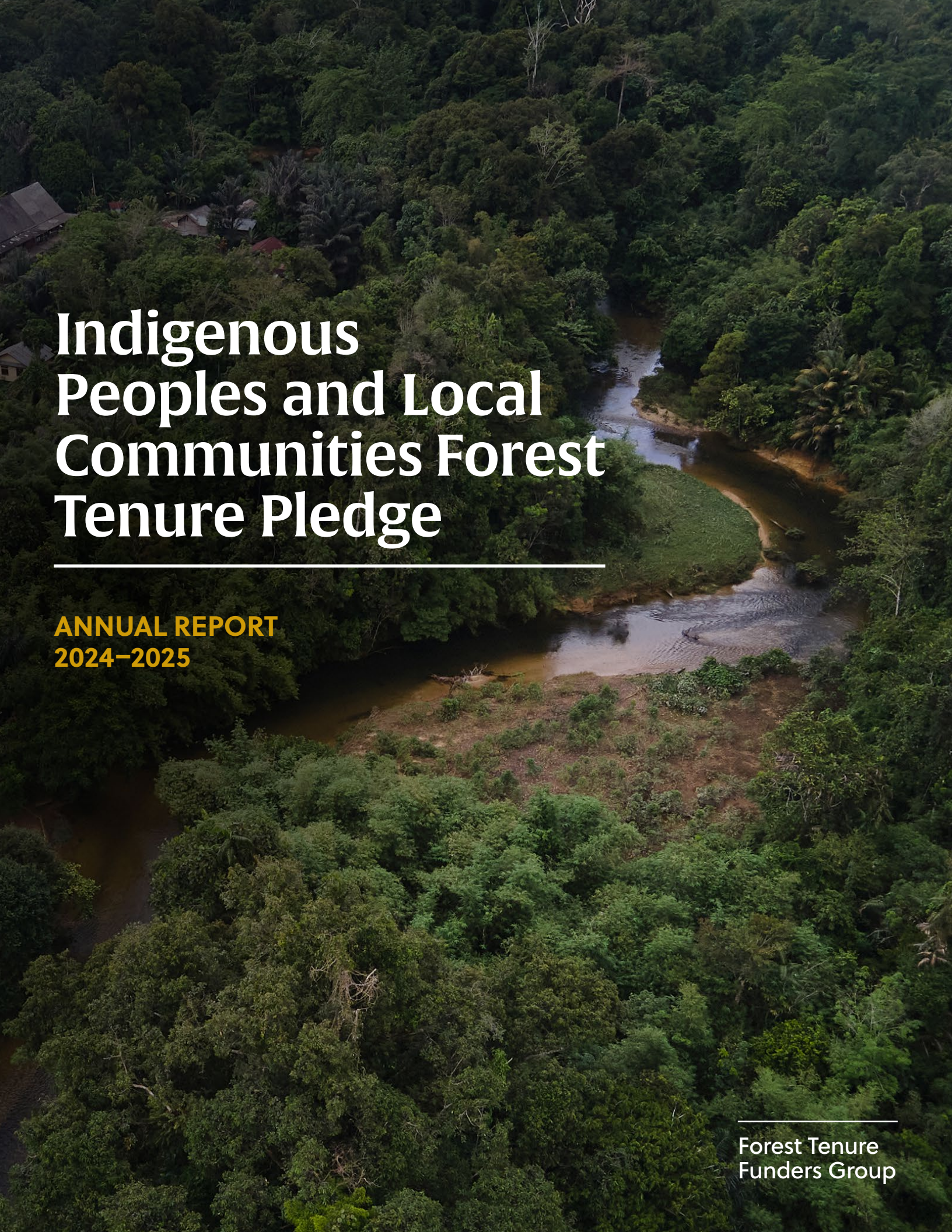

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge

ANNUAL REPORT 2024–2025

Forest Tenure Funders Group

Acknowledgements

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Opening Statement

Foreword from CEO Carla Fredericks on behalf of The Christensen Fund, 2025 Co-Chair of the Forest Tenure Funders Group

As we reach the conclusion of the COP26 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge, I write with both pride in our collective achievements and a deep sense of responsibility for the path ahead. Serving as co-chair of the Forest Tenure Funders Group in 2025, alongside our German government partners, has been an honor and a powerful reminder that meaningful change requires not only financial commitments but fundamental shifts in how we engage with Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

This report's data demonstrate the tangible impact of our collective commitment. In 2024, pledge signatories provided **almost $527 million in aligned funding**. Over the first four years—from 2021 to 2024—we provided **$1.86 billion in funding, exceeding our $1.7 billion commitment**. While the pledge concludes at the end of 2025, there will be one more year of reporting. I remain encouraged that our collective financial commitments are generating meaningful impact for communities and the planet.

Progress and Persistent Challenges

This report documents significant achievements. In a four-year period, we have seen unprecedented recognition of Indigenous territories. We have seen the creation of important legal frameworks to advance tenure rights. And, we have seen growing acknowledgment that Indigenous Peoples and local communities play a vital role in protecting the ecosystems and biodiversity essential to the planet's longevity. Funding committed through the pledge has supported these advances and demonstrated that targeted investment in tenure security yields measurable results.

Still, we need to evolve. Many of our Indigenous partners have emphasized their preference for more direct funding relationships and expressed frustration with intermediary structures; these can slow decision-making and dilute community priorities. We recognize that while traditional funding mechanisms may be rooted in good intentions, they can create barriers that prevent resources from reaching the guardians of the world's essential ecosystems.

We also must acknowledge that forest protection is increasingly dangerous. Environmental defenders—often Indigenous leaders and community members—are subjected to threats, violence, and harassment. Tenure security is an important step—and one that provides important legal protections—but defenders will never be truly safe until we address the structural challenges and power imbalances that put them at risk.

The Path Ahead

The Pledge members remain committed to supporting Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant peoples, and local communities who protect the forests our collective future depends on. We believe that the next phase of international support must include braver, more ambitious financial commitments and a more transformative approach to partnership.

The climate crisis demands urgency, but it also requires us to right our relationships. Indigenous Peoples have been protecting forests for millennia—and long before international pledges or funding mechanisms. They have deep cultural, spiritual, and practical connections to their territories. As funders, our role is to support and amplify this work—not to direct or control it.

As co-chair of the Forest Tenure Funders Group, The Christensen Fund thanks Ford Foundation for its unwavering support and partnership, including their vital contributions to writing this 2024–2025 report. We are also deeply grateful to the diverse coalition of public and philanthropic organizations within the Forest Tenure Funders Group. Most importantly, we express gratitude to the Indigenous Peoples and forest community leaders whose advocacy has shaped our learning.

As we look ahead to COP30 and beyond, I am optimistic about the potential for even more meaningful collaboration. The world's most biodiverse and climate-critical ecosystems, and all of us who depend on them, deserve nothing less than our most thoughtful, respectful, and transformative efforts.

Carla Fredericks
CEO, The Christensen Fund

Executive Summary

At COP26 in 2021, bilateral and philanthropic donors committed $1.7 billion over five years (2021–2025) to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' efforts to advance their land tenure rights and forest guardianship. This report presents progress through the Pledge's fourth year. More specifically, it provides an update on funding delivered to date; highlights Pledge-supported approaches and innovations; and distills lessons that are shaping the next phase of collaboration. The final report will be released in 2026.

Progress to Date

By the end of 2024, Pledge donors had provided **$1.86 billion in Pledge-aligned funding**, exceeding the original $1.7 billion target with one year of reporting remaining. In 2024, donors reported a collective $527 million in funding towards their shared commitment.

Resources are being delivered in significant ways. Highlights from 2024 funding include:

- 31% of Pledge funding supported global work, while 69% supported projects with a regional focus. For regional projects, Latin America received the largest portion of funding (58%), followed by Africa (23%), and Asia (18%). Asia's funding nearly doubled from 2023, though average grant sizes remained smaller than those made in Latin America.

- The largest funding share continued to support territorial management and strengthening tenure security (31%) and sustainable forest management and forest-based livelihood strategies (37%). Together, these two categories comprised more than two-thirds of all Pledge-aligned funding, consistent with prior years.

- Direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations reached 7.6% in 2024—over $39 million in total—compared to just 2.9% in 2021. There was a slight percentage decline from 2023, which can be partly attributed to an increase in bilateral reporting volume. Philanthropic direct funding rose to 34% in 2024 (up from 27% in 2023 and 3.8% in 2021).

- Broader donor support and more detailed reporting practices increased the number of Indigenous and local community organizations reported to have received funding—from 22 in 2021 to 112 in 2024.

- Projects with a gender focus have been better prioritized and integrated into FTFG members' work than in previous years; 14% of 2024 funding had gender equality as a principal objective, and 52% of funding listed it as a secondary focus.

- Funding targeting youth remained low, with less than 1% of 2024 funding designating this group as a primary target, though 28% of funding included youth as a secondary focus.

