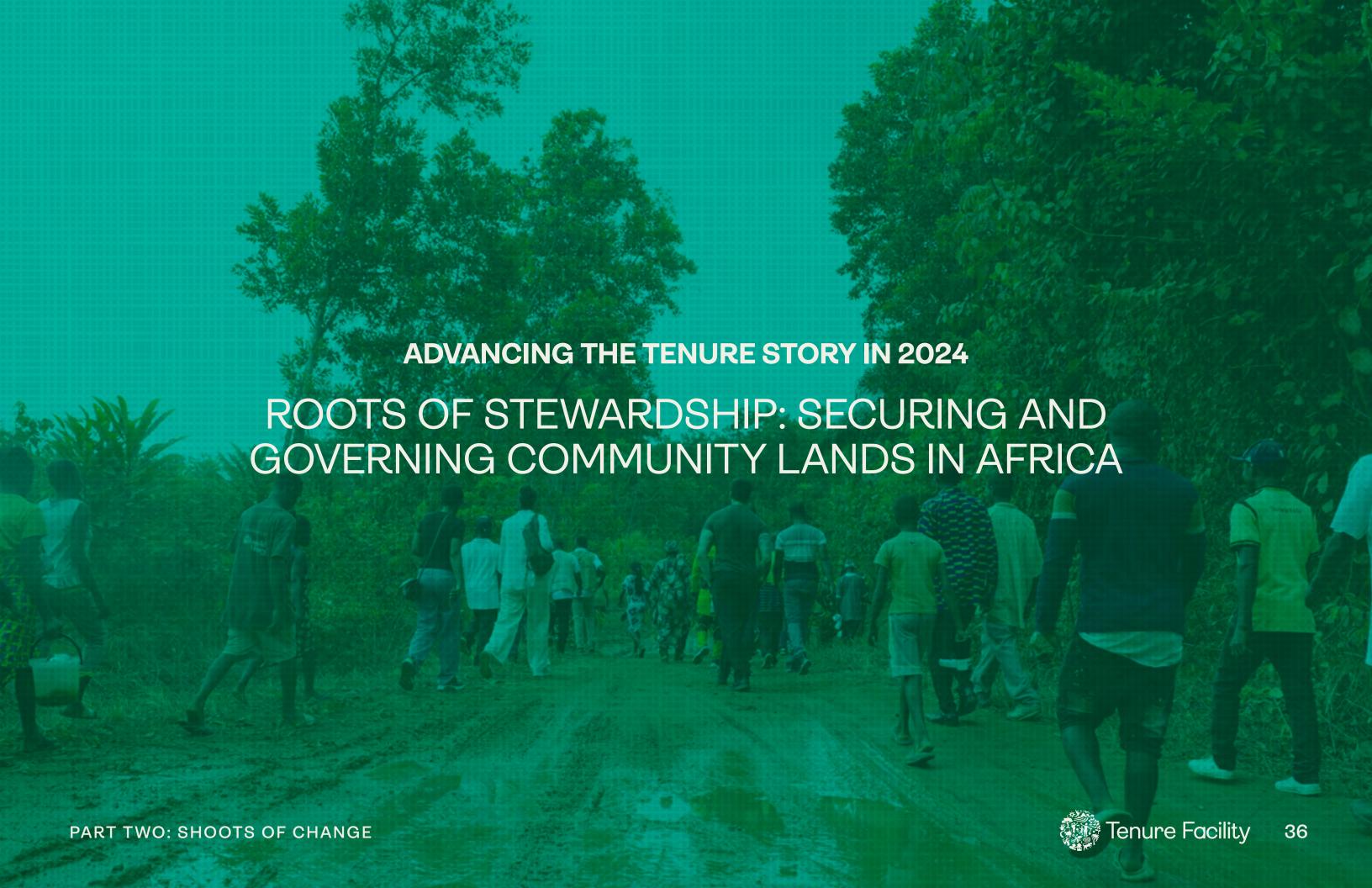
In December 2024, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of Colombia's U'wa People, whose territories encompass some of Colombia's most important páramos (highly biodiverse mountain ecosystems that are crucial for carbon sequestration and water regulation). In a case supported by the National Indigenous Territories Commission (CNTI), the Court found the Colombian state had violated the U'wa's collective rights by permitting oil and gas projects on their land without consent — undermining their cultural and spiritual ties to the territory — and ordered urgent corrective measures. This landmark case sets a legal precedent in Latin America, reaffirming Indigenous rights to land, culture, and self-determination under international law.

#### FORMAL RECOGNITION FOR THE BARRULIA PEOPLE

CNTI also secured a victory for the Barrulia, a nomadic Indigenous group in Colombia whose traditional land rights had long gone unrecognised. After two years of judicial and administrative actions, the National Land Agency issued a resolution formally protecting the Barrulia's ancestral territory, affirming their possession rights and setting a precedent for the land claims of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples.

#### ONGOING LEGAL STRUGGLE FOR MAYA LAND RIGHTS

Nearly a decade after the Caribbean Court of Justice's 2015 ruling that the Belizean state must recognise and title Maya territories, the government had yet to fully comply. In 2024, the Julian Cho Society, Toledo Alcaldes Association, and Maya Land Alliance, engaged in compliance hearings and negotiations, which led to the government withdrawing a proposal that would have restricted Maya land rights to just one kilometre around villages, excluding much of their ancestral territory. While the battle to ensure government compliance with the court's decision is far from over, this victory shows how legal rulings combined with persistent follow up by Indigenous organisations can act as an important protection against efforts to limit rights.





# FROM MAPPING TO MANAGEMENT-COMMUNITIES TAKE CONTROL OF FORESTS IN THE DRC

Some 87 percent of land in the DRC – home to the world's largest expanse of intact rainforest – is claimed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities based on their customary ownership. But only a tiny fraction of these communities' rights is recognised by the government. Our partners are working to change this by helping communities register and govern Community Forest Concessions (CFCLs), which give communities the right to own and manage specific forest areas.

In 2024, sustainable forest group Tropenbos RDC's mapping efforts covered **762,329 hectares**, bringing **28 communities** closer to securing legal rights to their forests. The group also helped establish management plans for 12

#### **762,329 HECTARES:**

Area mapped in the DRC, bringing 28 communities closer to securing their land rights.

CFCLs that had already gained recognition. This land covers **387,260 hectares**, with 70 percent designated for conservation. Plans were validated by communities and submitted to the provincial authority, with three already receiving approval by the year's end.

# INCLUSIVE LAND GOVERNANCE: ADVANCING COMMUNITY RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Four communes in Burkina Faso adopted gender-sensitive Local Land Charters, covering a total of **367,100 hectares** and benefitting **101 communities** and almost 272,000 people. These Local Land Charters help to ensure that women's voices are heard and their rights to manage communal resources are protected.

In Kenya, the Forum for Indigenous Resource Management facilitated eight communities in Marsabit County to elect Community Land Management Committees, with a collective responsibility for **2.5 million hectares**. Each committee is composed of 15 persons and complies with Kenya's two-thirds gender rule, which requires that no more than two-thirds of the members of elected public bodies should be of the same gender. The election of the committees is an official step under the Communal Land Act.

PART TWO: SHOOTS OF CHANGE





# RIGHTS FOR THE MANY – HOW OUR INDIAN PARTNERS ARE HELPING THOUSANDS OF COMMUNITIES ACHIEVE TENURE SECURITY

In the world's most populous country, achieving change at scale means working with thousands of individual communities to secure their land and forest rights. This presents immense logistical challenges. And our partners rise to them repeatedly, using innovative technologies and approaches to overcome hurdles some would see as insurmountable (read more about this below). In 2024, they helped 7,490 communities make progress toward securing and effectively governing their territories. This represented almost three quarters of the total

communities whose rights were strengthened by projects we financed last year.

A few cases stand out. In Odisha State, Vasundhara helped document the community heritage of seven Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, helping to secure government recognition of Habitat Rights over 875,000 hectares of forest for 547 communities — including recognitions within protected areas such as Similipal Tiger Reserve. Vasundhara also helped 1,223 communities in Odisha to

**7,490:** The number of Indian communities that made progress towards securing and effectively governing their territories.

establish Community Forest Rights Management Committees, which play a crucial role in developing and implementing sustainable forest management plans, ensuring responsible resource use and conservation.

#### VERIFYING ANCESTRAL LANDS AND SCALING RECOGNITION ACROSS INDONESIA

The Ancestral Domain Registration Agency (BRWA) in Indonesia verified **1,051,844 hectares** – an area roughly the size of Jamaica – across **53 communities** using its verification system. This verification provides an important basis for enabling these territories to achieve formal recognition.

# MAPPING A FUTURE OF COMMUNITY FORESTS RIGHTS IN NEPAL

In Nepal, Tenure Facility partners helped strengthen community-led forest governance across 32 districts. Community Forest User Groups received formal recognition for their operational plans, securing land rights for tens of thousands of households and mapping more than **53,000 hectares** of forest — an area larger than four times the size of San Francisco. Beyond strengthening tenure, the mapping also helped to resolve longstanding boundary conflicts and to identify traditional sites critical to community heritage.



# WHEN VESTED INTERESTS SLOW THE SCALE-UP OF LAND RIGHTS

Our partners, and the communities they support, face a host of challenges to their efforts to secure land and forest rights, from bureaucratic barriers to regional conflict.



### CORPORATE AND INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS

Illegal loggers, miners, and agribusinesses actively resist land tenure recognition, which they see as standing in the way of their continuing to exploit natural resources. For example, in Brazil, agribusiness and mining companies threaten traditional Babassu coconut breakers' forests. However, in 2024 the Inter-State Movement of Babassu Coconut Breakers (MIQCB) — the biggest traditional peoples' women movement in Latin America — succeeded in formally designating 18 million hectares of Babassu palm forests as traditional coconut breakers' forests in the state register. As a result, the extractive actors that pose daily threats to these crucial ecosystems will no longer be able to obtain permits for investments there without first consulting communities.

#### **SECURITY AND ARMED GROUPS**

Militias and armed groups in the DRC, Burkina Faso and Mali create financial and physical risks for partners transporting funds for community work and can even make it impossible to travel to project sites, delaying efforts to advance land tenure.

### FINANCIAL AND FUNDING GATEKEEPING

Indigenous organisations still struggle to access funding while big players dominate climate finance. Territorial funds are emerging as a promising solution – and one which Tenure Facility is actively supporting – but many grassroots organisations still struggle to attract funding without facing bureaucratic hurdles.

## POLITICAL, BUREAUCRATIC, AND LEGAL BARRIERS

A lack of political will – or even direct government interference – can obstruct land tenure processes. In Belize and Kenya, governments have resisted awarding communities land titles and management, despite court rulings, while in Indonesia the Omnibus Law on Job Creation weakened environmental and Indigenous-land protections.

In some countries, slow and opaque legal processes stall progress and favour private interests, while in others — like Kenya — the cost of land surveys is a barrier to securing tenure rights.

