



Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge

ANNUAL REPORT
2025–2026

Forest Tenure
Funders Group

Acknowledgements

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Opening Statement



Forest protection starts with those who know the forest best

Reem Alabali Radovan

Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

During my visit to Brazil for COP30 in Belém last year, I met representatives of Indigenous Peoples from the Amazon. I learned how they manage and care for the forest. They grow their food sustainably, monitor their territories, and prevent uncontrolled fires through carefully planned, low-intensity burns. They show the international community how the economy and the environment can coexist in harmony. We have a lot to learn from them.

As forest ecosystem stewards, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities play a crucial role in climate action and biodiversity conservation. Their rights, including rights to land, territories, and resources, must be respected, protected, and promoted, and their meaningful participation and self-determination must be guaranteed as a matter of human rights and climate justice. Studies show that secure land and forest tenure rights lead to lower deforestation rates, higher carbon storage, and better biodiversity protection.

However, less than one per cent of climate development finance goes to projects supporting tenure and forest management by Indigenous Peoples and by local communities. To change that, the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) successfully mobilized new resources for tenure rights funding: Since the Forest Tenure Pledge at COP26 in Glasgow, international funding for Indigenous Peoples and for local communities has increased significantly.

Funding mobilized by the FTFG has exceeded the original target of \$1.7 billion set at COP26 and reached a total of \$2.35 billion between 2021 and 2025. In times of shrinking international development finance budgets, this is a major success. As a result, 135 Indigenous and local organizations received support for sustainable forest management, for claiming legal rights to land, and for improving forest governance and conservation.

As this final report shows, our funding has contributed to real change:

- **It helped secure and demarcate territories and advance policy reforms that strengthen the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.**
- **It highlighted the importance of secure land rights for climate and biodiversity protection.**
- **It enabled donors to improve their funding practices.**
- **It helped create new Indigenous and local funding mechanisms.**
- **It strengthened cooperation with rights holders and other partners.**

Consequently, a bold new 2026–2030 Pledge was launched at COP30 in Belém with a funding commitment of \$1.8 billion and more international partners on board than before.

These important milestones were possible because of the Forest Tenure Funders Group members: partners from governments and philanthropic organizations, our secretariat, our Indigenous and community partners, and the organizations that have supported this journey. I want to thank you all for your important work.

The FTFG must now build on this momentum and tackle remaining challenges. First, by providing more funding directly to communities. Second, by putting gender equality and youth at the heart of every decision. And third, by continuing to report transparently and implement the new Pledge in close coordination and consultation with communities and partners. Together, these steps can turn our big pledges into lasting, rights-based, and community-powered success.

The coming years will determine whether the international community manages to protect the world's remaining forests and achieve our shared climate and biodiversity goals. One thing is clear: we must invest in the Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant communities who have protected these ecosystems for generations. Germany stands firmly with them and is committed to turning this shared responsibility into decisive collective action for people and the planet.

Executive Summary

The COP26 Indigenous Peoples and local communities Forest Tenure Pledge concluded in December 2025. During that period, the COP26 Pledge’s endorsers—collectively known as the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG)—delivered \$2.35 billion towards the \$1.7 billion commitment, surpassing the target by 38%. In the previous decades, Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ (IP and LC) tenure security received far less support than it required given that few investments deliver more for climate, biodiversity, human rights, and sustainable livelihoods. The COP26 Pledge attempted to respond to this.

Donors are not solely responsible for the COP26 Pledge’s results. Credit must be given to our partners, especially Indigenous Peoples and local communities, who implemented the work and achieved real impact through decades of advocacy and daily territorial defense and stewardship.

When it was announced in November 2021, the COP26 Pledge affirmed what millions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities already knew: Forest protection requires supporting forest guardians and securing their tenure rights. The COP26 Pledge helped move forest tenure from the periphery of climate and biodiversity action to the center; it also facilitated the political space for governments to implement tenure security work. There was a palpable shift at UNFCCC COP30 with the announcement of the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment (ILTC) in 2025, led by tropical forest governments and supported by the Forest & Climate Leaders’ Partnership (FCLP) Secretariat. Through this, governments committed to recognize and strengthen 160 million hectares of Indigenous Peoples’, local communities’, and Afro-descendant communities’ lands by 2030.



Photo by Alfred Mtumba / If Not Us Then Who

Communities have governed and cared for their territories for centuries, but escalating threats make secure tenure more urgent than ever. Without recognized and enforceable rights, they are more exposed to displacement, encroachment, violence, and illegal activity. Tenure security is multi-dimensional. Its foundation is legal recognition, but rights must be realized in practice. To achieve this, communities require the institutions, resources, and information to govern, manage, and safeguard their territories. In turn, tenure security requires nuanced support across multiple channels: building enabling conditions—from national policy and legal reform to the government systems that implement them; reliable, long-term, and high-quality financing to Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations; and technical work alongside communities, including mapping and demarcation, legal assistance, territorial management planning, and monitoring. In isolation, none of these are sufficient, and the COP26 Pledge helped demonstrate that they must be combined.

In 2025, COP26 Pledge-aligned funding was concentrated around clear themes and geographies. Together, territorial management and tenure security (32%) and sustainable forest management and forest-based livelihoods (34%) accounted for nearly two-thirds of 2025 funding, while support for national tenure reform processes rose to \$47 million from \$25 million in 2024. Regionally, Latin America received 71% of non-global funding, followed by the Asia-Pacific region (16%) and Africa (13%).

Although the COP26 Pledge did not reference direct financing, FTFG members responded to partner needs and placed increasing importance on direct financing over the five-year Pledge period. Members also learned ways to improve how funding reaches communities. Over the course of the COP26 Pledge, direct financing to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations increased in volume and reach. Funding directly reaching Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations rose from 2.9% of reported funding in 2021 to 7.2% in 2025; and members reported direct support to at least 135 IP and LC organizations in 2025, compared to just 22 in 2021. Importantly, an expanding ecosystem of Indigenous-led and territorial funds opened new strategic options for donors, and offered communities financing pathways designed and governed by their own movements, which will be critical to the success of the renewed COP30 Pledge.

Progress in gender equality and youth support has been uneven and more focused effort is needed. Only 4% of 2025 funding had gender equality as a principal objective, down from 15% in 2024. This decline is best attributed to two factors: large, multi-year gender equality commitments were counted in earlier years and one donor's gender-focused portfolio sunsetted at the end of 2025. Less than 1% of funding had youth as a principal objective. Percentages for both funding areas must improve in the COP30 Pledge period. It is, however, worth noting that important gender-mainstreaming progress has been achieved: In the COP26 Pledge period's final year, over 60% of the funds integrated gender equality as a significant objective.

Government and philanthropic donors deliver funding differently, largely because they operate under different rules and constraints. Public donors manage taxpayers' money and are therefore bound by public budget rules, fiduciary standards, procurement requirements, and detailed financial management and accounting obligations. While this often makes it difficult to administer large numbers of small grants directly, public donors can mobilize funding at larger scales through intermediaries who are able to manage compliance requirements and regrant funding to Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations. Because it has greater flexibility, private philanthropy tends to work with local actors and civil society; it can support innovative, community-driven initiatives, respond quickly to local needs, and build close partnerships that strengthen grassroots ownership and impact, including with small-scale or experimental projects.

The FTFG includes both types of donors, so their efforts complement each other and facilitate the multiple dimensions necessary to achieve tenure security. All FTFG members recognize that Indigenous Peoples and local communities should benefit from rights-based, reliable, long-term, and flexible funding. They use different channels to achieve that goal and aim to measure progress through direct funding percentages, understanding that these percentages do not capture all aspects of high-quality funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Five years of collective practice produced other lasting lessons.

- The first is that tenure has moved from the margins of climate and conservation strategies to the center.
- The second is that legal recognition is necessary but not sufficient. Durable outcomes depend on robust and representative institutions, functioning territorial management, sustained financing, monitoring systems, and the capacity to respond to threats.
- Third, donors made efforts to adapt to the realities of communities by providing access to funding both directly and through trusted allies, partners and intermediaries. They offered capacity-building support so Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' organizations could build administrative resilience. Donors also let partners choose their own financing pathways and invested in the Indigenous-led and territorial funds that expanded over the COP26 Pledge period.