Key Findings

The 2024 results confirm that the Pledge has surpassed its financial target, but the findings also reveal important shifts and persistent gaps. Geographically, Latin America continued to receive the largest share of Pledge-aligned funding, followed by Africa, while Asia nearly doubled its share compared to 2023. This is an important change. Historically, funding patterns have not reflected that Asia is home to the world's largest Indigenous population. At the same time, the concentration of resources in the Amazon, Congo Basin, and Borneo-Mekong reflects donors' focus on globally significant tropical forests, but leaves critical ecosystems in regions like Mesoamerica with a smaller share of funding despite growing pressures.

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Photo by Kynan Tegar / If Not Us Then Who

Thematic allocations show that most funding continues to support territorial management, strengthened tenure security, and sustainable forest-based livelihoods. These practical, community-led approaches are complemented by initiatives advancing tenure policy reform, formal rights recognition, and international advocacy, which are smaller in share but often embedded within broader territorial and livelihood programs. This two-tracked approach underscores why it is important to combine national- and international-level with local implementation.

Funding pathways also reveal both progress and limitations. Direct funding to Indigenous and local community organizations has increased since the 2021 baseline, constituting 7.6% of 2024 funding—a slight decrease from 2023—with philanthropic donors driving much of this growth. In contrast, bilateral donors continue to channel the majority of funds through governments and multilaterals. Encouragingly, Indigenous and community-led funds and networks are playing a larger role in facilitating direct funding, and the number of organizations supported has expanded significantly.

While gender is increasingly integrated across donor portfolios—with over half of projects now including gender objectives—relatively few initiatives are designed with women's leadership as a central focus. Youth remain even less visible: Less than 1% of projects are designed with youth as the primary target. There is a missed opportunity to support the next generation of land and forest guardians, whose leadership will be critical to sustaining intergenerational knowledge and advancing climate and biodiversity action.

Emerging Lessons

Four years into the Pledge, several lessons are clear. Direct funding pathways are expanding, with Indigenous and local community funds demonstrating that it is possible to deliver resources in flexible, timely, and accountable ways. At the same time, systemic reforms remain essential: National-level changes in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, and Colombia underscore that community action must be matched with enabling laws and policies.

New research continues to confirm that securing land tenure rights is both a matter of justice and one of the most effective climate and biodiversity strategies. Yet, the hard truth is that land and environmental defenders continue to face disproportionate risks, with many Indigenous and community leaders subjected to harassment, violence, and death for their work. Funding must acknowledge these realities, commit to advancing rights recognition, and provide safe, sustained support for frontline advocates.

Finally, the Pledge highlights the value of collaboration. Through the FTFG, donors have shared data, aligned approaches, and engaged with Indigenous and local community partners in meaningful ways; such progress would not have been possible with donors operating in isolation.

Looking Ahead

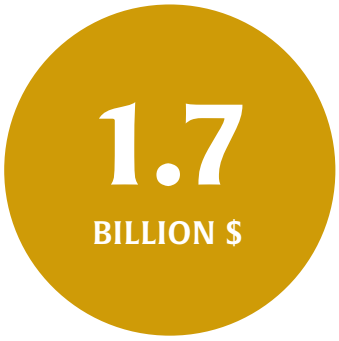
As the Pledge enters its final months, donors are examining achievements and shortcomings and addressing persistent funding gaps. Discussions are underway to launch a renewed commitment at COP30 in Belém, Brazil. While the design—and relevant funding commitments—is still being developed, there is broad agreement that the next Pledge phase must emphasize financial ambition and measurable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities and expand the scope beyond forests to include other critical ecosystems.

SECTION 1

Introduction

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Four Years Since the COP26 Pledge



At COP26 in 2021, bilateral and philanthropic donors announced a $1.7 billion[1] pledge over five years (2021–2025) to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' (IPs and LCs)[2] forest tenure and rights. The COP26 Pledge recognized the centrality of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land and forest rights in advancing climate and biodiversity goals, and delivering on global targets such as 30x30. It aligns with broader commitments including the Global Forest Finance Pledge (GFFP) and the Congo Basin Pledge (CBP), which also support forest conservation and climate change mitigation,[3] as well as the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

This report presents progress through the Pledge's fourth year. It provides an update on funding delivered to date, highlights Pledge-supported approaches and innovations, and distills lessons that are shaping the next phase of collaboration. The final report for the COP26 Pledge will be released in 2026.

BOX 1

About the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG)

The Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) convenes the 25 bilateral and philanthropic donors who are part of the COP26 IP and LC Pledge. Together, we committed to provide $1.7 billion by December 2025 to help advance IP and LC land tenure rights, their role in sustainable forest management, and IP- and LC-led conservation efforts in ODA-eligible tropical forest countries. The COP26 Pledge is not an independent fund and does not have a central allocation mechanism. Each donor operates independently, funding activities according to their individual mandates and priorities. The Pledge includes both allocated and unallocated funding, which means that not all pledged funding will support new initiatives. All funds counted towards the Pledge were spent starting in the beginning of 2021.

1 All report amounts are in USD unless otherwise indicated

2 We use the terms "Indigenous Peoples and local communities" and "IPs and LCs" to refer to self-identified Indigenous Peoples, as well as other self-identified territorial communities living in and managing forest ecosystems. Since both are identified in the FTFG Pledge scope, we often refer to these groups together in our reporting. However, we recognize that Indigenous Peoples have histories, challenges, and sets of rights that are distinct from other territorial communities. Additionally, while this language is consistent with the Pledge text, many donors also support Afro-descendant communities, Quilombolas, ribeirinhos, and other traditional peoples living in and around forests. The term "local communities" may also include these groups.

3 The Forest Tenure Pledge, GFFP, and CBP are linked pledges. All three recognize IPs and LCs as important forest guardians. When donor funding pledged under the GFFP or the CBP also contributes to the IP and LC Pledge objectives, it may be reported under multiple pledges. See **Appendix 1** for additional information.

Transparency, Accountability, and the Value of Collaboration

The Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) has been the platform for Pledge implementation since 2021. Since then, the FTFG has published an annual report to track progress, share financial data, and highlight both achievements and challenges. Signatories disburse funds according to their own mandates and priorities, but the FTFG is committed to this collective reporting mechanism to remain transparent and accountable and share information with partners and rightsholders.

In addition to transparency, the FTFG fosters collaboration and peer learning. The group serves as a platform for 25 bilateral and philanthropic donors to exchange knowledge, identify funding overlaps and gaps, and discuss evolving challenges in supporting Indigenous Peoples' rights, biodiversity conservation, and climate change efforts. It also provides a space for dialogue with Indigenous and community organizations and allied platforms such as the Forests and Climate Leaders Partnership and the Path to Scale Network. By creating a shared forum for learning and accountability, the FTFG helps cement the importance of funding tenure within donor institutions and keeps global attention on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

BOX 2

Pledge signatories and Forest Tenure Funders Group members

Federal Republic of Germany
Kingdom of Norway
Kingdom of the Netherlands
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America[4]

Children's Investment Fund Foundation
The Christensen Fund
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Ford Foundation
Good Energies Foundation
Oak Foundation
Sobrato Philanthropies
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Protecting Our Planet Challenge[5]
- Arcadia
- Bezos Earth Fund
- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Bobolink Foundation
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- International Conservation Fund of Canada
- Nia Tero
- Rainforest Trust
- Re:wild
- Rob Walton Foundation
- Wyss Foundation

4 The United States signed the COP26 Pledge, but stopped participating when USAID was closed in 2025.
5 The Protecting Our Planet Challenge (POP) members signed the Pledge as a group.

Emerging Lessons

After four years of implementation, several lessons stand out:

- **Direct funding pathways are expanding:** Territorial and pooled funds demonstrate how resources can be channeled in ways that strengthen community priorities and governance systems.
- **Policy reforms enable scale:** Tenure recognition advances in Colombia and the DRC—alongside the 2024 launch of the UK's Land Facility—show that national-level reform is essential to sustain and expand community rights.
- **IP and LC rights are central:** The Pledge spotlights the need to ensure IPs and LCs have secure rights to their lands and forests, while recognizing the powerful role they play in preserving forests and biodiversity. It also strives to elevate the leadership of women, youth, and other historically excluded groups.
- **Collaboration is key:** The Pledge's joint funding, data-sharing, and communications have created momentum that extends beyond individual donor actions.