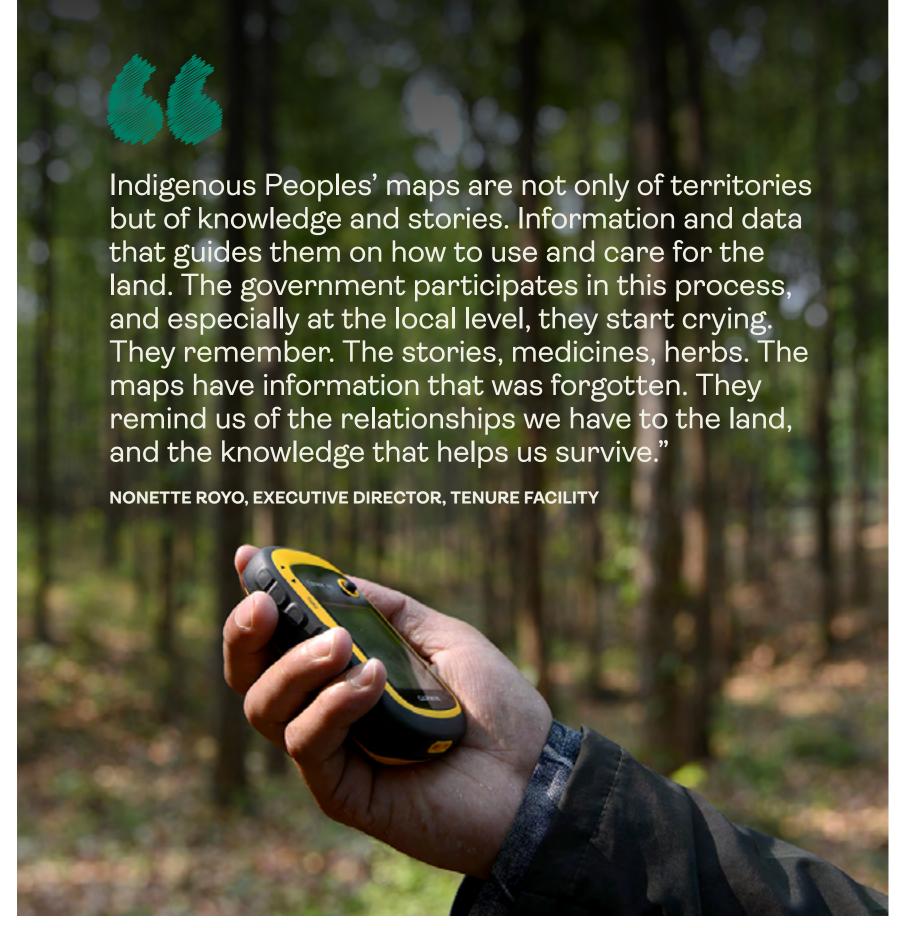




# WHEN THE PAST MEETS THE FUTURE: USING TECHNOLOGY TO SCALE TENURE

Threaded with trust, grounded in traditional knowledge, and controlled by communities, our partners are harnessing technology to secure territories and advance tenure rights.

From satellite data to smartphone apps, our partners, and the communities they support are using innovative tools to demarcate their lands and accelerate the documentation and recognition of their tenure rights. In this chapter, we share some of the stories from partners employing technology to make an impact.



#### PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENTS WHILE HOLDING THEM TO ACCOUNT

While governments are responsible for leading titling efforts, limited budgets or political will often make processes slow and cumbersome. Many of our partners have responded by developing their own systems to gather the territorial data needed for titling processes to proceed. Some of our partners' tools have even been officially recognised by governments, including the Observatory of Territorial Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a groundbreaking project integrating technology with Indigenous governance. Designed by the Indigenous Technical Secretariat of the National Commission of Indigenous Territories (CNTI), it is the first Indigenous-led platform in Latin America to have been recognised as an official source of geospatial data on Indigenous territories.

In Indonesia, maps created by registration agency BRWA and the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (AMAN) also received government recognition in 2024.

In India, Vasundhara's Forest Rights Act Atlases present detailed, data-driven mapping, offering a breakthrough solution for rights recognition. Fewer than 15 percent of eligible villages in India have received titles under Act. But Vasundhara's Atlases combine satellite-based mapping with local data and field verification to help identify eligible villages at scale. This technology, paired with close collaboration with government agencies and communities, has already enabled thousands of forest-dependent communities in Odisha State to begin the process of securing legal rights to their land.

Indian School of Business (ISB) has also been working to help implement the Forest Rights Act (FRA), having been invited by the Jharkhand State Government to be the technology partner for a statewide initiative aimed at recognising at least 10,000 community forest rights claims. The organisation's JharFRA app is designed to help communities with the digital filing process for FRA claims, while creating a robust digital record system accessible to both communities and government. Transparency is at the heart of the app. Once submitted, claims no longer sit under a pile of paperwork on a local administrator's desk but can be tracked by community members via a dashboard, thereby helping deepen trust and strengthen tenure rights at the same time.

Technology can also be a way to engage a diverse range of people with the mapping and monitoring process, as well as collecting a wider range of data on areas like biodiversity and carbon content. In India, ISB's nCount is

designed as an open-source data capture and analytics platform, actively involving forest-dwelling communities, government officials and other stakeholders in mapping boundaries and forest inventory. This participatory approach ensures accuracy and transparency, as all contributors can access and use the data for informed decision-making.

#### **TECHNOLOGY AND TRUST**

Some communities are sceptical about technological tools, which have been used against them in the past (such as drone footage taken without community consent). That is why a ground-up approach to technology is vital. It puts the process into the communities' own hands, enabling them to understand their boundaries, track threats and collaborate with governments and other stakeholders as an equal partner. Our partners approach participatory mapping and planning as a holistic and inclusive group process, and data collection is spearheaded and controlled by local communities, under the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent.



#### SCALING REGIONALLY, NATIONALLY, & INTERNATIONALLY

Many of our partners work in culturally diverse and remote areas, where even access to electricity or a bank account is limited. While emerging technology such as artificial intelligence has the potential to supercharge this work, for now our partners are concentrating on ensuring the communities they support have the access and training to make the most of the simple but effective technologies available to them. For example, ISB have focused on making the JharFRA app as user friendly as possible for Indigenous Peoples, including offering information in a range of languages and distributing physical copies of their claims filing toolkit on village market days.

# BRINGING TOGETHER OLD AND NEW, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS, FOR A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERSHIP

Ana Kahyana made history in 2024 when she became the first woman president of AlkATUK (the association for Kaxuyana Indigenous Peoples). At 35 years old, her election represents not just a personal triumph, but a victory for all women in her community in western Pará, Brazil, who have long worked behind the scenes. "I couldn't stop crying when the election was over," Ana recalls, her voice filled with emotion.

With a degree in Biological Sciences, she represents a new generation of Indigenous leaders who are using technology to transform how their territories are protected — exemplified by the innovative use of the Mapeo app for territorial mapping, monitoring, and protection.

"With access to technology and the internet, we can connect and learn from many things that were once out of reach. We can maintain our identity and live in both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds," she says. "This is how we can do meaningful work, continuing the efforts of older generations, while keeping our culture and identity alive."

This approach proved crucial during a severe drought in 2024 that threatened their community's survival. Ana mobilised young communicators to document the crisis, coordinated community resource-sharing efforts, and persistently advocated for government support.



Ana sees Indigenous lands as crucial for humanity's survival and climate change mitigation. "We are the only hope for this Earth to stay alive," she asserts.

"Without Indigenous peoples protecting the forests and rivers, we won't be able to survive much longer on this land."

It is this message that she hopes will be heard loud and clear at climate COP30, taking place this year in the Amazon city of Belém: that Indigenous lands must be protected and demarcated, not just for Indigenous Peoples, but for the survival of our planet.

# INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP: ELEVATING WOMEN AND YOUTH

Through targeted training and platforming, our partners are emboldening women and youth to lead in their communities, driving positive change for themselves, and the lands they protect.

Activities seeking to achieve gender equity in land rights and governance are woven into every project we fund, and a growing number of them implemented by women's organisations. In this chapter you will read about our partners work to advance women's leadership in 2024: how their strategic initiatives elevated women in land and forest management, highlighted their essential contributions. and amplified their voices within their communities, countries, and beyond.



Indigenous women are key players in language transmission and identity and have a deep connection with the environment... It is vital women are empowered to participate in decision making and planning of the use and management of the community land and territories."

VIVIANA FIGUEROA, OMAGUACA
INDIGENOUS WOMAN AND TENURE FACILITY
BOARD MEMBER

## WOMEN AS THE GUARDIANS OF MOTHER EARTH

It is widely acknowledged that, in many cases, when women speak up and act in their communities, governance is stronger, communities are safer and more resilient, and there is faster progress towards securing land tenure rights at scale.

Indigenous women weave together cultural and environmental knowledge; for many such women, the preservation of traditional customs, culture and language is entwined with the protection of biodiversity. Yet, despite this, they are often not given the platform or opportunities to lead their communities and may even — like women from many groups worldwide — face restrictions on their rights to access land.

In some Indigenous cultures landholding is matrilineal, but colonial tenure practices are patriarchal, which means women's traditional rights to land are overlooked. Often, women in local communities are less likely to learn skills such as numeracy, so they are not positioned to negotiate with external stakeholders. Some historically matrilineal cultures embraced patriarchal practices imposed from colonisers centuries ago, which then became embedded in the local cultures. In other cases. traditionally egalitarian societies have developed hierarches and gender inequalities, in part because of loss of access to resources. This can hinder women's effective participation in territorial governance and land tenure processes. However, without their inclusion in these processes, global biodiversity conservation is compromised.

#### Figure 4 HIGHLIGHTS: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP WINS ACROSS 2024

From national councils to grassroots movements, a series of remarkable leadership wins highlight the growing power of women in land governance, policy, and economies.

GOVERNANCE & REPRESENTATION		GENDER-INCLUSIVE TRAINING & ADVOCACY		WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE & LIVELIHOODS	
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO  289  New women leaders	UEFA identified 289 women leaders and integrated them into Community Forest Concession (CFCL) governing bodies. This significantly increased female representation in local forest governance structures.	ECUADOR  128 Indigenous women leaders	128 Indigenous women leaders co-authored an alternative report for the United Nation's Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adovacting for women's rights and territorial governance.	GUATEMALA  500 K  Hectares of secured tourism permits	ACOFOP secured tourish permits for 500,000 hectares. This enabled the launch of women-led initiatives that now benefifrom tourism revenue.
GUYANA  400%  Increase in women-led vilages	APA's advocacy and training led to a rise in female village leadership. In Upper Mazaruni, women-led villages increased fourfold from 12.5% to 50%, and in North Pakaraimas from one to five villages.	NEPAL  16  Women enterprise leaders trained	Women leaders of 16 forest- based enterprises received training on registration, marketing, and gender-based violence prevention.	INDIA  24  Women-led producer groups	ISB helped register 24 women-led producer groups under the Green Shakti Producer Compar These groups represent hundreds of shareholder across Odisha's forest regions.
ENYA  2/3  gender rule compliance	CLAN! ensured compliance with Kenya's two-thirds gender rule in all Community Land Management Committees. This prevented gender overrepresentation and strengthened inclusive governance.	BURKINA FASO  140  Women leaders mobilised	CNAMIB mobilized 140 women leaders for the XI Pan-Amazon Social Forum (FOSPA). Their advocacy helped integrate CNAMIB's proposals into the final FOSPA declaration.	INDONESIA  50 K  Hectares mapped using a gender-responsive method	KPA mapped 50,268 hectares using a gender- responsive method in 34 areas. The initiative benefited 28,334 households and prioritize women in land use planning

# ADVANCING WOMEN AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN 2024

In 2024 several of our partners designed projects to advance women and youth inclusion in decision-making processes, from offering public speaking workshops to creating women-only safe spaces where women can share perspectives and build their confidence. These are their stories.