- The fourth lesson is that accountability is tied to transparency. Because the COP26 Pledge results were public and reported annually, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' movements could use the recurring, evidence-based instrument to hold funders to their commitments. The shared reporting cycle pushed donors to examine their own portfolios and uncover programming gaps in direct funding, regional coverage, gender equality, and youth.

The work now continues with a broader commitment. At the November 2025 World Leaders Summit in Belém, 39 government and philanthropic donors committed \$1.8 billion to the COP30 Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities Forest and Land Tenure Pledge. The new COP30 Pledge extends beyond forests to all relevant terrestrial ecosystems.

This broader approach reflects the tremendous need for tenure security support across ecosystems. Secure community tenure is increasingly recognized as foundational across all three Rio Conventions: UNCCD recognizes tenure security as critical to halting land degradation and restoring degraded landscapes; the CBD and its Global Biodiversity Framework commit governments to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030 while recognizing Indigenous and traditional territories; and in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement preamble calls on Parties to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities when taking climate action.

Five years ago, the COP26 Pledge set out to prove that a transparent public commitment could change how the world funds tenure. It did. And Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and their partners turned that funding into recognized territories, stronger institutions, and a seat at the center of the global agenda. The COP30 Pledge launches with proven delivery channels, a growing ecosystem of Indigenous and community-governed funds, deeper partnerships, and a shared evidence base. An ambitious plan guides our next five years. We aim to support efforts that address the systemic drivers of tenure insecurity, direct more funds to reach communities on their own terms, and enhance partnerships that embed tenure security across the global and regional initiatives that protect nature and people.



Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

An aerial photograph of a wide river flowing through a lush, green landscape. The river is dark and calm, reflecting the sky. A small boat with several people is visible in the lower center of the frame, moving away from the viewer. The river is bordered by dense, green vegetation on both sides. In the background, the river widens and the landscape becomes flatter, with some distant hills visible under a hazy sky.

SECTION 1

Introduction

The COP26 Pledge: Final Annual Report



In 2021, over twenty government and philanthropic donors came together at COP26 in Glasgow to announce a \$1.7 billion,¹ five-year pledge to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' (IPs and LCs)² forest tenure and rights. The COP26 Indigenous Peoples and local communities Forest Tenure Pledge (COP26 Pledge) covered 2021–2025; it aimed to advance forest tenure and governance and recognize the importance of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land and forest guardianship in advancing climate and biodiversity goals. Launched shortly after [findings](#) showed that very little climate funding was directed towards IP and LC forest tenure and management, the COP26 Pledge was designed to build momentum around forest tenure and increase understanding of and support for tenure as a key element of climate and biodiversity agendas.

The COP26 Pledge aligns with other COP26 announcements and commitments, including the [Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#), the [Global Forest Finance Pledge](#) (GFFP) and the [Congo Basin Pledge](#) (CBP), which all support forest conservation and climate change mitigation.³ The COP26 Pledge also supports the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, the UNCCD, and the CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework goals, including the associated 30x30 target.

The COP26 Pledge implementation period concluded in December 2025. This report presents its final funding figures for 2025 and for the full five years of the COP26 Pledge, highlights overall achievements, and provides updates on the renewed commitment announced at COP30.

Last year's annual report announced that the FTFG exceeded its \$1.7 billion commitment after the first four years. The FTFG also succeeded in establishing an important platform to influence other funders and articulate a shared vision for stronger climate, biodiversity, and tenure rights policy.

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 COP26 Pledge, reporting often refers to these groups together. 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 COP26 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.

BOX 1**About the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG)**

In 2021, the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) first convened the 25 government and philanthropic donors who made up the COP26 Indigenous Peoples and local communities Forest Tenure Pledge (COP26 Pledge).⁴ The group committed to provide \$1.7 billion by December 2025 to help advance Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' forest tenure rights and support their sustainable forest management and ecosystem protection roles 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. Because the COP26 Pledge includes both allocated and unallocated funding, pledged funding supports existing and new initiatives. The COP26 Pledge counts funds spent between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2025.

The Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) combines the distinct strengths of government and philanthropic donors. While government donors can provide the scale and rigorous compliance required for large-scale institutional impact, philanthropic donors offer the flexibility needed to build direct, agile, and trust-based partnerships with grassroots organizations. By using both approaches, the FTFG bridges the gap between major systemic change and localized, community-driven success, ensuring that tenure security initiatives are both adequately funded and truly responsive to the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

With the COP30 Pledge announcement, the FTFG now convenes 39 donors, including governments and philanthropies. (See [Box 4](#) for more information).



Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

BOX 2**COP26 Pledge Endorsers**

Federal Republic of Germany
Kingdom of Norway
Kingdom of the Netherlands
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America⁵

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 Challenge⁶

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 See <https://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230106145205/https://ukcop26.org/cop26-iplc-forest-tenure-joint-donor-statement/>

⁵ The United States signed the COP26 Pledge but stopped participating when USAID closed in 2025.

⁶ The Protecting Our Planet Challenge (POP) members signed the COP26 Pledge as a group.

Collaboration and Transparency

As the COP26 Pledge implementation coalition, the Forest Tenure Funders Group (FTFG) helps foster learning and collaboration. We provide a platform for the COP26 Pledge's government and philanthropic donors to exchange knowledge, identify funding overlaps and gaps, and discuss evolving challenges in supporting tenure rights and ecosystem protection efforts. The platform also provides a space for dialogue with partners, including Indigenous and local community organizations and funds and coalitions such as the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP).

Transparency is a core element of the FTFG's work. We publish annual reports to track progress towards our commitment, share financial figures, and highlight the COP26 Pledge's achievements and challenges publicly. While each signatory disburses funds according to individual mandates and priorities, the FTFG is committed to collective reporting to remain transparent and accountable to partners and rightsholders. By creating a shared platform for learning and accountability, the FTFG urges donor institutions to prioritize funding tenure and keeps global attention on Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights.

BOX 3

Land Tenure in 2025–2026: the “Three Pledges”

The highly anticipated UNFCCC 30th Conference of Parties was located at the “Gateway to the Amazon” and had strong Indigenous Peoples, local community, and Afro-descendant community representation.

Three major global commitments for people and forests were announced at COP30:

1. The FTFG launched a renewed \$1.8 billion Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities land and forest tenure pledge.
2. The Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment, led by tropical forest governments and supported by the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) Secretariat, committed to collectively recognize and strengthen at least 160 million hectares of lands for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities by 2030.
3. The Tropical Forest Forever Facility was launched and committed to allocate a minimum of 20% of payments to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

These commitments make strong promises to communities, forests, and tenure at a moment of crowded climate negotiations. They demonstrate that people and forests are integral to climate action. They are bolstered by the Belém Call to Action for the Congo Basin Forests, a renewal of the COP26 Congo Basin Pledge commitment. Central African countries and European country partners, development banks, and other organizations made this \$2.5 billion commitment to sustainably manage and protect the Congo Basin's forests.⁷ Also at COP30, the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) announced "The Peoples Pledge," a commitment to "invest 500 million dollars over the next five years in truly territorial action," to complement other pledges.

As we move beyond COP30, we are focused on doing our part to meet the world's ambitious 2030 climate and biodiversity targets, including protecting 30% of the world's land, waters, and ocean areas; halting and reversing deforestation; and reducing global warming and greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Paris Agreement.⁸

COP30 Pledge

At COP30, the FTFG shone a bright spotlight on the importance of land and forest tenure with the [COP30 Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities Forest and Land Tenure Pledge](#). Thirty-nine government and philanthropic donors endorsed this renewed \$1.8 billion pledge; it advances Indigenous Peoples (IP), local community (LC), and Afro-descendant (AD) community land tenure rights and roles in ecosystem protection and climate mitigation. The FTFG renewed the COP30 Pledge with an expanded donor group and increased funding. Its three main goals are to build upon the COP26 Pledge progress; adapt future work to meet evolving realities; and respond to Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant needs related to tenure security and forest conservation.