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Global Context for Forest Tenure and Indigenous Rights

The Pledge is part of a broader global shift to recognize Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure rights. In recent years, several countries have advanced important legal and policy reforms. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a July 2025 landmark land-use planning law strengthens inclusive, community-centered land governance. In Colombia, Indigenous Territorial Entities (ITEs) recognize Indigenous communities as formal, self-governing entities with administrative authority, with processes underway to formalize governance over almost 18 million hectares—40% of the Colombian Amazon.[6] After years of delay, the Brazilian government has resumed the demarcation of Indigenous lands; since 2023, more than 800,000 hectares have been approved as officially protected Indigenous territory.[7] In Peru, 37 land titles were secured in the Amazon, from June 2023 to May 2024, safeguarding Indigenous Peoples' rights in record time.[8] Indonesia has expanded rights under its social forestry framework, broadening recognition of customary governance systems. While this is an important step to advance IP and LC rights, much more needs to be done; I**ndigenous Peoples and local communities still lack legal rights to much of the land they occupy and manage**.[9]

Alongside these legal and policy advances, financing pathways are also evolving. Indigenous and local community funds and pooled mechanisms—including Fundo Podáali, Nusantara Fund, Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, and the REPALEAC Fund—are demonstrating how resources can be channeled more directly to rightsholders, especially when they are supported by donor investments in flexible, long-term funding. While these mechanisms signal a shift toward community-led financial governance, demand still far exceeds supply. For example, a recent baseline study across Asia documented that Indigenous organizations had more than $43 million in unmet funding needs,[10] and a report on women's organizations highlighted low annual budgets, minimal core support, and reliance on short-term grants and volunteer labor.[11]

6 Rainforest Foundation Norway (2025). Historic result for Indigenous local governments in Colombia. https://www.regnskog.no/en/news/historic-result-for-indigenous-local-governments-in-colombia

7 The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2025). *The Indigenous World 2025: Brazil*. https://iwgia.org/en/brazil/5726-iw-2025-brazil.html

8 Vasquez and Pineda (2024). Record number of Indigenous land titles granted in Peru via innovative process (commentary). *Mongabay*. https://news.mongabay.com/2024/09/record-number-of-indigenous-land-titles-granted-in-peru-via-innovative-process-commentary/

9 Rights and Resources Initiative (2023). *Who Owns the World's Land?* https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Who-Owns-the-Worlds-Land_Final-EN.pdf

10 IPAS Fund (2025). *IPAS Fund Baseline Survey: Funding Realities of Indigenous Peoples in Asia*. https://ipasfund.org/ipas-fund-baseline-survey-funding-realities-of-indigenous-peoples-in-asia/

11 Rights and Resources Initiative and Women in Global South Alliance (2025). *Is Global Funding Reaching Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and Local Community Women? Experiences from the Women in Global South Alliance (WiGSA)*. https://rightsandresources.org/publication/wigsa-funding-report-2025/

In recent years, several important studies have bolstered the evidence base for community stewardship. A 2023 study found that secure tenure in the Brazilian Amazon led to reduced deforestation and higher forest regeneration.[12] A groundbreaking 2025 Nature article found that Afro-descendants' lands in the Amazon—these cover 9.9 million hectares across Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Suriname—experience up to 55% lower deforestation rates than similar control sites nearby; they also safeguard globally significant biodiversity and secure irrecoverable carbon.[13] While these are positive developments, there is also cause for concern. Global Witness and other monitors continue to report that land and environmental defenders face disproportionate risks, with many Indigenous and community leaders being subjected to harassment, violence, and death.[14]

These findings reinforce that secure rights for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities (IPs, LCs, and ADs)[15] are integral to the pursuit of justice and essential to achieving the Paris Agreement, the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the safety and resilience of climate and biodiversity frontline defenders.

Looking Ahead

As the Pledge enters its final months, donors are focused on highlighting achievements, addressing gaps, and discussing the launch of a renewed pledge at COP30 in Brazil. The next pledge is still being developed, but there is broad agreement that sustaining this funding and extending the commitment beyond a single financial headline is critical. The emphasis is three-fold: advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities; create a broader vision of ecosystem stewardship that includes forests alongside other critical, land-based ecosystems; and avoid spreading resources too thinly to achieve impact.

This report serves as an accountability exercise and a moment for reflection. It documents how far we have come in four years and provides a foundation to consider how lessons can inform the next pledge and deliver even greater impact.

12 Baragwanath *et al.* (2023). Collective property rights lead to secondary forest growth in the Brazilian Amazon. *PNAS* 120(22). https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2221346120

13 Sangat *et al.* (2025). Afro-descendant lands in South America contribute to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. *Communications Earth & Environment* 6(458). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43247-025-02339-5

14 Global Witness. (2024). *Missing Voices*. https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/missing-voices/

15 Donors use varying terms that include "people of African descent," "Afro-descendant peoples," and "Afro-descendants." We use the term "Afro-descendant communities" because it is consistent with how many of our members and partners speak about their work or self-identify. At the same time, we recognize that there is no consensus on this term and that some donors also believe that "local communities" is inclusive of Afro-descendants.

SECTION 2

Pledge Funding Progress

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

This report covers donor progress—from January to December 2024—towards the Pledge's overall $1.7 billion commitment. The data were analyzed in 2025. The Pledge period concludes in December 2025, with final year funding to be reported in 2026.

Methodology

Each Pledge signatory provided a list of 2024 calendar year Pledge-aligned funding, compiled and coded in a common format.[16] The data were then analyzed in the aggregate to produce findings. In line with past practice, the FTFG does not publish information about individual members' Pledge commitments, allocations, or grant recipients. Some members publish separate and more detailed information about their Pledge commitment progress.

Donors use different language and terms to describe their support for this work. To ensure consistency, we apply a set of key definitions to guide donor data collection. Appendix 1 includes definitions in our reporting template such as "percent pledge-aligned," "direct support," and "percentage reaching Indigenous Peoples and local communities in ways they can influence and control." Despite different direct funding approaches, these definitions provide a common ground for data reporting and help us analyze the aggregated information.

We understand that many aspects of funding cannot be captured solely through quantitative information. Section 3 contains case studies that highlight examples of promising Pledge-supported work. We also address potential overlapping of funds and explain how we manage this in Appendix 1.

BOX 3

Pledge Commitments, Disbursements, and Implementation

As discussed in previous annual reports, the COP26 announcement of $1.7 billion of financing from 2021–2025 included different types of funding. Some Pledge-aligned funds support initiatives designed before the COP26 announcement but not disbursed until the Pledge period began (see Box 1). Additionally, due to the varying funding practices of philanthropic and bilateral donors, annual report figures include disbursements, formal allocations, and commitments. While all projects reported on have been formally committed and are being actively implemented, some funds are for long-term projects; in this case, partners will continue to disburse Pledge-reported funds beyond the Pledge period. Not all reported funds have been fully disbursed to their ultimate recipients, particularly in the case of support to multilateral trust funds or regranting mechanisms.

16 Several FTFG members did not report 2024 data, including some members of the Protecting Our Planet Challenge—which reports as a group—and Sobrato Philanthropies. Additionally, due to the 2025 dissolution of USAID, we were unable to include the agency's 2024 figures even though relevant funding was committed and disbursed throughout 2024 and in early 2025. Submissions also included Pledge-aligned funding from 2021–2023 that was not previously reported and amendments to previous grants.

Progress Overview

In 2024, Pledge donors provided[17] around $527 million[18] to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land tenure rights and forest guardianship. **This brings the total funding over the Pledge's first four years to $1.86 billion**. Pledge donors have met their commitment target, with one year of reporting remaining. Projects reported under the COP26 Pledge may continue to disburse funds after the Pledge's conclusion.[19] Beyond the headline figure, the funding composition continues to evolve each year. In 2024, bilateral donors provided 80% of funds, an increasing share, while philanthropic donor funding decreased compared to prior years.[20]

Figure 1: Yearly Progress towards the $1.7 Billion Target

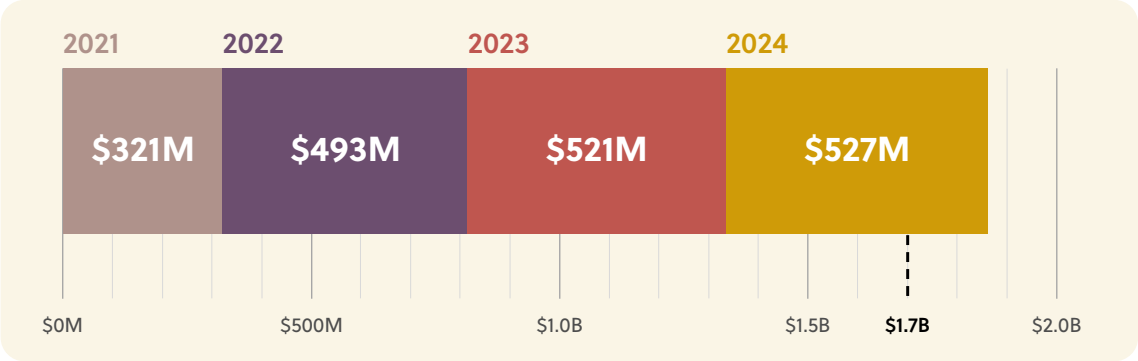


Table 1: 2021–2024 Pledge Funding[21]

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Cumulative
Total bilateral donor funding	$178,913,205	$331,540,695	$369,897,669	$423,316,735	**$1,303,668,304**
Total private donor funding	$142,341,542	$161,465,741	$150,954,869	$103,457,971	**$558,220,123**
Annual total	$321,254,747	$493,006,435	$520,852,538	$526,774,706	**$1,861,888,426**
Percentage of pledge total	19%	29%	31%	31%	**110%**

17 Totals provided include disbursements and formal allocations and commitments. For philanthropies, multi-year grants are considered disbursed once a grant agreement has been signed. In this report, and in other Pledge discussions, we use "funding" and related terms to refer both to allocated and disbursed funds.

18 Some bilateral donors report funds that are formally allocated and undergoing implementation but are not yet fully disbursed; $70.2 million of 2024 Pledge funding was reported as "committed" or "commissioned" funds, while the remainder is disbursements. The 2024 total figure also includes approximately $63.3 million in funds disbursed or committed in prior Pledge years that were not previously counted. These funds are also included in the disaggregated figures below.