#### A PLATFORM EQUIPPING WOMEN AND YOUTH TO SPEAK UP IN GUYANA

Based in Guyana, the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) tailors their work to meet communities' needs, whether that is offering training in entrepreneurial skills or sharing information on land tenure rights. In 2024, communities across North Pakaraimas and Upper Mazaruni expressed their desire to move towards more inclusive governance — and they wanted APA's support to make it happen.

APA focused their action plan on three intersecting strands: public speaking training, sharing information about communities' national and international rights, and an overview of different leadership structures.

PART TWO: SHOOTS OF CHANGE

Elections for village Toshaos (leaders) began in May 2024, shortly after APA's leadership workshops had taken place and the training contributed to a notable uptick in women and youth leaders across regions. In Upper Mazaruni, the percentage of village led by woman Toshaos rose fourfold from 12.5 percent to 50 percent, while in North Pakaraimas the number of woman-led villages jumped from one to five (out of 16). Youth representation among village counsellors and among male Toshaos also rose in both districts.

The communities are already seeing the impact of having fresh voices in their leadership. Youth leaders are using social media to bring awareness to their villages' specific challenges and priorities, and the newly elected leaders have asked APA to offer training in capacity building skills, such as financial management, so they can maximise their impact.



Women play a vital role in shaping communities and territories, striving tirelessly for collective well-being. Yet, despite their immense contributions, they often face significant challenges within their communities and territorial governance processes. Creating spaces to address these issues is essential. After all, we are all part of one territory — there is room for men, women, children, the elderly, and all of us who belong to it."

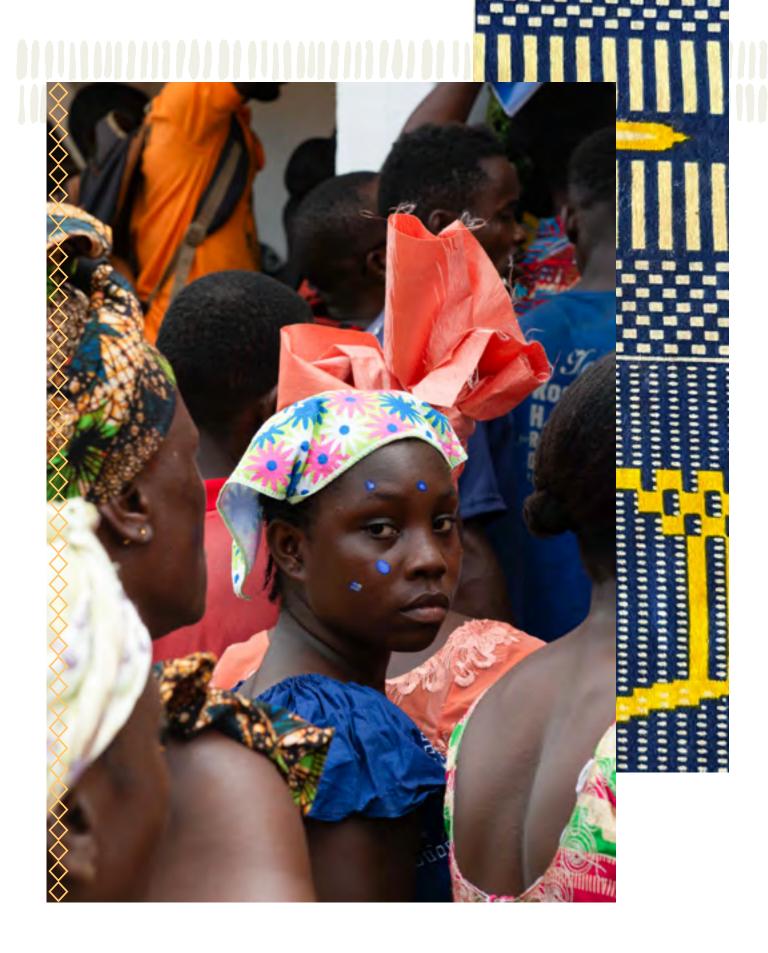
WILMA MENDOZA, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN OF BOLIVIA (CNAMIB)

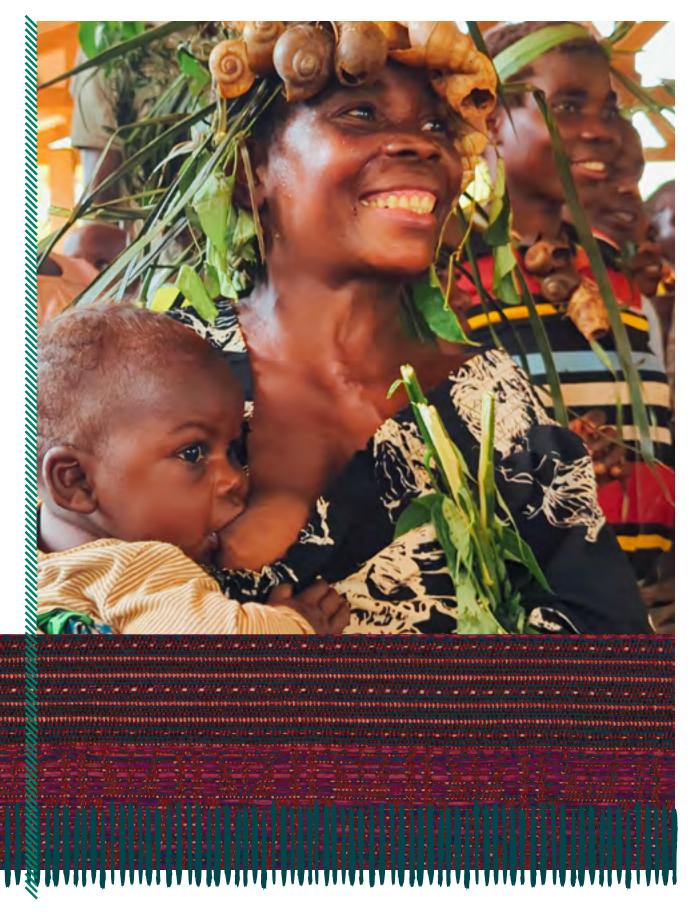
# BUILDING CONFIDENCE VIA WOMEN'S SAFE SPACES IN LIBERIA

Historically, women in Liberia's rural communities have faced systemic barriers to participating in landrelated decision-making. Customary practices often excluded them from leadership roles, relegating their voices to the margins. Recognising this gap, Tenure Facility supported the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) to develop an innovative strategy: dedicated, women-only sessions within the Community Land Formalisation process. The sessions created safe spaces for women to articulate their concerns, participate in dialogue, and gain confidence in engaging with land governance processes in the light of the 2018 Land Rights Act (a law that grants women equal access to customary land).

These safe spaces had an immediate impact. Women who might otherwise have been sidelined emerged as key decision-makers and leaders. Two women in each of the six participating communities were elected to fill half of all Community Land Development and Management Committee leadership positions. In Kahnweh, Gbito Fla-Fla, and Newenken, women's collective decision-making efforts led to unopposed elections for key roles.

The election of women leaders also marked a turning point in how these communities think about their own leadership structures. By having women at the helm, the governance framework within these communities became more representative and inclusive, encouraging broader participation and collaboration. Moving forward, SDI will continue to work to equip women with the skills and knowledge to navigate complex governance systems, ensuring their long-term effectiveness and reinforcing gender equity in land management.





# NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Union for the Emancipation of Indigenous Women (UEFA) is an Indigenous-led women's organisation that enables women and youth to participate in governance and forest management in Eastern DRC — home to some of the largest expanses of intact tropical forest on Earth.

Indigenous women play an important role in preserving and transmitting traditional conservation practices, such as the Sangisa spirit of forest protection. In fact, research indicates that forests governed by committees that include women are in better condition. UEFA's work, therefore, not only advances equality in these communities but also a contributes to valuable conservation work in the region.

Born into an Indigenous Batwa community, UEFA Executive Director Esperance Binyuki Nyota was one of only a few girls in her community who had the chance to go to school. Now she is committed to ensuring future generations of women and girls have access to education and the confidence to step into leadership roles. In 2024, UEFA identified 289 dynamic women from Indigenous and non-Indigenous Bantu communities with strong leadership potential and invited them to get involved in the management of the Local Community Forest Concessions, as well as taking on leadership positions within their villages.

Alongside this work, the project offered leadership training programmes for local youth and gave small study subsidies to seven girls from Indigenous and Bantu communities to pursue university degrees in forest resource management.

# THE YOUNG WOMAN BRINGING QUILOMBOLA YOUTH TOGETHER

When she was barely into her twenties, Erica Thais had already decided to put her energy towards advancing the rights of her people: the Afro-Brazilian Quilombola community, descendants of Africans who escaped slavery. Although the Quilombola people (around 1.3 million Brazilians) were granted rights to land titles in the 1988 Constitution, the process has been painfully slow and politically fraught.

Erica first engaged with Malungu
– the Pará affiliate of the National
Coordination for the Articulation of
Rural Black Quilombola Communities
(CONAQ) – in 2022, attending regional
meetings and exchanges in her native
state of Pará, before becoming a Youth
Coordinator and helping to organise
Quilombola youth across the state. Erica
was elected to the role at the state-level
General Assembly – a responsibility she
doesn't take lightly.



This movement doesn't choose us; it is within us to want to be a part of the change."

ERICA THAIS, YOUTH LEADER FOR THE THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN QUILOMBOLA COMMUNITY

In 2024, Erica represented Malungu and the youth voice at regional Quilombola meetings. She also helped to organise the first Quilombola Youth Seminar, a platform for young people and leaders to share experiences, assess public policies, and discuss the importance of youth engagement in the Quilombola movement.

"Brazil is so big and dispersed that even the act of bringing people together is a success," she says.

With COP30 on the horizon, Erica is cautiously hopeful that Malungu will have a presence in international conversations. In the meantime, she is keen to learn all she can from Quilombola elders, working to compliment the technical skills she has gained via her role with Malungu with ancestral



wisdom and academic studies (she is currently enrolled in university). "Knowledge is a tool," she says. "Young people can turn knowledge into action."

With young leaders like Erica driving our partners' work forward, we don't doubt that this action will turn into impact.

# HARNESSING COLLECTIVE WISDOM: HOW LEARNING LEADS TO LASTING IMPACT

We believe that sharing knowledge creates mutual growth. That is why we foster opportunities for our partners, stakeholders, and team members across countries and regions to learn from each other's successes and struggles.

At Tenure Facility, learning is at the heart of our approach. Through learning exchanges, publications, bilateral meetings, and other initiatives, we aim to create opportunities for partners to share knowledge, deepen connections, and shape the future of tenure rights globally.