The COP30 Pledge was developed in a deliberate, iterative, and consultative manner to shape the next pledge in terms of substance and process. Beginning in 2024, FTFG members had internal meetings and led dialogue and workshops with additional governments and philanthropic donors; IP, LC, and AD partners; and other allied organizations to assess the COP26's successes and limitations. The COP30 Pledge was then drafted with these inputs. The final version incorporates feedback from and advocacy by donors and partners.

7 Elysee.fr (2025). *Joint press release - The Belém Call*. <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2025/11/06/joint-press-release-the-belem-call>

8 Convention on Biological Diversity. *2030 Targets*. <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>; UNFCCC. *The Glasgow Climate Pact – Key Outcomes from COP26*. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-glasgow-climate-pact-key-outcomes-from-cop26>; The National Archives (2021). *Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use*. <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230418175226/https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/>

This resulted in several key enhancements, including: i) the explicit inclusion of Afro-descendant communities in the COP30 Pledge text, ii) an expanded scope that goes beyond forest ecosystems to include other critical terrestrial ecosystems,⁹ iii) and a commitment to increase the share of direct, flexible, and long-term funding.

The COP30 Pledge does not address everything partners recommended, but the FTFG is committed to ongoing dialogue to facilitate effective COP30 Pledge implementation. Table 1 outlines how key elements have evolved from the COP26 Pledge to the COP30 Pledge.

Table 1: Key Changes for the COP30 Pledge

Topic	COP26 Pledge commitment	COP30 Pledge commitment
Commitment amount	\$1.7 billion	\$1.8 billion
Number of donors	25	39
Communities named in the pledge text	Indigenous Peoples and local communities	Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities
Pledge scope	Forest ecosystems in ODA-eligible countries	Terrestrial and coastal ecosystems in ODA-eligible countries
Direct financing	Not explicitly referenced	Commitment to “continue efforts to increase the share of direct, long-term, and flexible financing”
Pledge cross-linkages	Announced alongside the Global Forest Finance Pledge and the Congo Basin Pledge, but with no explicit cross-reference in the announcement	Explicitly mentions that the COP30 Pledge “complements and reinforces” the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment and the TFFF minimum allocation of 20% of payments to IPs and LCs

⁹ The COP30 Pledge applies to work in countries eligible for Official Development Assistance in relevant terrestrial ecosystems including forests, drylands, rangelands, peatlands, mangroves, and littoral forests.
¹⁰ The Protecting Our Planet Challenge (POP) members and Ocean Resilience & Climate Alliance (ORCA) members signed the pledge as groups.

BOX 4

COP30 Pledge Endorsers

Federal Republic of Germany
Kingdom of Norway
Kingdom of the Netherlands
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Arcus Foundation
Comic Relief
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Ford Foundation
Instituto Ibirapitanga
Jacobs Futura Foundation
LGT Venture Philanthropy
Oak Foundation
Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
Robert Bosch Stiftung
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
The Rockefeller Foundation
Serrapilheira Institute
Skoll Foundation
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
Anonymous Australian Trust

Ocean Resilience & Climate Alliance (ORCA)
Eight anonymous donors

Protecting Our Planet Challenge¹⁰
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

SECTION 2

COP26 Pledge Funding Results

This report covers COP26 Pledge-aligned donor funding from January to December 2025 towards the overall \$1.7 billion commitment. It also details overall trends across the Pledge's five years—from 2021–2025. The COP26 Pledge implementation period concluded in December 2025, and 2025 data were reported to and analyzed by the FTFG Secretariat in 2026.

Methods

Each COP26 Pledge signatory provided a list of 2025 calendar year Pledge-aligned funding, compiled and coded in a common format.¹¹ In collaboration with each endorser, the secretariat reviewed their submitted data to ensure consistent recipient organization classification, Pledge relevance, and geographic distribution calculation, among other quality assurance measures. The data were then aggregated and analyzed to produce findings. In line with past practice, the FTFG does not publish information about individual members' COP26 Pledge commitments, allocations, or grant recipients. Some members publish separate and more detailed information about their COP26 Pledge commitment progress.¹²

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 reporting template definitions 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.

Quantitative information can be limited and fail to capture all funding aspects. [Section 3](#) contains case studies that highlight promising examples of Pledge-supported work. We also address potential overlapping of funds and explain how we manage this in [Appendix 1](#).

¹¹ Several FTFG members did not report 2025 data. This includes some members of the Protecting Our Planet Challenge, which reports as a group, as well as members with changed strategies or COP26 Pledge commitments that were structured as front-loaded, one-time initiatives. Additionally, we could not include information from USAID, which dissolved in 2025 and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, which wound down in 2025. Submissions also included a small amount of previously unreported 2022–2024 COP26 Pledge-aligned funding and amendments to previous grants, which were allocated to the relevant year.

¹² For example, see Ford Foundation's May 2026 [update](#).

BOX 5**Pledge Commitments, Disbursements, and Implementation**

As discussed in previous annual reports, the COP26 \$1.7 billion announcement included different types of funding. Some Pledge-aligned funds supported initiatives designed before the COP26 announcement but not disbursed until the COP26 Pledge period began (see [Box 1](#)). Additionally, because of philanthropic and government donors' diverse funding practices, annual report figures include a combination of disbursements, formal allocations, and commitments. While all projects reported have been formally committed and are being actively implemented, some funds are for long-term projects; in this case, COP26 Pledge-reported funds will continue to be disbursed beyond the COP26 Pledge period. While funding is counted as "disbursed" when it is transferred to the entity responsible for implementing the grant or project, 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.

Funding Overview

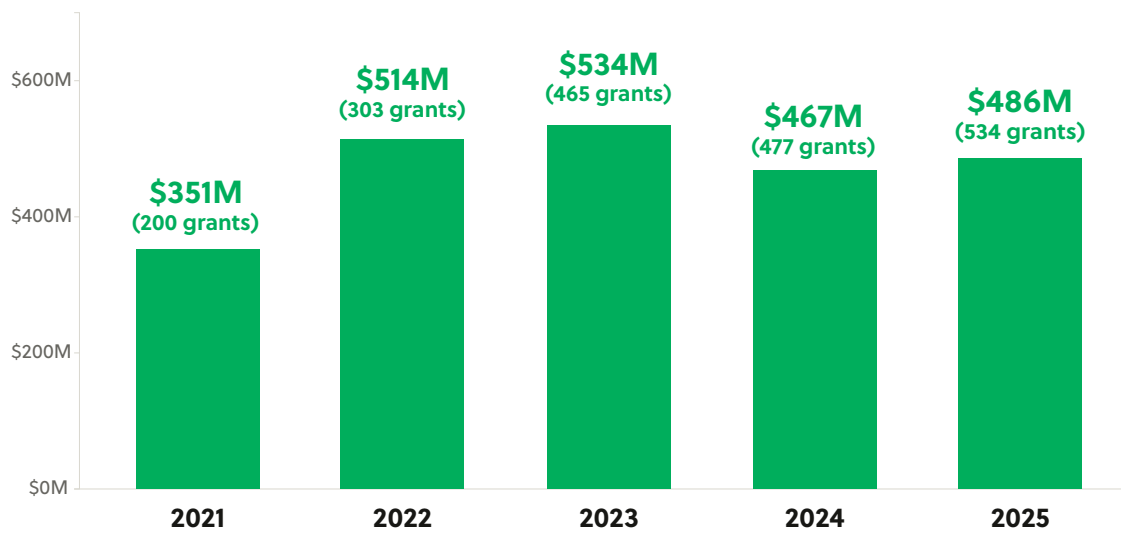
In 2025, COP26 Pledge donors provided¹³ over \$490 million¹⁴ to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land tenure rights and forest guardianship. **Over the course of the entire COP26 Pledge—from January 2021 to December 2025—funding totaled \$2.35 billion.** FTFG Pledge donors have therefore exceeded their commitment target by 38%. Equally important, many projects reported under the COP26 Pledge are multi-year commitments that may continue to disburse funds after the Pledge's conclusion; some funds have not yet reached their ultimate recipients.¹⁵ In 2025, government donors provided 74% of funds, a larger share than in 2021–2023, but a lower share than in 2024.

¹³ 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 COP26 Pledge discussions, we use "funding" and related terms to refer both to allocated and disbursed funds.