19 Due to multi-year grant agreements and bilateral funding for long-term initiatives, payments may extend beyond the Pledge period. Disbursements made after 2025 for commitments counted in the COP26 Pledge will not be eligible to count towards future Pledge-related commitments.

20 This change is due to several factors. First, the vast majority of funds not counted from previous years (see footnote 18) were reported by bilateral donors, artificially inflating their total. Second, several factors, detailed in the yearly progress discussion section, may have led to a decrease in philanthropic funding.

21 Values may not sum to total due to rounding. We have removed $375,000 from 2021 figures and $951,504 from 2022 figures due to potential USAID double-reporting, which could not be verified.

Discussion: Yearly Progress

Annual Pledge-aligned reporting totals continued to rise through 2024, with growth driven primarily by bilateral donors. Philanthropic donor funding declined compared to earlier years, in part because several philanthropies structured their COP26 Pledge commitments as front-loaded, one-time initiatives. Many of these grants were fully counted in the first and second year, which creates a natural tapering in later years. In addition, most philanthropic grants are typically reported in full when awarded—even if they are disbursed over multiple years—which creates variation across reporting cycles.

In line with our annual reports, the global funding trajectory is clear: Funding for IP and LC forest and land tenure rights and guardianship has increased since the Pledge's inception. An updated analysis analysis[22] by the Rights and Resources Initiative and Rainforest Foundation Norway found that financing for IP and LC tenure rights and land guardianship from 2021–2024 has increased 46% from the previous four-year period, with the majority of this increase attributable to FTFG members.[23] This underscores the catalytic effect of a collective donor commitment.

The same research also highlights a sobering reality. While the proportion of climate development aid supporting IP, LC, and AD tenure rights and land guardianship has increased moderately since 2020, it remains less than 1% of total flows. The share of philanthropic climate funding going to this work is larger—4.8%—but is smaller in scale. Funding levels remain insufficient to achieve the 2030 global climate and biodiversity targets. Moreover, the shuttering of USAID and a decline in overall annual funding from a 2021 peak have widened the gap.[24]

Taken together, the data demonstrate that the COP26 Pledge has succeeded in increasing resources for tenure rights and land guardianship, but sustaining progress will require renewed ambition. In the context of declining foreign aid, it is critical that future pledges expand momentum, ensuring that the long-term work of securing tenure rights is adequately resourced and recognized as a cornerstone of climate and biodiversity strategies.

22 This research covers all land-based ecosystems and has a broader scope than the COP26 Pledge. The previous analysis, released in 2024, focused on forest ecosystems and showed a similar trend.

23 Rights and Resources Initiative and Rainforest Foundation Norway (2025). *State of Funding for Tenure Rights and Land Guardianship: Donor Funding for Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Afro-Descendant Peoples* (2011–2024).

24 The report methodology, which only includes disbursements and draws from publicly available data, differs from that of this report and findings may therefore not entirely align.

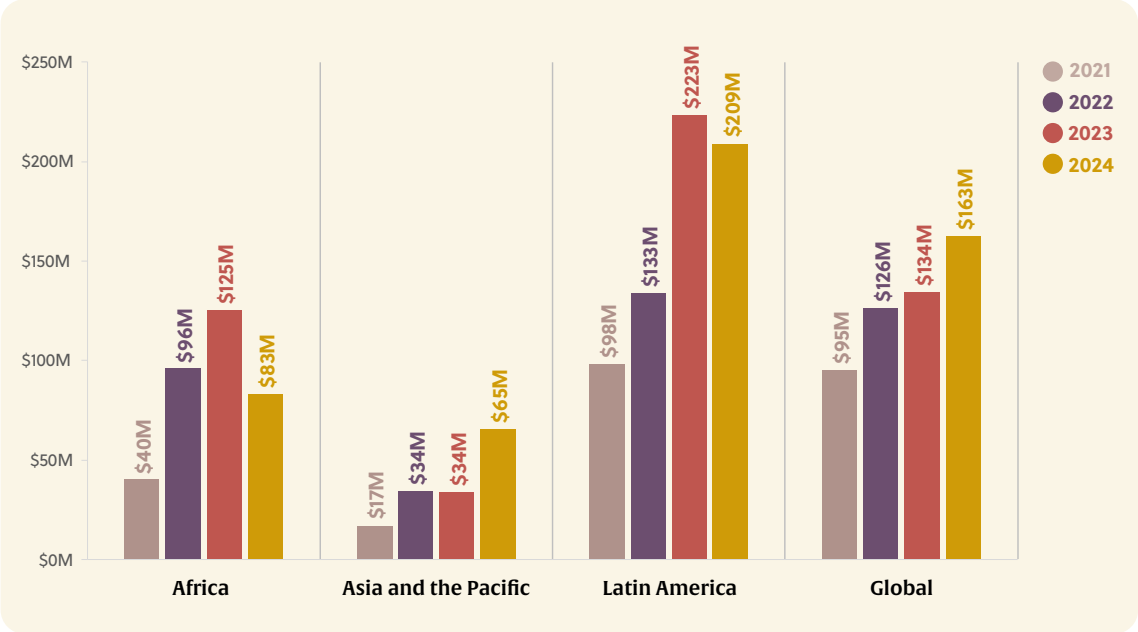
Funding by Geography[25]

In 2024, 31% of Pledge funding supported global work, while the remainder supported regional, national, or local projects.[26] Of the non-global share, Latin America received the largest portion (58%), followed by Africa (23%), and the Asia-Pacific region (18%).[27] In comparison to 2023, this represents a near doubling of funds to Asia-Pacific.

When examining the precise number of grants rather than their total value, Asia-Pacific accounted for 26% of non-global grants and Latin America for 51%. This suggests that Asia-Pacific is receiving a larger number of smaller awards while Latin America continues to see fewer but larger grants.

Pledge funding continues to concentrate around the three primary tropical forest basins. In Latin America, 88% of funds went to Amazon Basin countries. In Asia-Pacific, 80% of funding went to the Borneo-Mekong-Southeast Asia Basin.[28] In Africa, 34% of funds supported Congo Basin countries, and another 32% supported East Africa.

Figure 2: Geographic Distribution of Funding, 2021–2024[29]



25 All disaggregated figures in this and the following subsections are calculated using a standardized format to code grants and other funding from Pledge signatories. Some funders did not code their grants; we obtained coding for $519.9 million in 2024 funding and based percentage figures on this total.

26 Donors categorized Pledge-aligned projects by geographic region; where possible, they listed specific countries and percentage breakdowns. When available data allowed, funding for multi-country or multi-region projects was divided into the regional categories, according to the percentage breakdown of funds. When breakdowns were not available, multi-region projects were included in the "global" category.

27 Regional percentages were calculated using the total sum of non-global funding. Percentages do not total to 100 due to rounding.

28 Includes countries in Southeast Asia; excludes South Asia, Oceania, and funding supporting Asia overall.

29 Each year's figures are based on the grants for which we received coding. Thus, total funding shown in this section's figures will not sum to that year's total reported funding.

Discussion: Geography

The 2024 data show encouraging momentum for the Asia-Pacific region, where funding nearly doubled since 2023. This increase was driven both by an increase in the number of grants to Asia-Pacific—many were small—as well as several larger regional projects. This is an important step, as the region is home to two-thirds of the world's Indigenous Peoples yet continues to receive disproportionately low funding levels. The Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS) conducted a baseline survey, which underscores this point: Only 2% of the 433 organizations surveyed reported having sufficient funding, and most identified major gaps. Additionally, funding to Africa decreased in 2024. While some of this decrease is due to USAID—a major funder in Africa—no longer participating in the group, it is clear that current FTFG funding levels do not meet communities' needs.

At the same time, the funding concentration in the Amazon, Congo Basin, and Borneo-Mekong-Southeast Asia Basin reflects that donors are especially focused on the world's three largest tropical forest basins. These areas are globally significant carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots that are well worth prioritizing, but the emphasis should not be on these basins alone. Other forested regions like Mesoamerica receive less funding, which makes them ill-equipped to face growing pressures from deforestation, extractive industries, and climate impacts. This is an ongoing challenge, and the group acknowledges the need for a better funding balance across ecosystems and regions.