In 2024, we launched our learning strategy, focused on three key objectives: better partner impact, better funding, and a better Tenure Facility. And we followed this up by organising – together with our partners – more learning exchanges than ever before.



#### WHY HAVE WE MADE LEARNING EXCHANGES A PRIORITY?

Learning exchanges offer real value for communities, our partners, and our own organisation. They create spaces where communities can listen to one another's experience, feel a sense of shared purpose and build a movement together. For our partners, these learning initiatives are a chance to strengthen their networks, develop cross-regional strategies and replicate successful initiatives (such as territorial funds to channel resources to grassroots communities) in different contexts. For Tenure Facility, learning exchanges help us to see through the eyes of our partners and the communities they work with and to strengthen our position as a facilitator in the tenure rights space. They are essential to our strategy of listening deeply to Indigenous and local communities, and supporting them to develop, share and expand community-led solutions.





# Territorial funds of the Amazon unite in Esperantina

In Esperantina, Brazil, MIQCB and the Babassu Fund convened territorial funds and grassroots organisations from Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia to discuss how territorial funds fuel social movements and self-determined governance. The exchange culminated in a powerful open letter calling on international donors to recognize these funds as essential tools for territorial autonomy.

# Dialogue with Colombian judiciary helps integrate community perspectives into the justice system

CNTI and the Indigenous Territorial Rights
Observatory (ODTI) convened a national
dialogue on territorial restitution and legal
interpretation to exchange experiences and
knowledge between Indigenous leaders and
Colombia's judiciary. Together they integrated
legal and ancestral perspectives, contributing
to more culturally competent land justice in
line with the Peace Agreement.



# 16 TOTAL LEARNING EXCHANGES IN 2024

#### **KEY FOR EXAMPLES**

#### **Types of Exchange:**

Regional

Bilateral

National

#### Stakeholders:



Tenure Facility
Partners



Other Grassroots & Civil Society Organisations



National Judiciary



Community
Representatives



National Governments

# ACOFOP exchange leads to Colombia adopting legal framework for community forest concessions



ACOFOP (Guatemala) shared its experience with the Petén model of community forest concessions with the Colombian government, resulting in a Colombia adopting decree providing a framework for establishing Community Forest Concessions in Colombia, directly inspired by Guatemala's success.

## Finding strength in coming together in Cali



In Cali, Colombia, the Caribbean and Central America Research Council (CCARC), and the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) convened Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community organisations to discuss how learning across borders strengthens their struggles, reminds them they are not alone, and motivates them to carry on in the face of adversity.

# FECOFUN exchange sparks fresh approaches to grassroots conservation



# Integrating rights into carbon and conservation in the Congo Basin



The Second Congo Basin Learning Forum in Kinshasa provided a space for Indigenous and community representatives to engage with governments and civil society on the challenges they face in engaging with carbon and conservation initiatives and develop practical solutions to address them.

# LEARNING EXCHANGES IN LATIN AMERICA

The Tenure Facility Learning Exchange Programme 2024 aimed to facilitate knowledge-sharing among Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local community organisations across Latin America. The programme involved national, bilateral, and multi-country exchanges, and focused on strengthening territorial governance, sharing best practices, and fostering collaboration among Tenure Facility partners.

Participants across the programme discussed challenges and opportunities, including strengthening community territorial funds in Brazil, increasing Indigenous women's role in governance, and consensus-building on biodiversity and climate action.



The most important thing for me has been the opportunity to see that I am not the only one [working on this]. Sometimes it is exhausting [work], but to see that women are taking action on a global level is important for me... It strengthens me spiritually."

YANEL VENADO, LAWYER AND GENDER COORDINATOR WITH COONAPIP

# BRINGING TOGETHER INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN THE BOLIVIAN AMAZON

"Gracias hermanas!" ("Thank you, sisters!")

The learning exchange on women and territorial governance began with the strong smell of incense, the flicker of candlelight and a ritual to pay respect to the generations of Indigenous women who devoted their lives to defending their forests. The reverent silence was broken by clapping and a collective cry of gratitude, as participants readied themselves to share their experiences and perspectives.

Around 50 Indigenous leaders travelled from across Latin America to the outskirts of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to join the threeday event in December. In an atmosphere charged with feelings of joint struggles, sisterhood, and empathy, participants explored together how women pass down ancestral wisdom, ensuring the preservation of their territories and cultures, with a clear vision of the needs of their families, communities, and lands. They highlighted challenges including involving more men in women's rights conversations, as well as the need to work closely with younger generations and women across territories to build capacities for change and foster stronger alliances.



The discussion sparked hope and created opportunities for collaboration, both locally and internationally: participants specifically expressed a shared commitment to aligning strategies for the upcoming climate COP30, aiming to have a joint position on the agenda that reflects the needs of their territories.

The learning exchange was co-hosted by Tenure Facility and partners including the National Confederation of Indigenous Women of Bolivia (CNAMIB), Tinta – The Invisible Thread, and the International Forum of Indigenous Women.



# BRINGING TENURE AS A POWERFUL CLIMATE SOLUTION TO THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STAGE

From government meetings to conference stages, we have been supporting our partners to align their message, amplify their voices, and push for policy change — all anchored in the growing evidence of securing tenure and strengthening governance as a transformative climate and biodiversity solution.

In 2024, Tenure Facility and our partners scaled up our sub-national, national, and international advocacy efforts.

Our focus is on amplifying and supporting the leadership and vision of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities. We also create opportunities to ensure their perspectives, solutions, and tenure rights are both recognised internationally and embedded in local and national policies. A key opportunity in 2024 was the COP16 international biodiversity conference, where our Latin

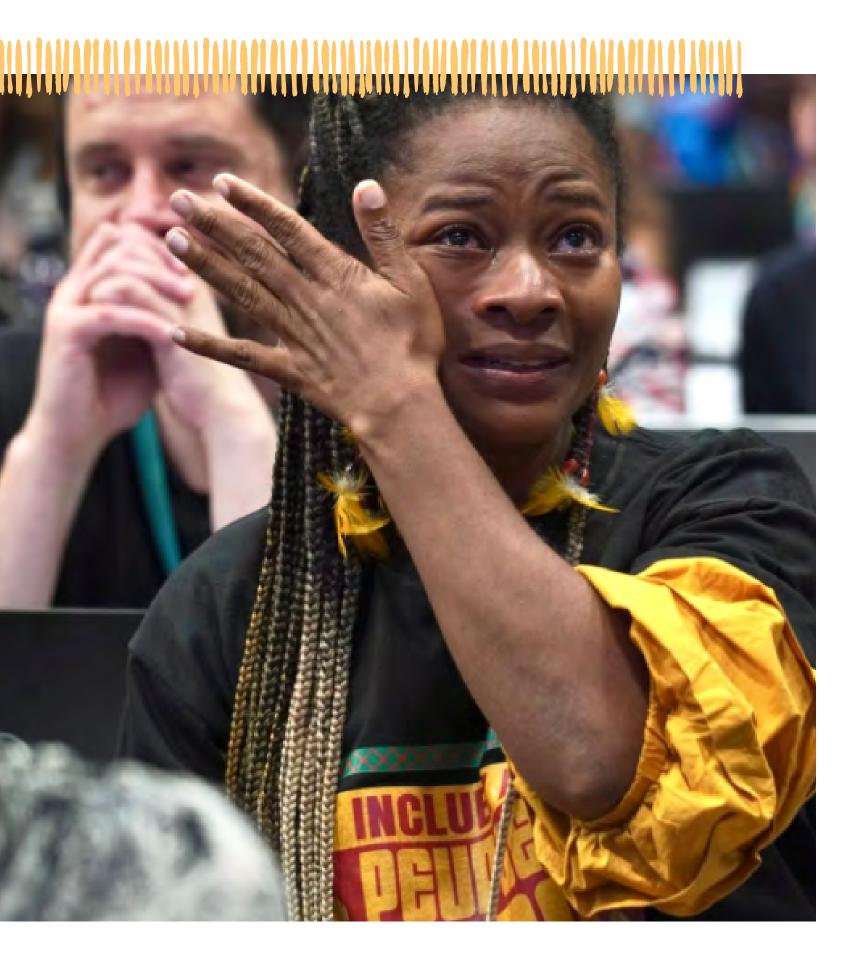
American partners came together to push for recognition of the central role of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities in biodiversity conservation.

It is more important than ever to ensure that the Indigenous and traditional community voices are not lost in the tumult of (geo) political upheaval. In this chapter, we also share how our partners are maintaining momentum in the face of elections and uncertain political environments — and continuing to advance tenure rights, even when the odds stack against them.

## FACILITATING CONVERSATIONS THAT DRIVE REAL CHANGE

As well as supporting Indigenous and community organisations to partner with and push governments to officially recognise communal land and forest rights, Tenure Facility also had our own presence at key international climate and biodiversity events such as New York Climate Week and the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum. We used these events to facilitate honest conversations between stakeholders to move the needle on funding tenure rights. For example, we invited multilateral donors, including the World Bank and the Green Climate Fund, to participate in a discussion during New York Climate Week about how we can secure more direct funding for Indigenous Peoples in multilateral climate and biodiversity initiatives.

Elsewhere, we engaged with the Forest Tenure Funders Group, comprised of the 25 public and philanthropic donors who signed the Forest Tenure Pledge, committing to support to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure rights and forest guardianship. Alongside the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), we also continued co-hosting the Path to Scale (an informal network of donors, intermediaries, and rightsholders aiming to scale-up global action on collective land rights). Both platforms are working to mobilise global funders to agree a new forest tenure funding pledge at COP30, when the current pledge runs out. We are also a partner in the Race to Resilience Campaign, a high-level Climate Champions initiative which aims to drive a stepchange in global ambition for climate resilience.



#### COP OF THE PEOPLE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COP16 BIODIVERSITY SUMMIT

With Colombia holding the biodiversity COP16 Presidency, our Colombian partners seized on the opportunity to leverage their strong relationships with the Colombian Government — and the latter's commitment to advancing Indigenous and Afro-descendant rights — to achieve wins for rights-based conservation at domestic and international levels and shape the global dialogue.

An Amazon Pre-COP event, hosted by the National Organisation of the Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC) and financed by Tenure Facility, enabled Indigenous organisations of the Amazon Basin to align on shared positions for advancing Indigenous rights at COP16. This paved the way for successful advocacy at the conference and beyond (the group will continue to coordinate in advance of climate COP30 in Brazil). Results included:

The establishment of a permanent Subsidiary Body for Indigenous Peoples and local communities within the UN Convention on Biological Diversity – a historic step that marked the first time a UN environmental agreement established a permanent body to represent communities.

The adoption of the Program of Work of Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which ensures the rights, contributions, traditional knowledge and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are further embedded in the global biodiversity agenda.

Tenure Facility

# PUTTING INDIGENOUS, AFRODESCENDANT, AND LOCAL COMMUNITY TERRITORIES AT THE HEART OF COLOMBIA'S BIODIVERSITY COMMITMENTS

At the domestic level, OPIAC, CNTI and the Black Communities Process (PCN) worked with the Colombian government to develop Colombia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This plan is the means through which Colombia translates the Global Biodiversity Framework (an international agreement signed in 2022 at Biodiversity COP15 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030) into national policy.