¹⁴ Some government donors report funds that are formally allocated and undergoing implementation but are not yet fully disbursed; \$12.7 million of 2025 Pledge funding was reported as "committed" or "commissioned" funds, while the remainder is disbursements.

¹⁵ Due to multi-year grant agreements and government funding for long-term initiatives, especially through multilateral funds, payments may extend beyond the COP26 Pledge period, but will not be counted towards the COP30 Pledge.

Figure 1: Yearly Progress towards the \$1.7 Billion Target



Note: Figures for all years reflect the most recent data available. As in previous cycles, some donors reported COP26 Pledge-aligned funding for 2021–2024 after that year's report was published, and some previously reported grants have since been corrected. Before this year, reports counted funding in the year it was reported. Because this report covers the entire pledge period, all annual and cumulative figures have been restated to attribute funding to the grantmaking year rather than the year it was reported. Increases to existing grants are counted in the year the additional money was allocated. Annual totals therefore differ from those published previously.

Table 2: 2021–2025 Pledge Funding

	Total government donor funding	Total philanthropic donor funding	Annual total	Percentage of COP26 Pledge total
2021	\$200.15M	\$151.34M	\$351.49M	21%
2022	\$351.30M	\$162.73M	\$514.03M	30%
2023	\$389.43M	\$144.21M	\$533.64M	31%
2024	\$362.78M	\$104.70M	\$467.48M	27%
2025	\$359.55M	\$126.57M	\$486.12M	29%
Cumulative	\$1.66B	\$689.55M	\$2.35B	138%

Note: Rounding may produce values that deviate from the total sum.



Photo by Jaye Renold / If Not Us Then Who

Discussion: Yearly Progress

We are very pleased that the FTFG exceeded its target by 38%; this is a strong sign for funding for IP and LC forest tenure and guardianship amid a challenging funding landscape. The 2025 COP26 Pledge-aligned total remained high but decreased slightly compared to 2022 and 2023. Philanthropic donor funding increased from 2024 but was lower than previous years. These trends may be attributed to several factors. First, no USAID contributions were counted in 2024 and 2025. Additionally, as noted in last year's report, philanthropic funding has declined in the report's final years; some of this can be attributed to the fact that several philanthropies structured their COP26 Pledge commitments as front-loaded, one-time initiatives, which were counted in the first and second years of reporting. Several philanthropic donors did not report 2025 data because of sunseting, internal policies, or grantmaking cycles; in both cases, this contributed to lower philanthropic funding levels than in the COP26 Pledge's early years. Finally, most philanthropic grants are typically reported in full when awarded—even if they are disbursed over multiple years—which creates variation across reporting cycles.

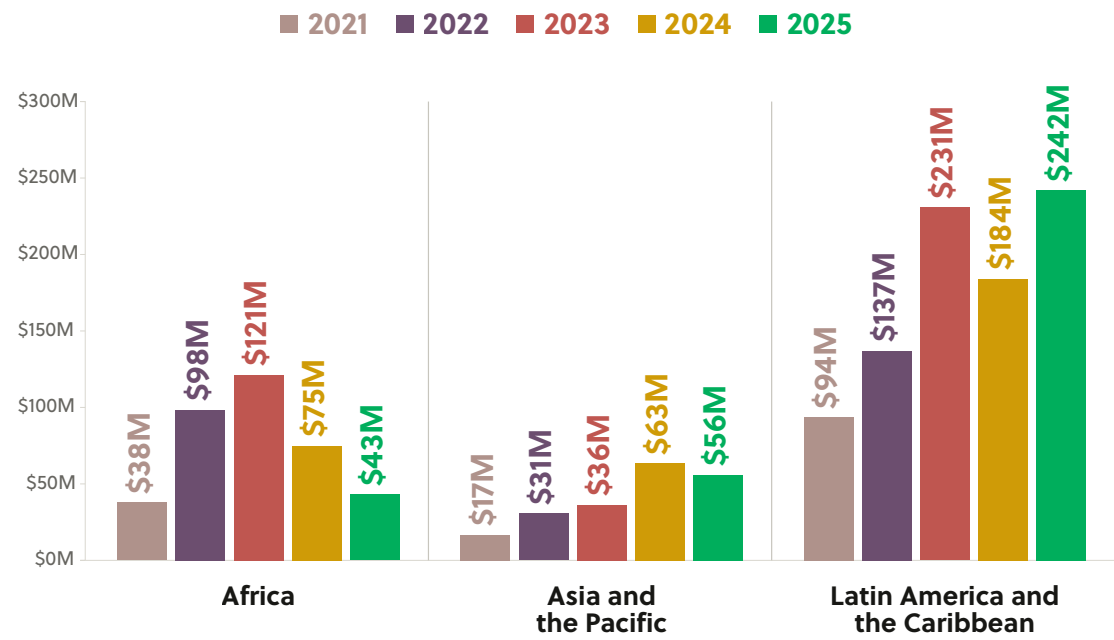
Funding by Geography

In 2025, 30% of COP26 Pledge funding supported global work, while the rest supported regional, national, or local projects.¹⁶ **Of the non-global share, Latin America received the largest funding portion (71%), followed by the Asia-Pacific region (16%), and Africa (13%).**¹⁷ Compared to 2024, funding for Africa and the Asia-Pacific region decreased. Funding for Latin America increased. And funding for global projects remained steady.

¹⁶ All disaggregated figures in this and the following subsections are calculated using a standardized format to code COP26 Pledge signatories' grants and other funding. Donors categorized COP26 Pledge-aligned projects by geographic region; where possible, they listed specific countries and percentage breakdowns. When 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. The global category also includes work without a specific geographic focus, such as for international communications, research, and advocacy.

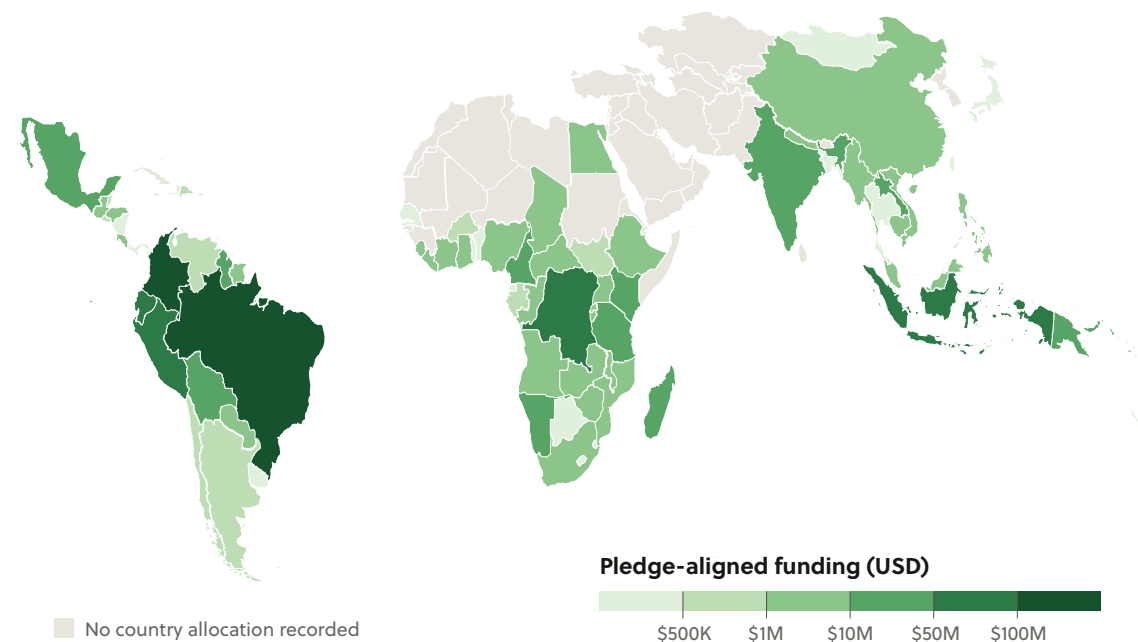
¹⁷ Regional percentages were calculated using the total sum of non-global funding.