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Funding by Theme

Donors categorized each grant or project into one of five thematic categories or in a sixth "other" category.[30]

1. Support to national land and forest tenure reform processes that help secure IP and LC rights
2. Support to map, document, register, or otherwise assert or claim legal rights to land (formal rights recognition)
3. Support to improve territorial management, conservation, and/or governance or to strengthen tenure security
4. Support for sustainable forest management or other forest- or nature-based livelihood strategies
5. Support for international advocacy and communications on tenure security, biodiversity, and climate change
6. Other

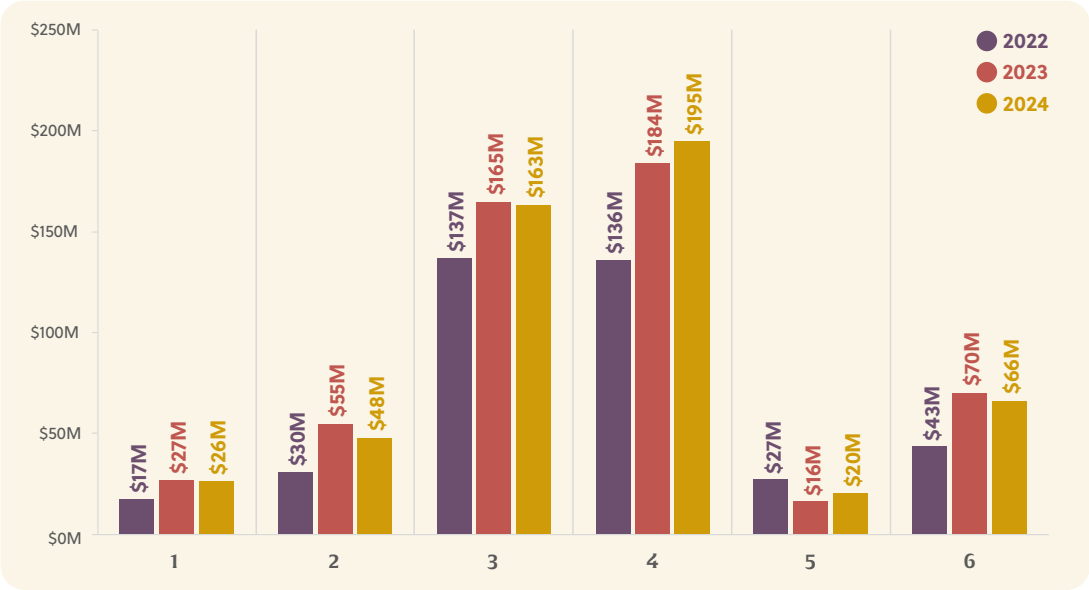
In 2024, the largest funding share continued to support territorial management and strengthening tenure security (theme 3, 31%) and sustainable forest management and forest-based livelihood strategies (theme 4, 37%). Together, these two categories comprised more than two-thirds of all Pledge-aligned funding, consistent with prior years.

In comparison, support to tenure reform processes to help secure IP and LC rights (theme 1, 5%) and legal rights recognition processes (theme 2, 9%) represented smaller funding shares, although these areas are also advanced through projects with multiple thematic priorities. Support for international advocacy and communications on IP and LC land rights and their role in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation received a similar share to previous years (theme 5, 4%). Figure 3, below, shows the funding breakdown by primary thematic area.

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

30 Some funders used the "other" category for work that other donors categorized by theme. These include capacity building and strengthening of Indigenous organizations (which other funders coded as theme 3), support for land and environmental defenders, support to advance Quilombola territorial rights, and benefit sharing programs. Several larger projects were counted as "other" because a single data line entry represented a collection of smaller grants with different thematic focuses.

Figure 3: Primary Thematic Area, 2022–2024[31]



1. Support to national land and forest tenure reform processes that help secure IP and LC rights
2. Support to map, document, register, or otherwise assert or claim legal rights to land (formal rights recognition)
3. Support to improve territorial management, conservation, and/or governance or to strengthen tenure security
4. Support for sustainable forest management or other forest- or nature-based livelihood strategies
5. Support for international advocacy and communications on tenure security, biodiversity, and climate change
6. Other

Many grants advance multiple objectives. Around 65% of 2024 funding was coded with both a primary and secondary thematic area. When examining the secondary thematic focus, tenure reform, rights recognition, and related themes (themes 1 and 2) comprised 28% of funds, compared to 52% for territorial management and livelihoods (themes 3 and 4), and 12% for advocacy (theme 5). This indicates that while relatively few grants have tenure reform and rights recognition as their principal focus, it is often embedded in broader initiatives.

Discussion: Theme

As in prior years, most 2024 funding prioritized territorial management, governance, and livelihoods (themes 3 and 4). It is, however, important to note that coding does not tell the full story and can understate the volume of tenure reform and formal rights recognition work (themes 1 and 2). Given potential category overlaps and divergent donor perspectives, some of this work may be included in a few different categories. Once secondary themes are included, rights-focused work represents a substantial portion of funding (roughly a quarter); this suggests that reform is often embedded within broader territorial and livelihoods initiatives and not funded as a stand-alone activity.

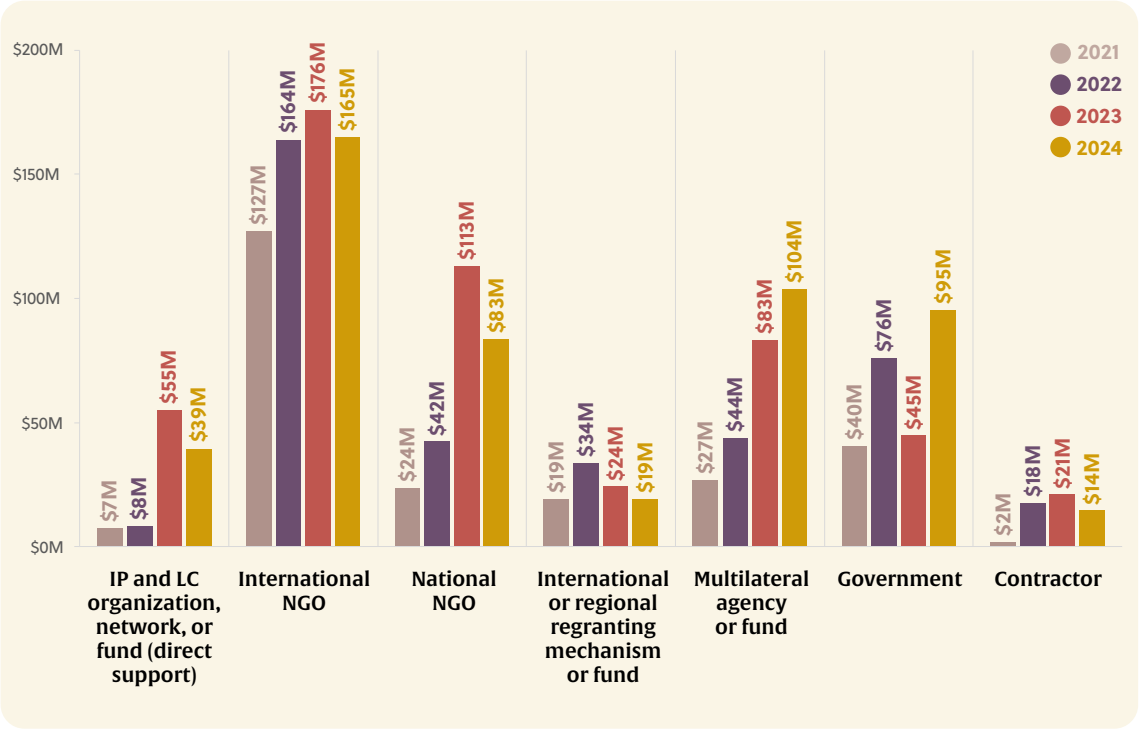
As demonstrated above, the Pledge period has been defined by a two-track approach. The emphasis is on (1) practical, locally led implementation (territorial management, livelihoods, and guardianship) and (2) enabling conditions work—policy, legal recognition, administrative systems—that is frequently delivered through grants with multiple focuses. Several donors also advance tenure reform through complementary platforms such as the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership, which improves land governance by working at the political level. See the case study on tenure reform for more information.

31 A 2021 comparison is not available because thematic categories were modified in 2022.

Funding by Delivery Partner and Direct Support

In 2024, nearly half of Pledge-aligned funding went to international and national NGOs (32% and 16%, respectively). Another 38% went to multilateral agencies and governments (20% and 18%, respectively).[32] Around 4% went to international and regional regranting mechanisms.[33] Compared to 2023, a larger share of funds flowed through multilateral agencies and governments, reflecting the greater weight of bilateral donor funding in 2024. Figure 4, below, shows the funding breakdown by primary delivery partner.

Figure 4: Primary Delivery Partner, 2021–2024



Direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations reached **7.6% in 2024, over $39 million in total**—compared to just 2.9% in 2021. While this percentage declined slightly from 2023, philanthropic direct funding rose to 34% in 2024 (up from 27% in 2023 and 3.8% in 2021). In contrast, bilateral donor direct funding was only 1.6% in 2024. Despite year-to-year variations, the longer-term trend is clear: Overall direct support has increased from the baseline.

32 Multilateral funding includes allocations and disbursements to UN agencies and special rapporteurs and multi-donor trust funds, including CAFI, the LEAF Coalition, EnABLE, and the IDB Amazon Bioeconomy and Forest Management Multi Donor Trust Fund (AMDTF).

33 Some organizations act as partners to IP and LC organizations and movements and provide regranting, technical expertise, and other support. Because many donors classify organizations that play multiple roles as international NGOs, the funding share for regranting mechanisms may appear lower than the reality.

Beyond funding volume, 30% of 2024 grants were to Indigenous and local community organizations, and 112 IP and LC organizations were reported as receiving support in 2024—up from 22 in 2021. This reflects more detailed donor reporting, expanded direct funding, and broader donor engagement with Indigenous and local community funds, regional and global networks, and local organizations working at community scale.