Presented at COP16, the final plan rewarded our partners' efforts by recognising the contribution of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local communities' territories to Colombia's area-based commitments under Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as including commitments to supporting and financing the sustainable management of these territories.

CNTI's Indigenous Geographic Information System geospatial data was paramount in influencing Colombia's negotiation texts by highlighting the overlap between Indigenous territories and protected conservation areas and biodiversity hotspots. So much so, that the Colombian government also recognised it as a critical tool for compliance with the plan. COP16 also provided the impetus for Colombia to adopt a decree recognising Indigenous authorities as official environmental regulatory authorities in their territories. The decree grants Indigenous Peoples the authority to protect, manage and conserve biodiversity within their territories according to their knowledge.

## OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF AFRO-DESCENDANT PEOPLES

The last day of COP16 made history with the formal recognition of Afro-descendant Peoples under the Convention on Biological Diversity as a group that plays a significant role in biodiversity conservation. This milestone was the result of extensive efforts throughout the year, including preparatory work, discussion, lobbying, and collaboration between PCN, the Colombian government, and other stakeholders.

Our support included co-organising the Afrodescendant Pre-COP, alongside the Bezos Earth Fund and Conservation International.
Convened by PCN in partnership with the Colombian Vice-Presidency (including Vice President Francia Márquez, an Afro-descendant leader herself), the Pre-COP provided a crucial opportunity for Afro-descendant organisations to align their proposals and strategies before the conference.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO COP30 IN BELÉM

Our partners worked tirelessly to shape and influence the decisions at COP16, the ripple effects of which will be felt by Indigenous and local community organisations worldwide. Now, all eyes turn to the 30th conference of parties to the UN Climate Convention (COP30) in Belém, Brazil.

A key focus for our work at COP30 is calling for a renewed funding pledge to support forestbased communities' tenure rights and their role as environmental stewards. The previous pledge, adopted in 2021 at COP26, has been crucial in scaling up and maintaining funding for tenure, even in the face of tightening government budgets, helping secure rights and keep forests standing. A second pledge is critical to sustain this momentum — especially given the adverse political trends in the United States and much of the European Union. That is why we have been working with our partners, as well as governments, funders, and other stakeholders, in organising and aligning messages to call for a pledge renewal.

COP30 will also be a pivotal moment for strengthening Pan-Amazon dialogues, policy influence, and partner visibility, with the successful advocacy at COP16 providing an invaluable template for future advocacy efforts. Our Brazilian partners are already working to replicate and build on the impact achieved in Colombia and make domestic, as

well as international, leaps forward in terms of community rights and recognition.

Tenure Facility is supporting its partners in Brazil, which include the most influential territorial movements in the Amazon, as they prepare for COP30. The preparations aim to connect the dots between land tenure and climate action, pushing the Brazilian government and other governments to advance land demarcation efforts while using the climate agenda as a catalyst for domestic policy change.

Tenure Facility has been assisting partners with accessing dialogues and key discussions on climate finance, ensuring that communityled territorial funds are represented. This includes co-hosting the Path to Scale Coalition, funding COIAB to convene Pre-COP30 meetings across all nine Amazon Basin countries and sponsoring the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa's engagement in the development of an Indigenous Peoples and local communities Congo Basin Pledge, which aims to mobilise US\$1 billion to support land rights, conservation, and sustainable development for communities in the Congo Basin.

However, the goal is not just COP30 itself but what comes afterwards. By strengthening financial mechanisms, policy advocacy, and international networks, these organisations are positioning themselves to access funding at scale for securing community tenure rights across the globe.



#### MAINTAINING MOMENTUM DURING ELECTIONS

Elections – and any subsequent change in political leadership – can pose a real challenge for our partners. They can disrupt activities, slow (or halt) policy implementation, and heighten land tenure vulnerabilities. But despite this, our partners are adept at navigating political upheaval and minimising its impact on their work.

## PIVOTING ACTIVITIES DURING ELECTIONS IN INDIA

India held both national and state-level elections throughout last year, extended over multiple stages. With governments focused on campaigning, titling processes tend to slow or stall during election periods. To maintain momentum, our partners strategically scheduled their initiatives around election timelines, using election periods to focus on capacity-building activities like staff training. For instance, in Odisha, where election-related restrictions limited community engagement, Vasundhara adapted by conducting centre-level training for staff and officials and refining their land rights documentation strategies, ensuring that progress continued even in the absence of direct fieldwork.

In states where leadership changed, partners focused on relationship building with both bureaucracy officials and incoming administrations, while formal partnerships with state governments helped to maintain momentum on land rights initiatives. Vasundhara became the

official facilitator for the state-led MJJY scheme (Mo Jungle Jami Yojana, translated as "Our Forest Land Scheme"), which focuses on accelerating the recognition of Community Forest Rights in Odisha State under the Forest Rights Act (which recognises and protects the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and forest resources).

### WEAVING NEW TIES FOLLOWING ELECTIONS IN INDONESIA

Indonesia's 2024 general elections, including presidential and regional polls, created uncertainties for Indigenous and local community land rights. The lack of progress on the Indigenous Peoples Rights Bill — which seeks to strengthen legal protections for Indigenous communities and territories — left Indigenous groups exposed to land grabs, especially as investments surged under the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, which weakened land and forest protections. Meanwhile, administrative uncertainties caused further delays in land rights recognition efforts.

To navigate this, partners focused on building relationships with government stakeholders. The Consortium of Agrarian Reform forged several partnerships with key government bodies, including the Ministry of Village Development, the Indonesian Ombudsman, rights institution Komnas HAM, and the General Elections Commission, to keep agrarian reform on the national agenda and protect land rights defenders. The organisation also coordinated with local governments to accelerate land redistribution.

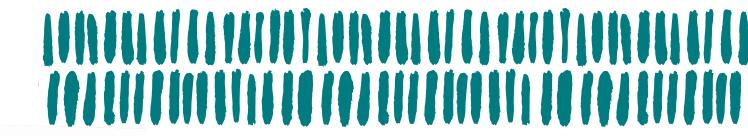
The challenges continue into 2025: unresolved issues within Indonesia's One Map and One Data Policy (an initiative by the Government of Indonesia aimed at resolving inconsistencies and overlaps in spatial and statistical data, especially related to land use, development planning and natural resource management) are obstructing Indigenous land recognition. Tenure Facility will continue to support our Indonesian partners as they work to navigate these uncertainties and forge ahead with strengthening tenure protections at both national and regional levels.





Strong growth is grounded in trust. Here, we show how Tenure Facility's flexible, values-driven funding model empowers community-led solutions building durable systems of governance, resilience, and self-determination from the ground up.





# WHY OUR FUNDING IS FIT-FOR-PURPOSE

Our rights-based funding model is what sets us apart. By meeting partners where they are, we can support them to grow and access funding at scale while staying rooted in their missions and in the communities they serve.

Respect, reliability, and trust are the values that underpin our work. They are ingredients in the "special sauce" that makes our funding model fit for purpose, allowing us to build deep relationships with our partners and act as a bridge between stakeholders.

In this chapter we share more about the role trust plays in our funding approach, how we help partners build their capacity to manage large funds, and why we are excited about the potential of territorial funds as a mechanism for communities to take charge of their own development.

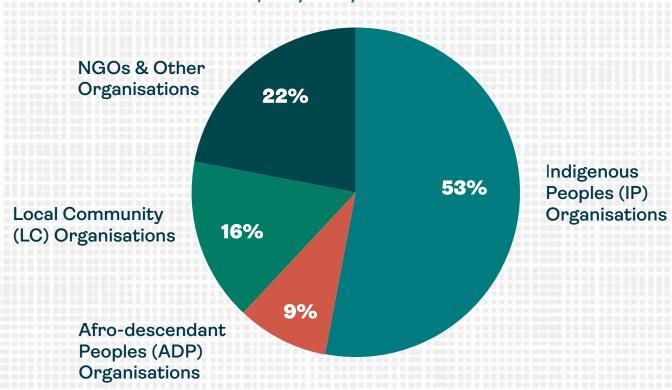


When I joined the Tenure Facility board, I had some doubts about the operating model of handing substantial resources to communities and giving them the freedom to direct them. It was fascinating to me as a human rights activist to see an organisation that believed in self-determination and really trusted people. It was also a bit of a gamble! However, it soon became clear that the model was working — and it sent waves into the donor ecosystem. You can't provide someone with the right to self-determination unless you take a risk."

DR. ALBERT BARUME, OUTGOING TENURE FACILITY BOARD MEMBER AND SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

#### **2024 FUNDING DISBURSEMENTS**

\$29,993,000 USD





## A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE FUNDING APPROACH

The Tenure Facility finance team works closely with our partners to help them navigate donor requirements and strengthen their capacity to manage significant funding.

Capacity levels vary between partners and regions. In Brazil, for example, organisations tend to be more structured due to historical factors, whereas in the DRC, logistical challenges, and remoteness limit organisational capacity. We tailor funding to meet the differing needs of our partners while interfering as little as possible, catering to both donors and partners through innovative approaches and a co-learning model, while also navigating our own growth in the face of a rapidly changing environment.

In practice, this involves simplified grant agreements and partner-centric financial systems, developing a shared approach to ensure robust compliance with both national legislation and our donors' requirements.

Our model is built around supporting grassroots community organisations to lead the tenure strengthening process, ensuring long-term security for their territories, access to resources and

economic activities, and unlocking greater financial independence for their movements. Every project we fund involves Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) consultations. This approach, where decisions and solutions come from the bottom up, can be complex at first. But it also fosters long-term legitimacy and aligns with the grassroots, democratic structure of the majority of our partner organisations.

Ultimately, we hope to inspire other donors to adopt this fit-for-purpose funding approach, in line with our partners' call for direct, large, long-term, and flexible finance.





#### UEFA'S FINANCIAL TRANSFORMATION

UEFA, an Indigenous women's organisation based in South Kivu, DRC, began working with Tenure Facility in 2023. Despite two decades of grassroots work, they faced gaps in their administrative and financial processes that prevented them from diversifying their funding sources. The UEFA leadership team decided to put stronger financial systems in place to ensure the organisation's long-term future.

UEFA received a US\$125,000 grant from Tenure Facility to improve its financial management systems and develop a detailed project proposal. The organisation made notable strides, including implementing accounting software across their offices and developing a financial procedures manual. In the implementation phase (with UEFA receiving an additional US\$820,000 grant), Tenure Facility has supported the organisation with further financial planning workshops, UEFA has also put together a five-year financial plan, which it has used to bolster conversations with other donors. The organisation has now become a knowledge source for other Tenure Facility partners in the region, sharing their insights via learning exchanges.





# OUR SHARED PATH TO SCALE

Securing land rights at scale requires strong representative organisations that have the systems and resources needed to advocate for their members, to access finance, and to achieve real results. That is why, alongside supporting our partners to secure and sustain tenure, we also support territorial funds and connect partners with technical and financial support they need to grow and meet the needs of their constituents.

Tenure Facility is committed to working with traditional communities to scale finance to the levels needed to secure and sustain their rights globally. Over time, our global presence has expanded, and our work has evolved — although our core mission and values have never wavered.