Figure 2: Funding by Geography, 2021–2025



Over the course of the COP26 Pledge, funding was concentrated around the three primary tropical forest basins. In 2025, 85% of Latin American funding went to Amazon Basin countries. In the Asia-Pacific region, 97% of 2025 funds went to the Borneo-Mekong-Southeast Asia Basin.¹⁸ In Africa, 34% of 2025 funding supported Congo Basin countries. Figure 3, below, shows the geographic distribution of funds across countries from 2021 to 2025.

Figure 3: Funding by Country, 2021–2025



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

Discussion: Geography

The geographic data show that COP26 Pledge funding is going to critical regions for forests and tenure rights. Although funding for the Asia-Pacific region decreased in 2025, the data show a continued higher rate of funding for Asia-Pacific compared to the 2021 baseline. This is important progress, yet the region continues to receive disproportionately low funding levels, despite being home to two-thirds of the world's Indigenous Peoples.

At the same time, Africa funding has declined substantially since a 2023 peak. The amount of COP26 Pledge funding going to the continent is, however, higher than our figures suggest because some large, multi-region projects are counted as “global” if specific allocation figures are not available. Additionally, several FTFG funders with substantial programmatic work in Africa did not report funding to the FTFG in 2025, which may help explain the decline.¹⁹ Regardless, more funding should be directed to Africa. Several new FTFG members who endorsed the COP30 Pledge are focused on Africa; funding from these members will be included in next year's annual report.

The geographic data continue to reflect that FTFG funding is concentrated in Amazon, Congo Basin, and Borneo-Mekong-Southeast Asia Basin countries. While the world's three largest tropical forest basins have clear funding needs, other key regions receive less funding, leaving communities vulnerable to foreign aid cuts, deforestation, extractivism, and climate change. The FTFG continues to stress that we must improve the geographic funding balance. Launched in 2025, our regional working groups provide space to discuss these challenges.



Photo by Hugo Metz / If Not Us Then Who

¹⁹ Several FTFG members did not report 2025 data, including some members of the Protecting Our Planet Challenge, as well as members with changed strategies or COP26 Pledge commitments that were structured as front-loaded, one-time initiatives. Additionally, we could not include information from USAID, which dissolved in 2025 and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, which wound down in 2025.

Funding by Theme

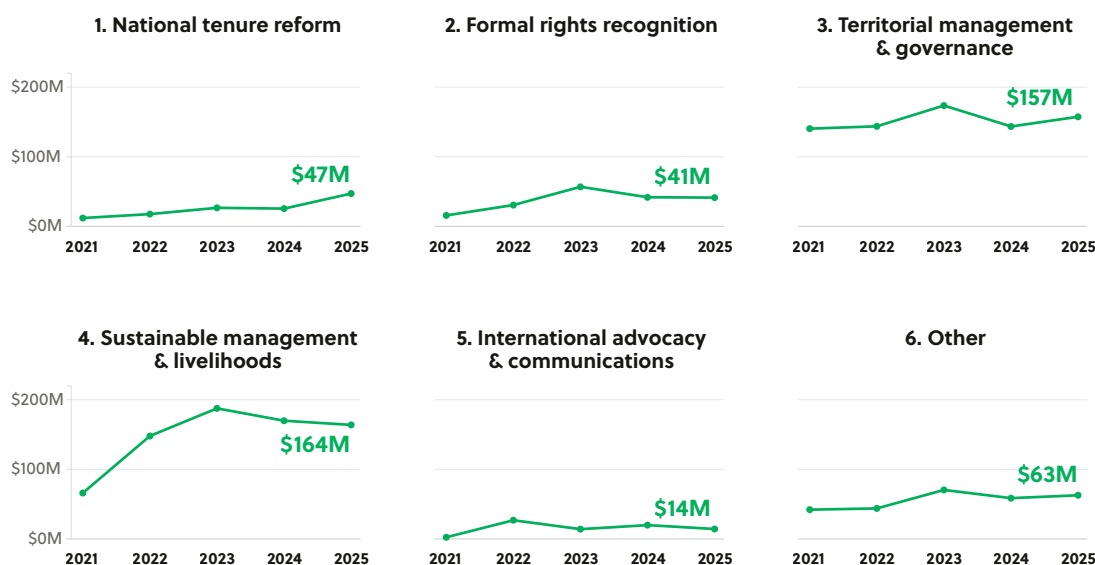
Donors categorized each grant or project into one of five thematic categories or in a sixth “other” category:²⁰

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

As in prior years, the largest shares of 2025 funding supported territorial management and strengthening tenure security (theme 3, 32%) and sustainable forest management and forest-based livelihoods (theme 4, 34%); together these comprised nearly two-thirds of all COP26 Pledge-aligned funding. Support for tenure reform process to help secure IP and LC rights (theme 1, 10%) and formal rights recognition process (theme 2, 8%) represented smaller funding shares. There was a notable increase in theme 1 funding from an earlier baseline of 4–5%; this accounted for \$47 million in 2025 compared to \$25 million in 2024.

In 2025, the share of funding for international advocacy and communications on IP and LC land rights—and funding to support the role of IPs and LCs in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation—was similar to but slightly slower than in previous years (theme 5, 3%). Many grants advanced multiple objectives; around 57% of 2025 funding had both a primary and secondary thematic focus. This means more projects advanced themes 1, 2, and 5 than the primary thematic focus data capture. The 2025 secondary thematic focuses had a similar distribution to the primary thematic focuses, although theme 5 received a larger share of funding as a secondary thematic focus (9%). Figure 4, below, shows the funding breakdown by primary thematic area.

²⁰ Some funders used the “other” category for work that other donors categorized by theme, including capacity building and strengthening of Indigenous organizations (which other funders coded as theme 3), support for land and environmental defenders, support for narrative change and knowledge production (which other funders coded as theme 5), support for cultural preservation, and support for women and youth. Several larger projects were counted as “other” because a single data line entry represented a collection of smaller grants with different thematic focuses.

Figure 4: Primary Thematic Area, 2021–2025

Note: The thematic categories used in 2021 differed from those used from 2022 onward. To support comparison across the full pledge period, 2021 categories were mapped to the closest equivalent in the current six-category framework. The former 2021 categories for formal rights recognition and national tenure reform were thus reassigned to categories 2 and 1, respectively; the former “other” category was mapped to category 6. Category 5, international advocacy and communications, did not have a direct equivalent in the 2021 framework.

Discussion: Theme

As in prior years, most 2025 funding prioritized territorial management, governance, and livelihoods (themes 3 and 4).²¹ Projects were implemented by a wide range of actors. These included Indigenous organizations working on community-led territorial management or livelihoods projects in a single community or territory. There were also larger initiatives by NGO or multilateral agencies to advance rights-based territorial management or advance sustainable forest economies across multiple countries or regions.

However, it is important to acknowledge that Figure 4 does not capture the full picture of members’ support for tenure reform and formal rights recognition work (themes 1 and 2) and may understate its volume. Once secondary themes are included, the rights-focused work aligned with these two themes represents over a quarter of funding. This suggests that this work often occurs as one portion of broader territorial and livelihood initiatives. Additionally, the volume of support for theme 1 (national land and tenure reform processes) increased substantially over prior years. This may reflect that some members ramped up initiatives designed specifically to advance tenure reform. Tenure reform work is also advanced by FTFG donors through complementary, non-financial initiatives. The FTFG government members all participate in the Forest & Climate Leaders’ Partnership, which advances land governance and tenure reform at a political level. These donors also endorsed the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment to support the recognition and strengthening of 160 million hectares of IP, LC, and AD land by 2030.