Table 2: Direct Support, 2021–2024

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percent direct funding	2.9%	2.1%	10.6%	7.6%
Percent private donor direct funding	3.8%	8.5%	27%	34%
Percent bilateral donor direct funding	1%	1%	4%	1.6%
# of IP and LC organizations supported[34]	22	39	100	112

Note: 2021 and 2022 figures are based on disaggregated reporting from a smaller set of FTFG members

As with the past two reports, the FTFG attempted to calculate the diverse ways funding reaches IP and LC organizations beyond the "direct funding" framing. Many funding recipients have close, trusted partnerships with IP and LC organizations, co-designing projects and proposals, regranting funds, and providing technical expertise and other support. To quantify such funding, we asked donors to approximate the portion of each grant that reaches IPs and LCs in ways they can influence or control. Not all donors could do this; we received data for just under half of all 2024 funding.[35] In 2024, donors estimated that about 33% ($83 million) of these funds reached or closely involved IPs and LCs; this information provides a more nuanced picture of impact that extends beyond direct grantmaking.[36]

34 This represents the number of IP and LC organizations who were reported on each year. While there has been a clear increase in year-to-year support, the jump from 2022 to 2023 appears abnormally large because a greater number of FTFG donors began reporting disaggregated data in 2023, providing more detail on specific organizations receiving support.

35 We only included data from donors who provided this information for a majority of their grants. When these donors could not provide an estimate for a specific project, it was counted as 0%.

36 This represents funding that reaches IP and LC organizations both indirectly and directly. These figures rely on estimates and should be considered as approximations.

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Discussion: Delivery Partner and Direct Support

The 2024 figures demonstrate that direct funding remains a small percentage of overall flows, but the trendline is positive when compared to the 2021 baseline. The 2023 decline can be largely explained by multi-year funding cycle variations and the predominance of bilateral donor funds in 2024, which are more often channeled through multilateral agencies and governments. In contrast, philanthropic donors have increased the proportion of their funds going directly to Indigenous and local community organizations.

The array of delivery partner distribution categories highlights that Pledge funding reaches the ground through mixed pathways. Intermediaries can bring clear advantages: They enable larger, multi-year commitments; help IPs and LCs access national funds aligned with national climate, biodiversity, and emissions reduction strategies; and provide fiduciary assurance that satisfies donor requirements. Funding disbursed through multilateral agencies and governments can also expand reach to national programs and policy reform and provide funding avenues for Indigenous and local community organizations through sub-grants and technical assistance. To be clear, these pathways are not perfect: They can exacerbate distance from communities, lengthen timelines, and weaken accountability to rights-holders unless governance is designed accordingly.

At the same time, Indigenous and local community funds and networks are scaling direct pathways. Increased philanthropic direct funding is tied to fit-for-purpose mechanisms—territorial funds, pooled Indigenous-led regranting, and regional platforms—that provide smaller, flexible grants and core support that better suit community timelines and facilitate shared decision-making. These mechanisms often pair grants with institutional strengthening—improving governance, safeguarding, and financial systems—which is essential for absorptive capacity and future eligibility for larger public flows.

Direct funding does not capture the full picture, and we asked Pledge donors to estimate how much funding reached Indigenous and local community organizations in ways that they could influence and control. Of the 2024 funding for which this estimate was provided, roughly one-third met these criteria. This suggests that IPs and LCs can have meaningful levels of control over funding even if they do not receive formal direct grants; there is enormous value in accountable intermediaries that embed Indigenous leadership in decision-making, publish transparent criteria, and pass through resources in a timely manner. Some intermediaries have made meaningful changes by establishing Indigenous-majority advisory bodies or setting explicit regranting targets.

The 2024 findings reinforce that there should not be a binary choice between direct and intermediary funding. Both remain important. The key challenge is to ensure that every channel—whether a multilateral agency, a government program, an international NGO, or a regranting mechanism—increases Indigenous and local community influence and control. In the long-term, the task is two-fold: Scale up the Indigenous-led funds and networks already demonstrating fit-for-purpose models, and reform intermediary channels so that they are more transparent and accountable to rights-holders. Together, these shifts can ensure that funding is both scalable and community-controlled—and that there is a stronger foundation for the next phase of work. See the case study on innovative funding approaches for more detail.

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Funding for IP and LC Women and Youth

While the COP26 Pledge acknowledged the importance of funding women and youth and including them in decision-making, it did not set specific targets for these goals. To better understand how historically excluded groups receive funding, the FTFG began tracking these indicators in the 2023–2024 report.

In 2024, 14% of funding—and 18% of direct funding—had gender as a primary focus (up from 11% in 2023), while another 52% included gender as a secondary objective.[37] This indicates that while relatively few grants are specifically focused on women's rights and leadership, gender considerations are increasingly embedded across projects.

In contrast, youth remains a much smaller focus.[38] Less than 1% of 2024 funding—and around 5% of direct funding—had youth as a principal target, although 28% of funds incorporated youth as a secondary focus.

These patterns highlight both progress and gaps; a greater number of projects integrate gender considerations, but the scale of dedicated funding remains limited, and youth inclusion is still at a nascent stage.

Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

37 This method to track gender targeting aligns with the OECD reporting framework, which states: "An activity can either target gender equality as its 'principal objective' or as a 'significant objective.' A 'principal' score (2) is assigned if gender equality was an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental to its design—i.e., the activity would not have been undertaken without this objective. A 'significant' score (1) is assigned if gender equality was an important, but secondary, objective of the activity—i.e., it was not the principal reason for undertaking the activity. A 'not targeted' score (0) is assigned if, after being screened against the gender equality policy marker, an activity is not found to target gender equality."

38 As previously mentioned, there is no international youth marker; this targeting is based on individual estimations. This may limit the ability to track youth targeting for larger projects, especially for bilateral donors.

Discussion: IP and LC Women and Youth

The data on women and youth illustrate modest progress and highlight structural gaps. For example, a 2023 study found that just 2% of climate finance lists gender equality as a principal focus.[39] Women and youth are often excluded from decision-making spaces, including around land governance and climate-related financing. Additionally, legal obstacles and patriarchal views prevent women from owning or inheriting land, and land use consultation and consent policies often fail to account for gender.[40]

Recent findings from the Rights and Resources Initiative and the Women in Global South Alliance (WiGSA) further underscore these gaps. The 2024 median budget of WiGSA member organizations was just $338,000, with two-thirds able to operate for only six months or less without new funding.[41] More than half reported no core or flexible support, and 85% rely on short-term grants of two years or less. These structural constraints force many women's organizations to depend on volunteer labor, reinforcing patterns of unpaid work and weakening institutional sustainability. The inequities are especially stark for Afro-descendant women's organizations, which operate with budgets less than half those of Indigenous peers, reflecting a donor ecosystem still blind to structural racism. Together, these findings highlight persistent challenges to advancing women's leadership and ensuring their meaningful inclusion in decision-making. Longer-term funding and intersectional approaches that prioritize women's organizations' needs are essential to addressing these ongoing inequalities.

A 2024 review of a subset of FTFG members found that a majority have gender-sensitive or gender-responsive projects, programs, or strategies. Very few members have gender-transformative strategies focused on systemic change. These data—and the increase in Pledge projects that list gender as a primary or secondary objective—suggest that donors are more consistently integrating gender considerations. However, the overall share of dedicated gender funding remains limited, and very few projects center women's leadership and gender equality. The FTFG report findings and other recent research spotlight the need to support transformative work that addresses structural barriers to women's rights and equal participation in decision-making.

39 Patel *et al.* (2023). *Gender, climate finance and inclusive low-carbon transitions*. IIED Issue Paper. https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2023-09/21601IIED.pdf

40 See the case study on women's land rights for an example of how the Pledge is supporting work to address these obstacles.

41 Rights and Resources Initiative and Women in Global South Alliance (2025). *Is Global Funding Reaching Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and Local Community Women? Experiences from the Women in Global South Alliance (WiGSA)*. https://rightsandresources.org/publication/wigsa-funding-report-2025/

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Youth remain even less visible in the reported projects. Less than 1% of 2024 funds had youth as a principal objective, and while more than one-quarter of projects reported youth as a secondary focus, few were explicitly designed to support youth leadership. This is a missed opportunity; young people play a primary role in sustaining cultural practices, advancing intergenerational knowledge, and mobilizing for climate and biodiversity action. Encouragingly, some new Indigenous-led funds, such as IPAS in Asia, have embedded youth-specific steering committees, showing how governance reforms can create space for strong youth leadership within broader funding mechanisms.

Since 2022, the FTFG gender working group has provided a platform for members to exchange learning, develop common language, and engage with Indigenous and women's organizations. This collective effort has helped move gender from a "cross-cutting theme" to a more explicit accountability area, including in the way donors report funding and track gender-responsive indicators. The working group provides a foundation for building consensus on what defines progress, but all members must commit to ensuring that funding reflects the full diversity of Indigenous and community leadership.

Conclusion

The FTFG is committed to transparency and accountability; in 2026, we will publish another annual report covering the final year of Pledge funding. This year's results confirm that the **$1.7 billion target was met ahead of schedule and that direct support to Indigenous and local community organizations has grown from the 2021 baseline**, even if year-to-year fluctuations remain.