As well as funding projects focused on securing land and forest rights, we also work with partner organisations to strengthen their governance structures, such as decision-making and due diligence processes. This, in turn, allows them to increase their impact,

influence, and independence. The more our partners build their organisational capacity to manage significant funds and access finance directly, the more we take a step back.

Whether they are developing a proposal, accessing large-scale funding for the first time, or sharing their expertise globally, we support our partners at every stage of their individual journeys. While connected by a shared mission to strengthen tenure rights, the stories in this chapter show how every project's path to scale is unique.

#### STARTING THE JOURNEY: **HOW SAAMAKA YOUTH CRAFTED A PROJECT PROPOSAL IN SURINAME**

Every project proposal we receive is the result of months of thoughtful, collaborative effort by traditional community organisations or NGOs.

Take the Saamaka People, one of six Tribal Peoples in Suriname and descendants of Africans who managed to escape slavery. Saamaka culture is deeply connected to the Amazon rainforest.

In October 2023, when the Association of Saamaka Communities (VSG) was getting ready to prepare the Tenure Facility proposal, they called up young Saamaka people from the VSG youth group to take the process into their own hands. This group — 10 enthusiastic Saamaka people between the ages of 22 and 30 with different educational backgrounds and skill sets — first organised in 2022 to support VSG leaders in their fight for land rights and to protect Saamaka territory against deforestation.

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The youths responded with enthusiasm. Travelling to the village of Tutubuka, they spent 10 days crafting a Theory of Change for the proposal and laying the groundwork for a shared vision of the nearto-mid future. The structured process moved through four key stages: group discussion to define a collective vision; identifying pathways and barriers to realising it; exploring activities and projects as solutions; and feedback sessions with VSG Board members, elders, and women to ensure alignment and start the FPIC process (the team consulted and received written consent from - 375 community members from 55 villages). The process ensured that Saamaka communities fully understood the project's scope, objectives and potential impacts before providing their consent.

The end-to-end process served to engage those young people and instil a sense of ownership, not only of the project but also of their collective future as the next generation of Saamaka leaders.



"This process marked the first time in the VSG's project history that a project has been designed in this way: from us, truly for us. The process not only equipped Saamaka youth with valuable project development tools but also empowered them, along with the VSG board members who participated from the start, to fully understand the project and speak about it with confidence."

**HUGO JABINI, SAAMAKA LEADER** AND VSG MANAGING DIRECTOR

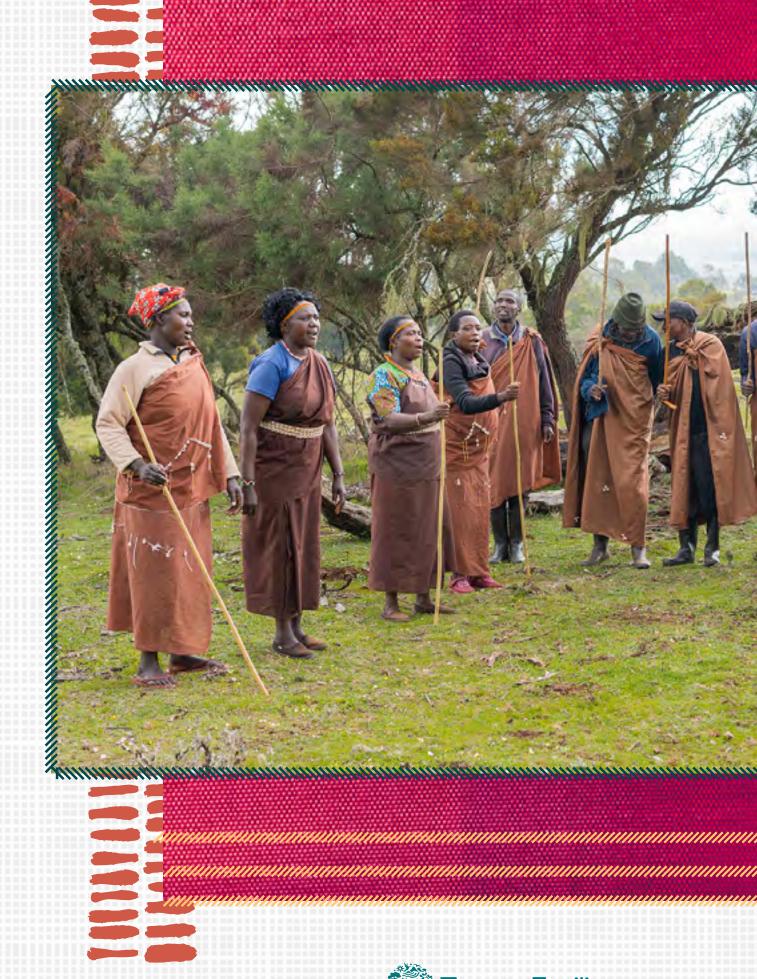
#### DEFINING THE WAY AHEAD: CLAN!'S COMMUNITY-LED GOVERNANCE STRENGTHENING

CLAN! (Community Land Action Now!) is a network of grassroots organisations and NGOs advocating for secure land tenure rights and natural resource management in Kenya. Like most Indigenous and communityled organisations, CLAN! is democratically organised and prioritises the autonomy of the communities it works with by making their voices heard and represented. Because of the diversity of the network, strong governance practices are crucial to ensure direction and decision-making are aligned and representative - which is a great strength when achieved.

In early 2024, CLAN! found itself grappling with governance issues, including trying to reconcile diverse member views on leadership, decision-making and the network's strategic direction.

CLAN! took a two-pronged approach to address these challenges: it worked with Maliasili, an NGO specialising in strengthening governance, while also assembling a taskforce to conduct its own internal review, composed of 10 individuals, some of whom represented different Indigenous groups from across Kenya. While Maliasili conducted stakeholder interviews, the taskforce focused on interpersonal relationships and internal accountability. Together, these processes resulted in a unified set of recommended actions to be presented to network members at CLAN!'s General Assembly.

The experience demonstrated how internal governance challenges, when approached with openness and collaboration, can become opportunities for growth and institutional resilience.



# THE NEXT STAGE IN THE JOURNEY: HOW CAGDFT BROADENED AND DEEPENED ITS IMPACT

Before partnering with Tenure Facility, the Centre for the Support of Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests (CAGDFT), operated as a local NGO with limited resources, focusing on community forest advocacy in the DRC. Tenure Facility provided funding and financial management training that enabled CAGDFT to manage multi-milliondollar grants, strengthen community governance and scale conflict resolution efforts. Five years into our partnership, the organisation is now a national and global leader in community forest governance.

In 2024, the organisation made measurable progress towards securing land tenure rights across 306,263 hectares and contributed to the formal recognition of 166,631 hectares of community forest land across Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu, and Sud Ubangi provinces. It also helped reduce wildfire incidents in Kwango province and drove women's inclusion and Pygmy leadership in forest governance (all community forest governance bodies supported by CAGDFT now include at least three women). These outcomes were a direct result of CAGDFT's focus on building up its institutional capacity — as well as supporting communities to do the same. This transformation has positioned CAGDFT as one of the strongest Indigenous and community land governance organisations in the DRC, with a scalable, long-term rights-based conservation model.



# WHEN LARGE GRANTS SHIFT POWER DYNAMICS ON THE GROUND

One of the most biodiverse places in the world, the Madre de Dios region in Peru is home to 38 Indigenous communities. They are represented by the Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries (FENAMAD), a pioneering Indigenous organisation dedicated to defending the rights and promoting the wellbeing of the region's first inhabitants.

While Tenure Facility has been working with FENAMAD since 2015, funding was previously directed via an NGO, with FENAMAD as a sub-grantee. In 2024, Tenure Facility and FENAMAD shifted to a direct finance model, allowing the organisation to broaden their work with their constituents — but taking on significant funding also had implications for the advocacy landscape in the region.

A national NGO had been working closely with the communities in Madre de Dios for decades and was not convinced that FENAMAD had the capacity to take over its work in the region. The situation threatened

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to turn into a tug of war that could fracture relations between both organisations and the communities they were seeking to support.

As Tenure Facility navigates situations such as these, our role is to be a bridge between our partners and other allies as they work with communities on the ground to find a solution. We try to lead with trust and respect, while giving voice to our partners' perspectives (particularly in situations when Indigenous rights and authority have not been historically and systemically respected). In this case, the communities decided to continue working with the NGO on certain challenges, while also asking FENAMAD to increase its presence across the region.

Although shifting power dynamics are certainly a challenge, when communities' needs remain front and centre, they are also an opportunity for deeper stakeholder collaboration and accelerated impact.



# WHY WE WORK WITH PARTNERS ON COMMUNITY TERRITORIAL FUNDS

Territorial and financial autonomy are deeply interconnected — and both are essential for communities to effectively manage and protect their lands. That is why we support territorial funds — financial mechanisms that provide direct finance to traditional communities to support their self-determined priorities and projects — by channelling funding through them, allowing them to develop and grow.

Territorial funds are bottom-up mechanisms, rather than top-down structures created at the national or regional level. These funds are created in response to the needs and demands of communities on the ground, directing money where it needs to go and enabling local people to take charge of their own development.



#### **HOW THE PODÁALI FUND** IS CREATING FINANCIAL **AUTONOMY IN BRAZIL**

The Podáali Fund is an Indigenousled fund created by the Coordination of Indigenous Organisations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB). It supports It supports Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organisations by creating processes tailored to their specific needs. Much like Tenure Facility, Podáali does not just distribute funds; it also builds the capacity of local organisations by helping them design their own proposals and funding plans. This process requires training, guidance, and hands-on support, not to mention overcoming distance and language

barriers, making it much more than a simple financial transaction. Three out of Podáali's four directors are Indigenous women — an example of inclusive leadership in action.

Tenure Facility's grant to Podáali is more than a regranting mechanism; it is also an investment in the fund's long-term sustainability. It has been used for institutional capacitybuilding (including expanding its human resources and strengthening financial and monitoring systems) and to enhance Podáali's role in advocacy and donor engagement, ensuring the organisation can function effectively as an intermediary Indigenous-led fund.