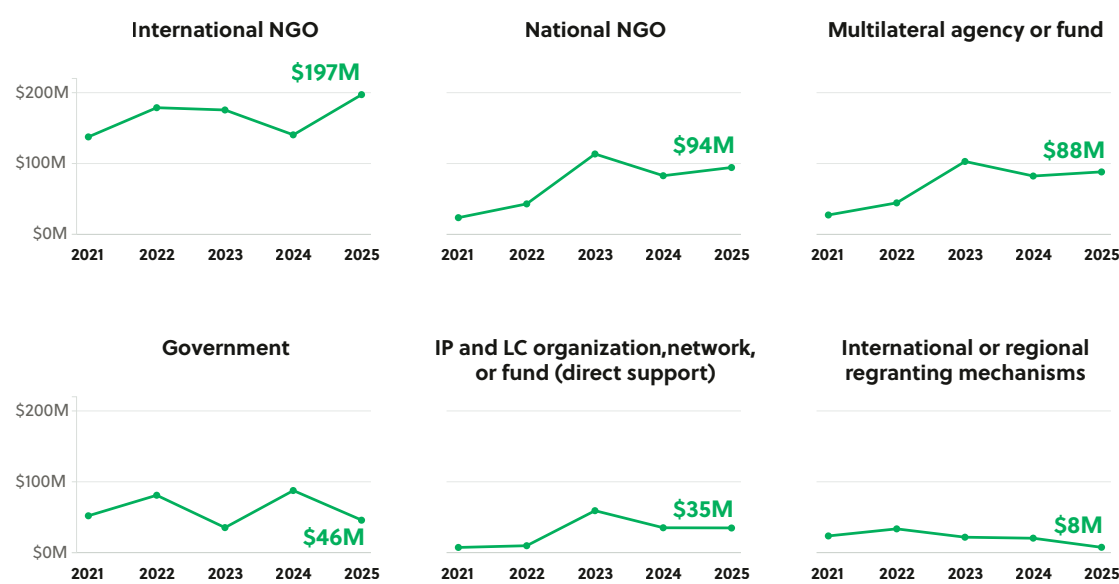
²¹ Themes are not mutually exclusive; many grants work across several themes but are categorized by their primary objective.

FTFG members consider funding across all these categories essential to advancing tenure rights and forest protection. This funding covers the broad spectrum of work that both enables and advances this work—from creating the political conditions for tenure recognition to ensuring the participation of IPs, LCs, and ADs in international decision-making spaces to technical mapping and registration work to supporting communities so they can manage and live off of their territories to communications and narrative building. Advancing the COP26 Pledge’s goals to secure and sustain tenure rights and ecosystem protection requires combining enabling conditions work (including policy, legal recognition, systemic reform, and advocacy) with grassroots-level implementation (including territorial management, guardianship, livelihoods, and security).

Funding by Delivery Partner and Direct Support

In 2025, the largest funding share went to international NGOs (41%), while 19% of funding went to national NGOs. Another 27% went to governments (9%) and multilateral agencies (18%). Indigenous and local community organizations received over 7% of funding; contractors received 4%; and international or regional regranting mechanisms received 2%. In 2023–2025, funding for national NGOs more than doubled compared to 2021–2022. Funding also increased for multilateral agencies. Meanwhile, funding for international NGOs increased compared to 2024, while funding for governments and regranting mechanisms decreased.

Figure 5: Primary Delivery Partner, 2021–2025



Note: This figure excludes a small amount of funding going to contractors. In 2025, \$19 million of funding went to contractors serving as the primary delivery partner.

Direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and local community organizations, networks, or funds was 7.2% of funding in 2025—around \$35 million.²² While this percentage declined from 10.6% in 2023, annual direct funding volumes have still quadrupled since 2021 and 2022. Philanthropic direct funding was 25%; this is a decrease from 2024 but still much higher than government direct funding, at less than 1%.

Beyond funding volume, 36% of 2025 grants were to Indigenous and local community organizations, and more than 135 IP and LC organizations received direct support.

This reflects expanded donor engagement with Indigenous and local community funds, networks, and organizations across levels—from the global and regional to individual communities and leaders. Table 3 details direct funding trends from 2021–2025.

Table 3: Direct Support, 2021–2025

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percent direct funding	2.9%	2.1%	10.6%	7.6%	7.2%
Percent philanthropic donor direct funding	3.8%	8.5%	27%	34%	25%
Percent government donor direct funding	1%	1%	4%	1.6%	0.6%
# of IP and LC organizations supported ²³	22	39	100	112	135

Note: 2021 and 2022 figures are based on disaggregated reporting from a smaller set of FTFG members. Direct funding figures for 2021–2024 have not been restated to the grantmaking year to maintain consistency with past reporting cycles.

²² Direct support is defined in [Appendix 1](#).
²³ 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 2022 to 2023 jump appears abnormally large because a greater number of FTFG donors began reporting disaggregated data in 2023, which provided more detail on specific organizations receiving support.



Photo by Alfred Mtumba / If Not Us Then Who

As in previous reports, the FTFG attempts to calculate the diverse ways that funding reaches IP and LC organizations beyond direct funding. Many funding recipients work closely with IP and LC organizations, co-designing projects or receiving funds on behalf of IP and LC organizations to reduce their administrative and reporting burdens. Other funding recipients regrant large volumes of funds to IP and LC organizations, expanding the number of organizations that ultimately receive funding beyond the original donor's capacity. To quantify such funding, we ask FTFG donors to approximate the portion of each grant that reaches Indigenous Peoples and local communities in ways they can influence and control—through direct funding, regranting, or close partnerships that ensure communities have a say in project design and funding usage. Some donors can't obtain this information—especially for large, long-term projects—but we received this data from donors whose projects totaled 56% of funding.²⁴ In 2025, donors estimated that 45% (\$121 million) of these funds reached or closely involved IPs and LCs.²⁵ This suggests that a much greater proportion of funding reaches communities than through direct funding alone.

Discussion: Delivery Partner and Direct Support

Forest tenure is ultimately shaped by laws, policies, institutions and public authorities. Community-level action can document and defend rights, but durable tenure security often requires governments to recognise customary rights, register territories, reform land and forest laws, resolve overlapping claims and guarantee

²⁴ 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%.

²⁵ This represents funding that reaches IP and LC organizations both indirectly and directly. These figures rely on estimates and should be considered as approximations.

rights. The COP26 Pledge therefore explicitly included both community-level tenure work and national land and forest tenure reform and implementation. Working with governments can address the enabling environment in which community rights either become secure or remain vulnerable.

The role of governments is to:

- › **Pass laws** and policies that recognise and protect Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' forest tenure rights.
- › **Strengthen public systems:** Build the capacity of land, forest and other public institutions to administer and enforce tenure rights.
- › **Turn rights into practice:** Fund land registration, mapping, demarcation and implementation so legal rights become secure rights.
- › **Address conflicts and competing claims:** Support legitimate mechanisms for dispute resolution and accountability.
- › **Enable scale and sustainability:** Use ODA and development cooperation to embed tenure rights in national systems, policies and budgets-complementing, not replacing, direct community finance.

The long-standing support of bilateral donors in the FTFG for the rights and organizations of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities is systematically integrated into broader policy and governance reform programs and collaboration with partner governments, since lasting progress on land and territorial rights depends on political will, implementation and effective public administration. These reforms require cooperation between state and non-state actors to integrate Indigenous Peoples, and local communities into national policies and legal systems, with public donors helping to create the enabling environment.

Funding modalities that are directly accessible, flexible and genuinely responsive to Indigenous Peoples' self-determined priorities and the needs of local communities are an important element in this multi-level approach.

The 2025 data confirm that the FTFG's direct funding levels increased from the 2021 baseline. The data also show a consistent increase in the number of IP and LC organizations reported as receiving funding, suggesting an increasingly diverse and robust landscape of IP and LC organizations funded by FTFG members. The decline in direct funding percentage from 2023 to 2024 and 2025 can largely be explained by the tapering-off of some philanthropic funding towards the end of the Pledge period and multi-year funding cycle variations. Four FTFG members who reported funding in 2024 were unable to report in 2025; this decreased the total volume of direct funding included. Additionally, in 2023, some philanthropies made large, multi-year direct funding grants; these provided funding in 2024 and 2025 even though the full grant amounts were reported in 2023. Nonetheless, the FTFG's current direct funding levels do not meet some partners' expectations.

In 2026, the FTFG entered a new phase to begin implementing the COP30 Pledge. As the FTFG welcomes an expanded set of donors, we are committed to understanding and addressing barriers to increasing direct funding. At the same time, some government donors with strict requirements—audits, safeguards, and compliance—are balancing the trade-offs of direct funding and total funding volumes. They channel funding through delivery partners to many IP and LC organizations to maximize the government funding that can reach communities, balancing accountability with the ability to fund IP and LC organizations at a larger scale. In 2026, FTFG donors had active dialogue with Indigenous and local community organizations and funds to consider questions around increasing direct financing. We are also exploring how to engage donors and intermediaries in responsible funding practices that respect Indigenous Peoples' self-determination.