At the same time, **the data highlight persistent challenges**. Reporting inconsistencies across donors, reliance on intermediaries that may dilute IP and LC influence, and limited dedicated funding for women and youth remain pressing concerns. Donors are working to address these gaps through supporting Indigenous-led funds, targeted gender initiatives, and reporting quality improvements.

The results show the COP26 Pledge's promise and pervasive challenges. Achievements demonstrate that collective donor commitments can mobilize significant new resources and shift practices. Yet, critical context**—continued threats to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lives, rights, and lands; declining foreign aid; and growing climate and biodiversity pressures—creates undeniable urgency**. Sustaining and scaling these gains requires renewed ambition, stronger accountability, and deeper alignment with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' leadership and demands. As the Pledge enters its final months, it is clear that meaningful progress has been achieved—but much more must be done.

Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

SECTION 3

Case Studies

Photo by Eli Virkina / If Not Us Then Who

Pledge members are proud to share a collection of 2024 case studies that spotlight successes and demonstrate meaningful progress. Impact cannot be solely attributed to the Pledge, but these examples show what is possible when members act with intention and operate within a supportive ecosystem. More specifically, they demonstrate how the Pledge has helped catalyze and strengthen new funding mechanisms, systemic reforms, Afro-descendant rights recognition, conservation outcomes, and the leadership of women and youth. As a whole, these case studies document a diversity of strategies and the lessons that inform the path to COP30.

Innovative Funding Approaches: Expanding Direct and Fit-for-Purpose Financing

The COP26 Pledge spurred a significant shift and supported new funding mechanisms designed and led by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant peoples. These bold mechanisms create more flexible, timely pathways that are accountable to rightsholders. Several initiatives—the Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI) and the Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS)—demonstrate that donors are responding to community demands for direct access. And, by investing in institutions that are governed by and for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, donors are helping to strengthen self-determined leadership and ensure that resources reach the people and places where they are most needed.

The Germany Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development decided to support CLARIFI as a result of the COP26 Pledge's goal to enhance direct access to funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. CLARIFI mobilizes public and private funds to extend flexible resources directly to Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant peoples. With this support, it focuses on five priority areas: strengthening the rights of women and vulnerable groups; enhancing participation in biodiversity and ecosystem protection; promoting tenure rights; facilitating dialogue and participation in decision-making; and ensuring equitable benefit-sharing.

Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

To date, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's funding has supported 17 projects across Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In Costa Rica, for example, ADI Nairi Awari has bolstered women's groups and forest guardians across five Indigenous territories; expanded the Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Network (RIBCA); and created new spaces for seed conservation and women's strategic planning. In Cameroon, REFACOF has reinforced its continental leadership on women's forest tenure rights. And in Nepal, CIPRED advances the formal recognition of Indigenous communities' customary institutions and tenure systems within conservation areas and national parks.

In Asia, Good Energies and Ford Foundation have supported IPAS, an Indigenous mechanism that strengthens access to funding and self-determined governance. Launched in 2023, the Fund works in 13 Asian countries and builds solidarity among the continent's 300 million Indigenous Peoples. In 2024, IPAS disbursed 21 grants across six countries, totaling $125,000. These grants ranged—from grassroots Indigenous Peoples' organizations to sub-national and national level initiatives to emergency solidarity funds for communities facing disasters or risks while defending their rights. Grantees were selected by nine country steering committees and three sectoral committees representing Indigenous youth, women, and people with disabilities. In addition to grantmaking, IPAS conducted the first major regional baseline survey of Indigenous organizations' operational realities and funding situations, reviewing 433 organizations across 12 countries. The findings revealed stark gaps: 45% had no paid staff but depended exclusively on voluntary work, and nearly 80% reported that their current funding was "insufficient" or "very insufficient," which meant they could not address their most important needs and priorities. Collectively, the organizations estimated an annual unmet need of over $43 million to secure rights; strengthen governance; empower women, youth, and people with disabilities; and pursue biodiversity conservation and climate action. These findings reinforce those of the FTFG's annual reports, which consistently flag that the **Asia-Pacific region continues to receive disproportionately low funding levels despite being home to two-thirds of the world's Indigenous Peoples**. New funding mechanisms like IPAS and the Nusantara Fund are critical to addressing this stark gap.

Donors can support a more sustainable, effective funding ecosystem by investing in institutional strengthening and peer learning. Ford Foundation has supported a customized package of resources for emerging Indigenous and local community funds. This program enhances governance, accountability, and learning and financial systems, ensuring that nascent mechanisms like IPAS have the capacity and resilience to manage growing resources. This financial and organizational scaffolding is key to creating a thriving fund ecosystem that can deliver resources in an effective, sustainable manner.

As these examples demonstrate, **the Pledge has not only mobilized new financial commitments but also reshaped resource movement**. Mechanisms like CLARIFI and IPAS are proving that direct, fit-for-purpose financing is both positive and effective, while donor investments in institutional strengthening help ensure their durability. The current challenge is to scale these approaches, embed them within broader funding systems, and ensure that communities have lasting influence and control over the resources intended to support their stewardship. In doing so, the Pledge can leave a legacy of more equitable and accountable financing that endures well beyond its five-year horizon.

Photo by Tim Lewis / If Not Us Then Who

Tenure Reform: Pairing Direct Support with Policy and Partnerships

The Pledge urges increased support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities working to protect and manage their territories and achieve tenure recognition. But it also emphasizes that **this work won't be impactful unless it is accompanied by broader reforms that advance tenure security**. To do this, some donors support work to advance national and local land and forest tenure laws, policies, and systems, including through partnerships with tropical forest country governments; the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP) facilitates such collaboration. These tenure reform initiatives help advance IP and LC tenure rights in new policy frameworks and ensure that IPs and LCs are consulted as reforms are developed. Several key national policy reforms have significantly advanced tenure rights recognition. These include a 2022 law on Indigenous Peoples' rights in the DRC and the creation of Indigenous Territorial Entities (ITEs) in the Colombian Amazon.

The United Kingdom is an FTFG donor championing tenure reform work using multiple complementary entry points. In addition to providing direct support to IP and LC organizations, the UK works to catalyze systemic national-level change through programming and political policy work. In 2024, for example, the UK launched the Land Facility, a new global program, which partners with governments to accelerate progress on robust land governance systems and processes and increase formal recognition and protection of land tenure rights.

The Land Facility recently completed a project in the Congo Basin region and is exploring collaborative partnerships with forest country governments—including Brazil, Indonesia, Zambia, and Colombia—to develop and deliver progressive land governance reform. Potential activities are focused on improving tenure security for IPs and LCs; they include improving the quality of cadastral systems to map and record territories and expanding inclusion of IPs and LCs, including women and others historically excluded from decision-making spaces, in national reform processes. The UK coordinates and collaborates with national and local partner organizations to ensure that reforms they support elevate IP and LC organizations' activities and demands.

Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

Supporting Afro-descendant peoples' Climate Justice Agenda

Nearly one in four people in Latin America identify as Afro-descendant. Many of the region's Afro-descendant communities—from Brazil's Quilombolas to Mexican Afro-descendants—have a strong legacy of forest and land stewardship. Still, they continue to confront systemic racism that has long invisibilized their culture, traditions, and collective knowledge, all of which are vital for biodiversity conservation and climate mitigation. Stewardship traditions and deep connection with nature keep deforestation in Afro-descendant territories as much as 55% lower than other nearby sites, according to research published in 2025. Many Afro-descendant lands are also among the top 5% in global biodiversity.

Despite Afro-descendant communities' historical presence on more than 32.7 million hectares of land, only about 24% of their collective territories have been formally recognized. Inspired by Colombia's groundbreaking 1993 Law 70, key regional legislation has helped create legal pathways to collective land titling, but the process is slow, and enforcement can be inconsistent. Without secure land tenure, communities face growing threats of displacement and violence from mining, illegal deforestation, and other extractive industries that operate without their consent. In Brazil, 40% of Quilombola territories are located in the impact zone of energy transition projects, including energy farms and increased mining for renewable energy minerals. When Quilombola communities defend their territories, the results are often fatal: A disproportionate number of land and environmental defenders killed in 2023 were Afro-descendant.

Ford Foundation supports multiple organizations advancing the collective territorial rights and protection of Latin America's Afro-descendant communities. This includes:

- Direct support to Afro-descendant and Quilombola organizations working to protect their territories; partners include Malungu in Brazil, ASOM in Colombia, and OFRANEH in Honduras
- Grants for legal and communications activities by organizations like Movilizatorio and support to Quilombola communicators to develop a National Indigenous and Quilombola web radio station on climate justice
- Advancing Afro-descendants' right to consultation around land rights, mining, and energy transitions through the Observatory of Community Consultation Protocols
- Mapping how energy projects impact Indigenous and Quilombola territories through work housed at World Resources Institute and the Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia

Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Until recently, Afro-descendants' significant contributions to climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation were not internationally recognized. After territorial Afro-descendant and Quilombola communities spent decades engaged in collective organizing, research, and advocacy, this began to change. At the 2024 UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16) in Cali, Colombia, global leaders announced significant milestones. Afro-descendants received formal recognition for their essential contributions to implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). And, a historic agreement—committing to establish a body to include Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, and local communities in biodiversity protection strategy decisions—was announced.