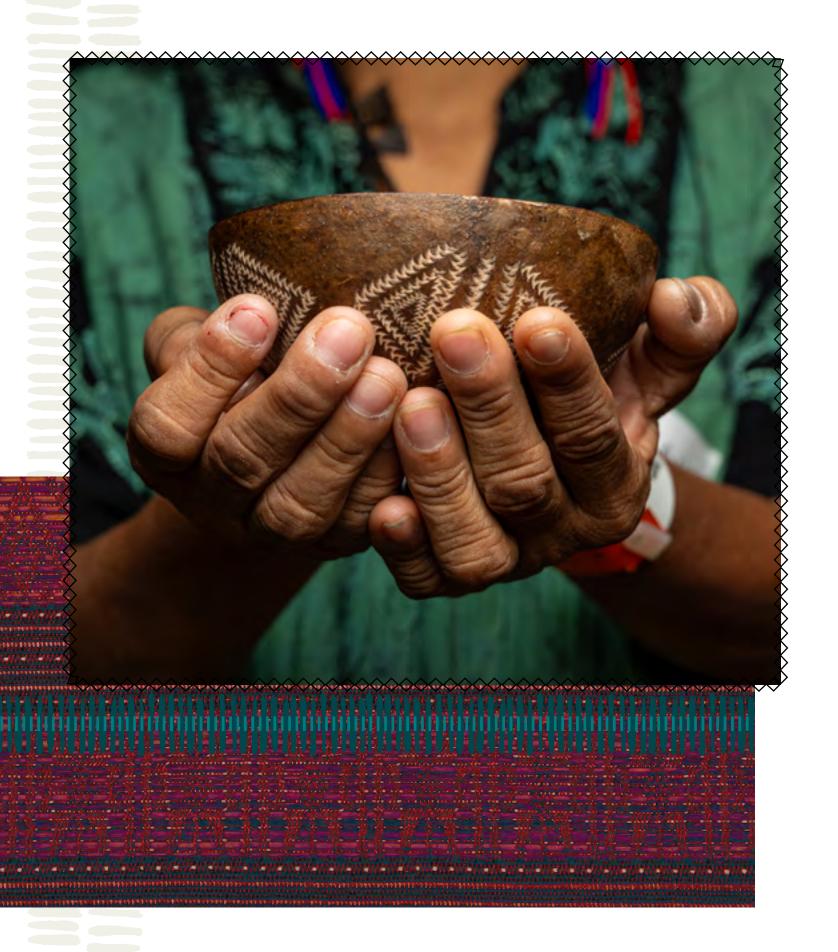


#### **CASH MANAGEMENT IN HIGH-RISK CONTEXTS**

In the DRC, especially in the east, Tenure Facility partners face severe operational challenges due to insecurity and limited banking infrastructure. Many Indigenous and local communities lack access to formal financial systems, forcing partners to rely on cashbased transfers and disbursements to deliver project funds. This creates risks, especially when moving money from place to place. Partners often encounter up to 20 road checkpoints per journey, manned by police, military, and militias, posing risks of intimidation, extortion, and theft.

To better understand these challenges, Tenure Facility surveyed our DRC partners in June 2024. The results were encouraging because partners had not experienced a single major security breach, thanks to strong risk-mitigation strategies, including route planning, intelligence gathering, discreet transport, and staff training in cash handling.

Building on these insights, Tenure Facility adapted its operational guidance and gathered best practices for secure cash disbursement. These now shape both our own financial support systems and partners' capacitybuilding in fragile states.



## LOOKING INWARDS TO MOVE FORWARDS: TENURE FACILITY'S DEVELOPMENT IN 2024

With a stronger, more diverse Tenure Facility team and improved systems and processes, 2024 saw us lay the foundations for the years to come as we support our partners in protecting communities and ecosystems.

In 2024, we deepened our roots and broadened our branches — helping partners strengthen their systems, adopt new tools, grow their networks, and collaborate with governments and allies to influence policy.

Alongside this work we have continued our internal development, grown our team and improved our systems so that we can continue supporting Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and community organisations for as long as they need us.

Just like our partners, we are committed to a continuous process of learning and evolving. We embrace feedback from communities, partners, donors, and other stakeholders, are motivated by our shared successes, and strive to improve our practices and processes.

Below are some highlights from our own internal journey in 2024.

#### **GOVERNANCE**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

We welcomed three new Board members in 2024, all Indigenous women:



**Viviana Figueroa**Omaguaca People,
Argentina



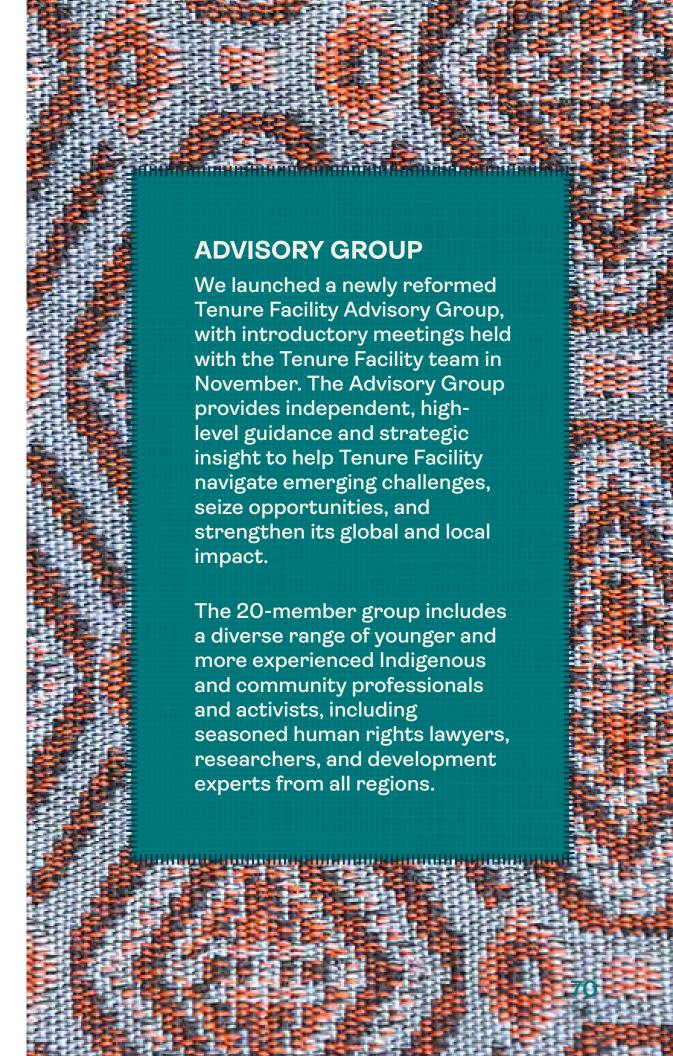
**Lesle Jansen** Khoikhoi People, South Africa



**Jennifer Corpuz**Kankana-ey Igorot People,
Philippines

Additionally, Joan Carling was welcomed as the new Chair of the Board, with Carl Lindgren being appointed Vice-Chair. Joan takes the mantle from Myrna Cunningham, who had been Chair ever since the Interim Board was established in 2016. We are deeply grateful to Myrna for her invaluable wisdom in guiding Tenure Facility through its founding and growth over the past decade.

In December our colleague, leading human rights lawyer Dr. Albert Barume, was appointed as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights on Indigenous Peoples. We cannot think of a better candidate for the position, and while we will miss his sharp intellect on our Board, we are proud to be able to support part of the costs of his mandate.



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#### **BUILDING OUT OUR TEAM**

In 2024, we continued building a stronger, more diverse Tenure Facility team. We recruited staff, management, and Board members from diverse backgrounds, ages, and areas of expertise. We also rolled out a leadership programme to coach staff who had progressed to new roles. At the end of 2024, we had 25 team members in Stockholm and 31 in other locations, mostly in the regions where our projects are based.

We admire and deeply appreciate every team member's contribution, remind them to pace their work, and have committed to making sure that team members have good healthcare and security support and get time off. Team members see the huge sacrifices our partners make to protect their own communities and forests. We try to reciprocate by doing our best, working with respect and gratitude. We are also deeply motivated by our partners' rapid successes, which helps to maintain our spirits and drive us forward when challenges arise.





#### **NEW AND CHANGING TEAM MEMBERS**



Margaret Rugadya was selected to take over from David Kaimowitz as the Chief Programme Officer (CPO) from July 2025. Currently serving as our Regional Coordinator for Africa, she began onboarding for the CPO role in mid-2024. David is transitioning to new coordination responsibilities related to our work in the Amazon Basin and will be based in Latin America.



When our Chief Development Officer (CDO) departed in April, our Executive Director Nonette Royo temporarily took on this task herself. Following an extensive recruitment process supported by Isaacson Miller, we recruited **John Urschel** as our new CDO. John brings extensive experience in private philanthropy and formally joined the team in February 2025.







The DevelopmentUnit has been enriched with a new Development Manager, **Darragh Conway**, who leads the development of proposals and reports, along with **Kaleigh Carlson** and **Isabela Pérez**, who support report writing and communications.





The Programmes Unit recruited two new team members based in Brazil, **Davi Pereira Jr** and **Robervone Nascimento**.





We recruited two new Project Controllers in Peru and Colombia, **Doris Sipan** and **Daniel Carvajal**, who formally started in February 2025.

#### LEARNING AND STRENGTHENING AS WE SCALE

As we develop as an organisation, we continue to improve existing processes and integrate new ones to support our work, without sacrificing our values. Some of our 2024 lessons include:

# STREAMLINING PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND RESULTS TRACKING:

Collecting all relevant project documents and information in a ROOTS online project management system has led to more effective and efficient processes, and we have improved our ability to collect and use spatial data from projects. Crucially, we have also simplified results reporting.

## MANAGING DIVERSE DONOR REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

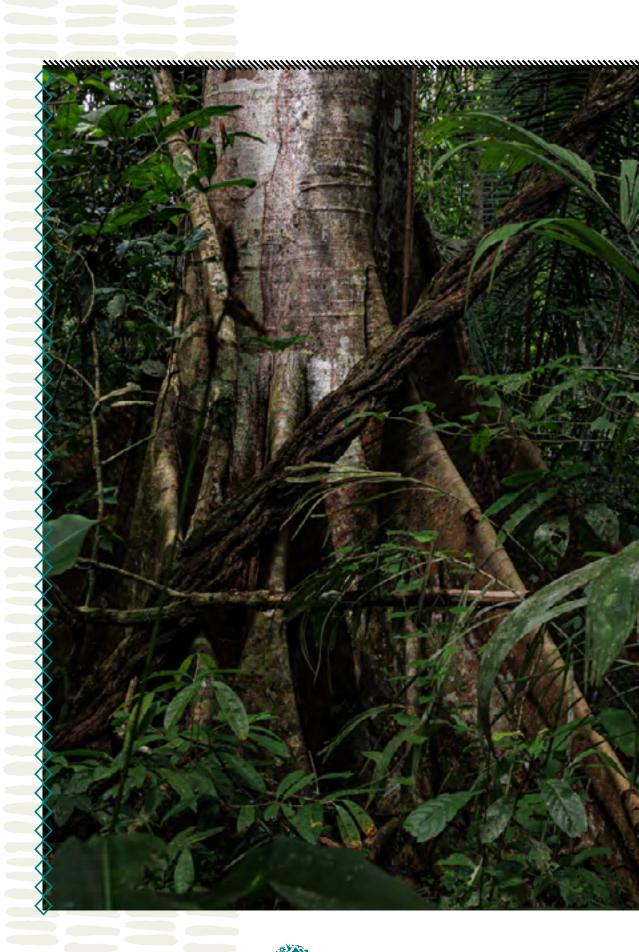
As we grow and diversify our funding, we have had to navigate an increasingly diverse set of donor reporting requirements. This has led us to consolidate our reporting capacities, something we will continue to do in 2025.

# STRENGTHENING OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR A GROWING TEAM:

With our team expanding across both our headquarters in Stockholm and regional locations worldwide, we need to develop systems and practices to ensure smooth operations. In 2024, we updated our Procurement Policy and an IT incident response plan and have trained staff on both.

# ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK IN A HYBRID ENVIRONMENT:

A growing hybrid team places higher demands on our ability to communicate and cultivate teamwork. Through carefully selected online tools, simple mobile apps, and new meeting formats, we are enhancing sharing across the team and ensure decisions are informed by our collective experiences.