COP26 Pledge funds are directed to various delivery partners, highlighting several pathways towards forest and tenure outcomes. These categories may, however, inadvertently obscure the varied critical roles organizations play. Many donors classify organizations that regrant funds as international NGOs since these organizations also implement their own projects or provide technical support alongside regranting. As a result, money counted as "international NGO" funding includes large sums which are disbursed to Indigenous and local community organizations. Organizations categorized as international NGOs include larger conservation NGOs, rights-based organizations, and organizations with missions to secure and sustain tenure.

In addition to an emphasis on systems-level work to open policy space to advance the Pledge goals, there has been increased COP26 Pledge funding to multilateral agencies and projects. This includes funding for UN agencies and bodies, UN special rapporteurs, and development banks. It also includes contributions to regionally and thematically focused multi-donor trust funds like the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), the Amazon Bioeconomy and Forests Management Multi-Donor Trust Fund (AMDTF), and the Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF). Some of these funds have explicit commitments to regrant resources to Indigenous Peoples and local communities or work in partnership with regional or national Indigenous organizations. This is not counted as direct funding in the COP26 Pledge methodology, but it enables government donors constrained by strict fiduciary standards and legal requirements regarding the use of taxpayer funds to move resources to communities. See [Box 6](#) for a more detailed example of this funding.



Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Intermediaries and multilaterals also play a distinct role. Intermediaries accommodate donors' funding limitations and requirements while enabling larger, multi-year commitments. Funding disbursed through multilateral agencies and governments can also expand the Pledge's funding scope to support national programs and policy reform and make sub-grants to Indigenous and local community organizations.

Where direct financing cannot yet be achieved, intermediaries can add value, particularly by:

- › **Reaching organizations that donors cannot easily fund directly.** Some community organizations lack legal identities or bank accounts, while others may prefer to work through trusted partners and fiscal sponsors .
- › **Reducing administrative barriers.** International funding can involve substantial fiduciary, safeguarding, reporting and compliance requirements that smaller community organizations may not yet be equipped to manage.
- › **Providing capacity and accompaniment.** Intermediaries can help organizations build the systems, skills and institutional capacity needed to manage larger and more complex grants over time.
- › **Aggregating and regranting resources.** A trusted intermediary or regranting mechanism can make many smaller grants possible, while reducing the transaction burden for donors with limited grant-management capacity.
- › **Supporting work at scale.** Some tenure outcomes require technical, legal or political engagement beyond the community level, for example, policy reform, land administration, national tenure processes and conflict-resolution systems.

To be clear, there are also disadvantages to working with multilaterals and intermediaries. Funding disbursements may be protracted. Accountability to rights-holders can decrease. The distance between donors and communities can increase. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are pushing to secure participation in the design of programs and accountability mechanisms to ensure they respond to rights-holders' needs.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities have developed new infrastructure to expand direct funding pathways. Indigenous and local community funds—from territorial funds to regional platforms and other Indigenous-led regranting—enable direct funding that supports communities and accommodates donors' funding capacity and requirements. FTFG members have increasingly supported these funding mechanisms, providing over \$15 million to support at least 20 IP, LC, and AD funds since 2021.²⁶ They provide flexible, fit-for-purpose funding for communities, including institutional capacity building to receive larger funding volumes.

²⁶ Figures are based on 2021–2025 grants data and member self-reporting and should be considered estimates. This includes some funding for the organizations establishing the funding mechanism. Some territorial funds were supported as part of larger projects, making it impossible to disaggregate and report on the amounts they received.

As mentioned, it is difficult to understand the full funding scope that ultimately reaches communities. For the subset of funding for which donors provided an estimate, around 45% of funding reached or closely involved IPs and LCs; this is encouraging and suggests that Indigenous Peoples and local communities have meaningful control over COP26 Pledge-aligned funding even when it is not direct. Intermediaries and regranting mechanisms can also help advance funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. To be effective, these must pass on resources in a timely manner. Some have established accountability structures; these include Indigenous representation on boards and advisory bodies and explicit regranting targets.

The FTFG members are not a monolith nor are the COP26 Pledge recipients. Annual funding volumes and funding pathways vary based on organizational structures, resources, capacity, and requirements. Several FTFG donors consistently report that 50–90% of their funding goes directly to IP, LC, and AD organizations. Others cannot provide any direct funding but channel funding to IP, LC, and AD organizations through intermediaries. We believe that the members' diverse funding approaches facilitate different tenure rights and forest guardianship objectives and provide opportunities for substantive discourse and learning.

It is important to remember that this report is a snapshot; it does not capture the robust and nuanced ways organizations provide resources and services. As the FTFG begins monitoring members' funding under the COP30 Pledge, we will explore ways to go deeper and better capture the multifaceted roles organizations play. The FTFG will also continue to serve as a space to reflect on funding practices and how members can increase resources to Indigenous, local community, and Afro-descendant funds and organizations and ensure that intermediary organizations are transparent and accountable to rights-holders.

BOX 6

Legacy Landscapes Fund IP and LC Funding Window

Launched last year, Legacy Landscapes Fund's (LLF) dedicated funding window for Indigenous Peoples- and local community-led organizations brings a new scale and time horizon to financing locally-led conservation. Backed by more than \$35 million from the German and UK governments, alongside philanthropic matching funds, it is designed around priorities consistently raised by IPs and LCs: substantial, long-term and predictable financing; a central role for rightsholder organizations to serve as implementers; and arrangements tailored to organizations with different capacities and institutional structures. By combining long-term commitments with flexible delivery models, including fiscal sponsors where needed, this window aims to support IPs and LCs in leading the conservation and sustainable management of their territories. Though not classified as "direct funding" under the COP26 Pledge methodology, LLF gives large public donors a route to channel substantial, long-term resources to IPs and LCs as implementers.

Funding for IP and LC Women and Youth

In 2023, the FTFG began tracking funding for IP and LC women and youth to understand the resources flowing to these and other historically excluded groups. Since then, we have asked donors to indicate whether gender equality and youth were a “principal” (primary) grant objective, a “significant” (secondary) grant objective, or whether gender equality and youth were not targeted.²⁷

In 2025, only 4% of funding had gender equality as a principal focus, and another 60% had gender equality as a significant objective. These figures were slightly higher for direct funding to IP and LC organizations—10% of direct funding had gender equality as a primary focus. Compared to the previous two years, there was a decline in funding with a principal gender equality focus; some possible explanations are included in the discussion section. The larger secondary focus suggests that projects are successfully mainstreaming gender equality.

As in past years, youth remains a smaller funding focus. Projects with youth as a principal focus constituted less than 1% of 2025 funding—and a little more than 2% of direct funding. A larger share of funding (23%) incorporated youth as a significant focus.²⁸

Table 4: Funding Directed to IP and LC Women and Youth, 2023–2025

	2023	2024	2025
Percent gender equality targeting: Principal	11%	15%	4%
Percent gender equality targeting: Significant	54%	52%	60%
Percent youth targeting: Principal	2%	1%	1%
Percent youth targeting: Significant	35%	27%	23%

These data confirm previous years’ findings: youth inclusion is at a nascent stage, and gender-focused funding is largely integrated as part of larger projects.

²⁷ This gender equality targeting tracking method follows 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.” There is no OECD marker on youth, but we use the same structure to assess youth targeting and ask organizations to score their own activities.

²⁸ Since there is no OECD marker for youth, youth data should be interpreted as an estimation rather than as definitive figures.

Discussion: IP and LC Women and Youth

The FTFG is committed to supporting the meaningful participation of women and youth in decision-making processes and to strengthening institutions that represent and are led by local women and youth. While the gender equality mainstreaming indicated by the high “significant” gender equality targeting is encouraging, we are concerned about the 2025 decline in funding with a principal gender equality focus. This decline can largely be explained by two factors. First, several large-scale, multi-year projects with principal gender equality targeting were reported in 2023 and 2024. Although these amounts were fully counted in those years, project funding will continue to be disbursed in 2026 and the coming years; this decline does not indicate a drop-off in funding for IP and LC women. Second, at the end of 2025, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, which had an explicit focus on women’s tenure rights, sunsetted. That meant that its 2025 grants were not included in this report. In anticipation of Wellspring’s planned wind-down, the FTFG specifically recruited gender-focused funders to endorse the COP30 Pledge commitment. Funding from these donors will be included in forthcoming COP30 Pledge annual reports, with the first to be published in 2026.