This long overdue recognition was largely due to organizations like Ford grantees PCN in Colombia and CONAQ in Brazil and organizations from 16 countries forming the International Coalition of Territories and Afro-descendant peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean (CITAFRO). In addition to ensuring that their climate justice contributions are acknowledged, CITAFRO advocates for Latin American and Caribbean countries to include territorial protection for Afro-descendant communities in Nationally Determined Contributions. Inclusion in these official climate action plans would help ensure that communities are centered in critical climate conversations.

These are important steps, but there is much more to do. Because the term "Afro-descendant peoples" is not formally included in international UN frameworks, community efforts to access climate finance and international legal protections are restricted. Communities now look to the November 2025 UN climate change conference (COP30)—it will be held in the Amazon for the first time—to expand their visibility and secure greater support.

Advancing Women's Land Rights

Women make up more than half of the 2.5 billion people who rely on common land for their livelihoods. Despite their central role in sustaining land-based economies and community well-being, only one in five landowners are women. Women also face disproportionate threats to their land rights—from discriminatory legal systems to exclusion from governance and vulnerability to land dispossession.

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund has supported the International Land Coalition (ILC) since 2012. A global alliance of 303 civil society and intergovernmental organizations, ILC represents 70 million people in five global regions. Since its creation three decades ago, it has promoted people-centered governance of collective lands. This strategy ensures that those who live on and from the land—farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers, fisher folk, and other local populations—are at the heart of land-related decision-making. ILC also works to advance the effective participation of historically excluded populations, including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and Afro-descendant communities.

One of ILC's strategic commitments is to advance equal access to land rights for women and secure gender justice in land and forest governance. To operationalize this commitment, ILC deploys a multi-pronged strategy. It includes strengthening grassroots women's organizations across 22 countries; establishing a Grassroots Women's Land Rights Fund to support local initiatives; fostering policy reform and legal accountability to secure women's land rights; enhancing tools and resources for leadership development and community advocacy; collecting sex-disaggregated data to expose land ownership disparities; and launching global awareness and action campaigns like the Stand for Her Land initiative.

In 2024 alone, ILC's gender justice work supported 27 women-led organizations, representing 370,480 people across 21 countries. ILC members in 35 countries integrated gender equality into land governance frameworks, influencing policy and resource allocation through national land coalitions. This advocacy also led to several concrete national-level policy and legal wins. In Uganda, ILC members helped secure land titles for women in customary systems; in Colombia, Afro-descendant women gained formal recognition of collective land rights through ILC-supported advocacy; and in Kenya, ILC's regional platform facilitated legal reforms that expanded women's inheritance rights. These successes underscore that **sustained efforts to secure women's land rights and equal participation in land and forest governance can produce meaningful results and create more just and sustainable land-based economies**.

Community Forest Concessions: A Model for Community Rights and Forest Management in the DRC

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indigenous Peoples and local communities benefit from community forest concessions (CFCLs). These collectively owned and managed forested areas secure local land rights for villages and communities and produce clear conservation outcomes. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) works with several partners—Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN), Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK), Wildlife Conservation Society, and Caritas, among others—to establish and implement CFCLs. This collaboration supports initiatives to map landscapes, promote territorial rights applications, and collaborate with local communities and Indigenous Peoples to develop sustainability plans.

From 2021 to 2024, RFUK's support helped establish nine new CFCLs, which conserved 1270 km² of high biological value forest. The project reached almost 28,000 people living in community forests. RFUK has also served as a convener; in 2024, the organization coordinated provincial meetings, which supported the government's CFCL policies by building consensus and promoting successful examples among local, provincial, and national stakeholders. RFN has also worked to formalize CFCLs and has conducted preparatory work with 148 new communities to advance this process.

Beyond facilitating CFCL establishment, Norad partners have also promoted community-led sustainable forest and land management. In 2024, RFUK trained 1,300 people in sustainable resource management, including agroforestry techniques. Similarly, in 2024, Caritas supported partners to improve the rights and livelihoods of IPs and LCs in the South Kivu province. Despite an unstable security situation, Caritas trained 375 farmers in agroforestry and how to establish and maintain nurseries for reforestation. Lucrative crops—oil palms, avocado trees, and coffee trees—were cultivated, and three nurseries were established.

Norad and its partners have helped **secure formal land rights for communities in the DRC and supported the sustainable management and use of forests, producing clear conservation benefits, supporting community rights, and improving livelihoods.**

APPENDIX 1

Methodology

Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

Each Pledge signatory was asked to provide a list of 2024 calendar year Pledge-aligned funding, compiled and coded in a common format.[42] Donors calculated grant funding using their own reporting systems and, where possible, submitted data disaggregated by geography, primary and secondary thematic areas, and funding mechanisms.[43]

Where funding for a given project or grant was not entirely Pledge-aligned, donors estimated the relevant percentage. Donors reported Pledge contributions in their own currencies and converted these to USD, using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) annual average conversion rate. All report amounts are in USD unless otherwise stated.

Direct funding and intermediary accountability are a focus of both our conversations and reporting. We know, with certainty, that there is limited direct funding, but there is no clear agreement on the boundary between "direct" and "indirect"; quantifying direct funding requires some subjective interpretation by both donors and IPs and LCs. To best approximate a direct funding figure, we used a direct funding indicator and additional indicators to track Pledge funding usage. We tracked the number of IP and LC organizations receiving Pledge-aligned funding and the amount of Pledge-aligned funding that ultimately reaches IP and LC organizations—including via trusted partners and intermediaries—in ways they could influence and control. Together these figures provided a clearer picture of the funding landscape.

Photo by Kynan Tegar / If Not Us Then Who

42 Submissions also included Pledge-aligned funding from 2021-2023 that was not previously reported, as well as a small number of adjustments reflecting additional funding amendments to previous grants.

43 Not all signatories are able to report their funding progress with this level of detail. Donor policies vary: Some signatories report a single funding figure or report program-level figures instead of individual grants.

BOX 4

Key definitions

The following definitions accompany the annual FTFG data reporting template.

% Pledge-aligned:

Proportion of the total grant or project amount that aligns with the Pledge criteria: All finance for work that supports the advancement of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land tenure rights and forest guardianship for ODA eligible countries.

Direct support:

Funding that aligns with the Paris framework for tracking funds and is transferred directly from donors to:

- Representative institutions of Indigenous Peoples
- Institutions or funding mechanisms established by Indigenous Peoples to realize their rights
- Fiscal sponsors or institutions Indigenous Peoples have selected to receive funds on their behalf

Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions:

As defined in the Paris framework for tracking funds, these are "institutions with a mandate to represent one or several Indigenous communities or peoples through a process carried out by themselves." (See UNDRIP, Article 18)

% reaching IPs and LCs in ways they can influence and control:

The percentage of funding that is Pledge-aligned and reaches IPs and LCs, indirectly or directly, in ways they can influence and have ownership over. This includes both direct funding to an IP or LC organization and indirect funding through regranting and close partnerships that provide IPs and LCs with a significant role in project design.

Primary delivery partner type:

This is the organization that holds the funding agreement with the donor. The categories are:

1. IP and LC organization, network, or fund (direct support)
2. International NGO
3. National NGO
4. International or regional regranting mechanism or fund
5. Multilateral agency or fund
6. Government
7. Contractor

Fiscal sponsor note: When Indigenous Peoples select a fiscal sponsor to receive funds on their behalf, this is considered direct support. The intended recipient/ sponsored organization should be selected as the delivery partner.

BOX 4 (cont.)

Gender and youth targeting:

Gender targets follow the OECD policy marker: "An activity can either target gender equality as its 'principal objective' or as a 'significant objective.' A 'principal' score (2) is assigned if gender equality was an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental to its design—i.e., the activity would not have been undertaken without this objective. A 'significant' score (1) is assigned if gender equality was an important, but secondary, objective of the activity—i.e., it was not the principal reason for undertaking the activity. A 'not targeted' score (0) is assigned if, after being screened against the gender equality policy marker, an activity is not found to target gender equality." There is no policy marker for youth, but we use the same structure to assess youth targeting and ask organizations to score their own activities.

Because of its close alignment with other initiatives, the Pledge reporting may overlap with funds from other Pledges. The first redundancy comes from connections between the IP and LC Forest Tenure Pledge and the Global Forest Finance Pledge (GFFP) and the Congo Basin Pledge (CBP), which are the other two Glasgow Pledges. These pledges share several signatories, and all recognize that IPs and LCs have a critical role in protecting and managing forests. Where donor funding pledged under the GFFP or the CBP also contributes to the IP and LC Pledge objectives, this funding may be reported under multiple pledges. Because the GFFP, CBP, and COP26 IP and LC Pledge have different annual report timelines for 2024, overlap amounts are not yet available. These will be detailed in the forthcoming GFFP and CBP reports. A second "double-counting" risk may occur because several Pledge signatories act as intermediaries who receive funds from other Pledge signatories. We verified that each donor who received funds from another FTFG member has excluded that funding from their 2024 reporting.