#### **FUNDING MILESTONES**

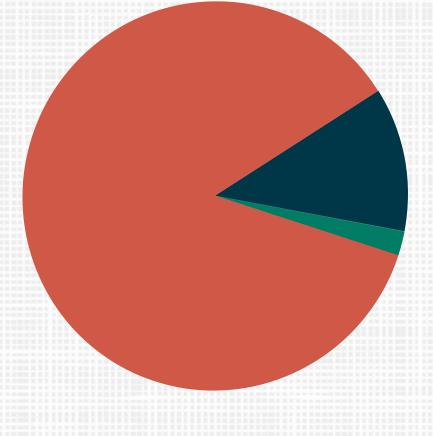
We are deeply grateful to our growing community of donors from around the world, whose commitment is helping to secure land rights and advance climate justice for some of the most marginalised communities on the planet.

Because of the shared belief in our mission our donors showed up big in 2024 — including a landmark commitment from the UK Government to invest up to GB£94 million (around US\$125 million) over six years to strengthen communal tenure security across the Amazon Basin (GB£90 million of which is set to be channelled through Tenure Facility). These achievements reflect the power of collective action. Yet the need remains urgent. Together, we have an extraordinary opportunity to accelerate impact, protect vital ecosystems, and uphold the rights of Indigenous and local communities for generations to come.

# Figure 7 OUR 2024 FUNDING MILESTONES NEW FUNDING COMMITTED IN 2024: USD \$130,989,988



USD \$113,085,900



Commitments from philanthropic donors:

USD \$16,150,000

Other commitments from government donors:

USD \$1,754,088

# OUR WORK IN 2024 WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF:

The Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT)

The Audacious Project

Ballmer Group

Bezos Earth Fund

**Bosch Foundation** 

The Christensen Fund

Crankstart

**ELMA Philanthropies** 

Ford Foundation

Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom

Hampshire Foundation

Lost Horse LLC

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Oak Foundation

Sall Family Foundation

**Skoll Foundation** 

Sobrato Philanthropies

Waverly Street Foundation\*

Younger Family Fund\*

Seven Anonymous Funders

\*New in 2024



## BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES:

Our total budget for 2024 amounted to just under US\$40 million, contributed by two dozen funders. The largest contributions came from the Bezos Earth Fund, Norway's International Climate and Forests Initiative, the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office, and a consortium of 13 private philanthropies supporting our 2021 TED Audacious Award with multi-year commitments.

## STRENGTHENING DONOR CONNECTEDNESS:

We were excited to grow our community of like-minded donors who are eager to engage in online and in-person learning opportunities at fora such as the TED Summit, the Skoll World Forum, the Asia Venture Philanthropy Network Global Conference, and the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum.

#### **NEW FUNDERS:**

Three new funders joined our journey in 2024 — Waverly Street Foundation, Hans Wilsdorf Foundation, and one anonymous funder for Asia.



## GREEN CLIMATE FUND ACCREDITATION:

Green Climate Fund is the world's largest climate fund, mobilising funding at scale to invest in low-emission and climate-resilient development. Our application, initiated in 2020, progressed to the second phase of assessment, positioning us closer to becoming the first organisation focused entirely on the tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Descendant Peoples, and local communities to obtain Fund accreditation. Meanwhile, in parallel, the Fund has approached us for guidance on making funding more accessible to community organisations.

#### **US FUNDING:**

We established the Tenure Facility Fund, a 501(c)(3) organisation to facilitate access to funding sources in the United States. It also serves as the fiscal sponsor for Turning Tides, a new "marine tenure facility" launched in June 2024.

**NAVIGATING CHALLENGES** 

#### **FUNDING**

In times of growing global uncertainty, the role of civil society organisations is more vital than ever. As isolationist policies and authoritarian pressures gain ground — weakening traditional systems of international cooperation — the importance of cross-border solidarity and global partnership becomes even more urgent. Philanthropic funding serves as a lifeline for movement-building, protecting Indigenous Peoples and marginalised communities and countering systemic injustice.

Despite challenges such as shrinking budgets and shifting national priorities, forward-thinking donors must continue to invest in grassroots organisations and locally led solutions. Their support offers hope, fortifying the defence of democratic values, advancing social progress, and driving climate justice at a moment when collective action is the only path forward.

By supporting our work — and, through us, the work of our partners — donors become a critical force for positive change, helping to safeguard fundamental rights, nurture strong communities and shape a more just and sustainable future for all.

PART THREE: ROOTED IN TRUST



As roots become anchored and branches strengthen, we now turn our eyes upward. In this final part, we outline our shared priorities for 2025 and beyond, reaching toward the canopy with purpose, determination, and wisdom learned from the communities we serve.





### **OUR OUTLOOK FOR 2025**

As we look to the future, secure tenure is more critical than ever for global conservation and climate action. 2025 will see our work stretch across land, forest, and sea while pushing to keep community tenure rights at the top of the global agenda.

Tenure Facility is committed to working with our partners to help position them to receive finance from donors directly. In the meantime, there is a clear demand for our role from Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local communities' organisations, as well as from major donors that find it difficult to channel finance directly to grassroots organisations. While that demand exists, so will we.

2030 is on the horizon — the deadline for the Global

Biodiversity Framework targets and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and one of the key target dates for reducing global emissions under the Paris Agreement. Ongoing funding is essential for us to support our partners in this crucial moment, as well as to showcase the connection between territorial tenure rights and climate and biodiversity goals via results, storytelling, and advocacy.

Here are some of our core focuses for the year ahead.



## DEEPENING OUR WORK IN THE AMAZON BASIN

Our regional work across the Amazon is likely to be impacted by large new additional UK Government funding for the Amazon Basin approved in October 2024. We plan to establish an Amazon Basin regional programme within the broader Latin America regional team and to expand the Tenure Facility team in the region, focusing on initiatives to strengthen and influence regional-level platforms, narratives, policies, learning and funding.

## COP30 AND A NEW FUNDING PLEDGE

This year we are prioritising efforts to promote a new funding pledge for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' forest tenure to provide continuity to the historic US\$1.7 billion pledge made in Glasgow in 2021, which expires this year. This effort will be integrally linked to broader work to ensure a high profile for Indigenous and community issues and concerns in the lead-up to and during COP30 in Brazil, including promoting our partner activities in the region.

#### **GROWING OUR FOOTPRINT IN ASIA**

We are preparing to expand into the Mekong region in Asia, including sourcing a new project in Cambodia and looking into potential tenure projects in Burma.

### CARBON AND BIODIVERSITY FINANCE INITIATIVE

Our new Carbon and Biodiversity Finance Initiative (CBFin) will help partners navigate the opportunities and risks presented by carbon markets, biodiversity markets, and other payments for environmental services. Our initial focus will be on partners in Africa, but we will soon also be rolling the initiative out to meet the needs of partners across other regions on this issue.

#### STRENGTHENING MARINE TENURE RIGHTS

Along the world's coasts of oceans, estuaries, lakes, and rivers, local communities, smallscale fishers, and Indigenous Peoples have relationships with aquatic environments and the resources they hold. Tenure over aquatic and shoreline spaces provides the foundation for livelihoods, food security, cultural identity, and environmental stewardship. Yet rights often go unrecognised, undermining local environmental stewardship, locally led climate action, and sustainable food systems. Through our fiscal sponsorship of Turning Tides, we are actively exploring how to strengthen the legal recognition of marine tenure, unlock funding for shoreline and marine rights, and facilitate knowledge exchanges between land and marine-tenure-focused partners to develop scalable, community-driven solutions.

### **EXPANDING SUPPORT**BEYOND FORESTS

While donor attention often centres on the world's three major tropical forest basins (Amazon, Congo, and Borneo-Mekong-Southeast Asia), we are also actively seeking donors who recognise the importance of protecting a broader range of critical ecosystems. Our partners work in savannas, arid and semi-arid zones, pastoral systems, and tropical forests outside the major basins — landscapes that are essential for biodiversity, livelihoods, and climate resilience. Strengthening tenure and territorial governance is key for their protection and sustainable management. We invite donors to join us in filling this critical gap and expanding the reach and impact of their contributions.





## MYRNA'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

As we look to the future, let us not forget to celebrate how far we have come.

What would it look like to have an organisation that worked alongside Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities, rather than pushing an agenda from above? One that channelled significant funding to them to direct as they saw fit, without complex restrictions or mandates? One that embodied the values of reciprocity, trust and humility while supporting these communities' right to self-determination, to govern over their territories, and to demand direct access to resources?

Ten years ago, I was part of an Advisory Group formed by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) to address these questions. The Tenure Facility was our answer.

After a decade as Chair of Tenure Facility's Board of Directors, I stepped down from the post in December 2024.

When I look back on my years as Chair, I see a path marked by many meaningful milestones. Becoming an independent organisation from

RRI. Seeing the results of our six pilot projects, which proved the feasibility of our strategy and model. A project in Liberia that showed how traditional knowledge and mapping technology could be brought together to advance the recognition and appropriation of local resources. Working with the National Coordination of Indigenous People in Panama to strengthen their governance, leading to state recognition for the Nassau territory and its customary authority. Supporting land rights for Indigenous peoples in Belize — a country that constitutionally denies their existence. Working with the many remarkable women who have overcome hurdles to take up leadership roles within their communities. Receiving the TED Audacious grant, giving us the flexibility to grow and channel even more resources to Indigenous-led organisations. And so many more.

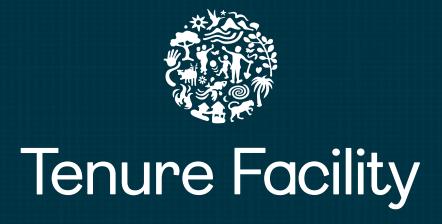
There have been challenges, too. Governments are beginning to formally recognise Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities' vital role in mitigating climate change and protecting biodiversity. Yet this recognition is often framed too narrowly, with a forest-centric lens that fails to acknowledge the other ecosystems – including deserts and seas – which Indigenous Peoples have stewarded for thousands of years, and which also have an important role to play as a climate and biodiversity solution.



When Indigenous Peoples have control over their territory, and that control is recognised and respected by governments, then our model will no longer be needed. For Tenure Facility, true success means writing ourselves out of the story.

How do we get to that point? By equipping traditional communities with the funding, structures, and knowledge they need to advance their land rights. Leading by example, so that other funders accept and replicate our model. Championing inclusive leadership and ensuring the voices of women and young people are recognised and respected. Educating governments and building alliances with like-minded organisations across the world to create a powerful wave of change.

My time as Chair has been an honour and a pleasure. I have loved working alongside Indigenous and non-Indigenous Board members of diverse backgrounds, respectful of each other and eager to share expertise as we strive towards a common goal. Now, the time has come for someone else to step into the role, just as a new generation of young Indigenous leaders is taking up the fight for collective tenure rights. These young people are proud of who they are — of their elders, their knowledge system, and their heritage. They lead not only with strength and vision, but also with joy. And, even as we contemplate the challenges and opportunities ahead, it is that joy that we must remember — the importance of pausing for a moment to celebrate how far we have come.



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