The FTFG is also committed to youth-focused funding, which is consistent but very low. This demographic plays a unique role in sustaining intergenerational knowledge and practices and advocating for climate and biodiversity action. Since there is no formal mechanism like an OECD marker for tracking youth funding, it should be noted that youth funding may be underreported in these data. FTFG members provide support for preserving intergenerational knowledge and cultural practices and to IP and LC youth for communications work and participation in decision-making spaces. To help rectify underfunding, the FTFG’s Gender and Youth working group—it previously led efforts to incorporate gender equality and youth data into the annual report—is planning targeted funding discussions to ensure that gender- and youth-focused funding increases over the course of the COP30 Pledge. Encouraging more funding for IP and LC youth and accurately monitoring funding progress would require a more robust, standardized tracking system, such as the OECD gender equality marker.



Photo by Sara Aliaga Ticona / If Not Us Then Who

SECTION 3

Lessons From the COP26 Pledge

At the conclusion of the COP26 Pledge, FTFG members and several partners shared observations about its impact and lessons learned since 2021. Below we share some principal lessons, quotes from FTFG members and partners, and short case studies highlighting progress and challenges.²⁹

Donors Describe the COP26 Pledge's Greatest Achievement

Members noted that the COP26 Pledge was successful in moving Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure rights from the margins of climate and conservation finance toward its center.

"Because of the COP26 Pledge, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure has become a core focus of climate and conservation strategy. This is bolstered by greater donor attention and investments to advance both formal rights recognition and the conditions needed to translate those rights into effective territorial management."

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

"The Pledge strengthened the case for IPs and LCs as the most effective forest stewards and highlighted the importance of securing their territorial rights as both a critical and cost-effective climate solution."

United Kingdom

"The pledge provides a unique space to identify what bilateral donors and philanthropic institutions each do best, and how their approaches can work together in practice. The FTFG evolved from a loose coalition into a more structured platform focused on peer learning, working groups, and coordination. It has also helped build trust with key partners, including Indigenous-led funds, the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, and UN mandate holders on the rights of Indigenous Peoples."

Germany



Photo by Hugo Metz / If Not Us Then Who

²⁹ Some contributions were lightly edited for length and clarity.

Changing the Conversation

“The most significant impact of the COP26 Pledge has been the shift in the global conversation on Indigenous Peoples’ financing. It demonstrated that Indigenous Peoples are not only rights holders but also key partners in climate action, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land stewardship.”

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Association of Peul Women and Autochthonous Peoples of Chad

“Beyond mobilizing resources, it created political legitimacy for a position long led by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant peoples, and local communities: that securing their collective rights and providing them direct access to finance are two of the most effective investments for securing forests, biodiversity, and climate resilience. It also attracted new actors, reshaped funders’ priorities, and helped move the sector from mobilizing commitments toward implementing them.”

Rights and Resources Initiative

“One of the most significant impacts of the COP26 Commitment has been helping to transform the global conversation: from focusing solely on forest protection to recognizing that rights, leadership, and financing for Indigenous Peoples and local communities are indispensable conditions for achieving lasting conservation results.”

Indigenous-led Funds Network of the Global South

Changing Funding Approaches

Over the COP26 Pledge period, several members underwent powerful evolutions. Ford Foundation re-examined its own grantmaking approaches. The Christensen Fund, in its work in the FTFG and across all of its grantmaking, continued to implement its trust-based model, doubling annual spending by providing additional long-term support to partners. For the Moore Foundation, the COP26 Pledge connected a long-standing commitment to the Andes-Amazon region with global climate and conservation commitments.

The COP26 Pledge also sparked the creation of a completely new program. The UK’s £94 million Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) was designed in response to IP and LC organizations who wanted more direct, flexible, and long-term funding and the ability to shape priorities, governance, implementation arrangements, and monitoring from the outset. Norway, which already had a longstanding commitment funding tenure and land rights, found that COP26 showed this to be a broadly shared agenda.

Membership in the FTFG has prompted Germany to reflect on its funding practices. Consequently, BMZ decided to launch a dedicated funding window for Indigenous Peoples and local communities under the Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF).

This new window aims to respond to requests from Indigenous partners for long-term financing for area-based conservation that reaches rightsholders directly in order to advance self-determination. Additionally, Germany supports direct funding to rightsholders through the Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI). The Germany Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) through its International Climate Initiative (IKI) emphasizes direct support for Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.³⁰ Since 2014, IPs and LCs in 45 partner countries have received financial and technical support for 655 projects for the expansion of protected areas, the improvement of ecosystems, and for upholding and protecting traditional knowledge. In an additional financing phase ICCA GSI 30x30 will work together with IPs and LCs in 50 countries as a contribution to the implementation of the global biodiversity targets.

“The Pledge pushed us to critically re-evaluate and adapt our grantmaking mechanisms, shifting our focus toward more direct funding models that bypass traditional, bureaucratic intermediary structures.”

Ford Foundation

“The Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) program was born out of the COP26 Forest and Land Tenure Pledge, which provided the political mandate and momentum to turn the commitments into a large-scale program for Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the Amazon Basin.”

United Kingdom



Photo by Nura Batara / If Not Us Then Who

³⁰ The IKI has been sponsoring the Global ICCA Support Initiative and is cooperating with UNDP, the CBD Secretariat, the ICCA Consortium, the Small Grant Programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the UNEP-WCMC, and the IUCN.

Value Beyond Funding

“Beyond funding, one of the COP26 Pledge’s greatest achievements was creating political and institutional space for meaningful discussions on direct access to finance for Indigenous Peoples. It helped elevate this issue across both formal and informal processes and encouraged funders to rethink how they engage with Indigenous Peoples and their organizations.”

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim

“By situating Indigenous Peoples at the center of climate finance, the COP26 Pledge created space for us to engage donors in long-term, trust-based partnerships rather than short-term project cycles.”

Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund

“The COP26 Pledge helped shift the debate from how much funding is mobilized toward the more important questions of who receives the resources, how they reach territories, and who decides how they are used. One clear impact has been greater recognition that the institutional, administrative, political, and financial capacities of territorial funds need strengthening. At the same time, the Pledge exposed that structural barriers still prevent resources from reaching territories directly. It also opened a more systematic space for dialogue between donors and Indigenous Peoples’ and local community organizations, including the relationship between the GATC, the FTFG, and the FCLP.”

Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) (translated from Spanish)

Realizing Tenure Rights

The COP26 Pledge encouraged donors to join forces and aim for a larger collective impact. Member portfolios reflect this with increased investment in territorial governance, community monitoring, and management planning. The COP26 Pledge also encouraged investment in threat response and financing mechanisms, including blended finance approaches like Vítuke in Brazil and ARPA Comunidades, which were designed to support communities to benefit from recognized tenure rights.

When formal titling was not possible, donors supported use rights. The Netherlands supported work on Ethiopia’s Tigray-Afar border—it was implemented by Tropenbos International with PENHA and local partners—to clarify community user rights and encourage customary authorities to link their decisions to regional drylands restoration strategies. While statutory land remains under state ownership, communities can now act as dryland forest guardians.

“Learning exchanges with other donors have underscored that legal recognition is essential but not sufficient: durable outcomes also depend on representative institutions, effective territorial management, sustainable financing, monitoring systems, and the capacity to respond to threats. A key lesson is that progress is often nonlinear and highly dependent on political conditions, making sustained and coordinated support as important as the initial legal designation.”

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Case Study

Colombia: Authority, Not Just Title

Supported by Norway through NICFI, Nia Tero, Moore Foundation, Jacobs Futura Foundation, and Re:wild; implemented by the Gaia Amazonas Foundation.

Indigenous Peoples in the Colombian Amazon spent more than thirty years pressing for the governance rights included in Colombia’s Constitution. In December 2025, the country formalized its first eight Indigenous Territorial Entities (ETIs) over more than seven million hectares—roughly 15% of the Colombian Amazon—granting Indigenous authorities political and fiscal autonomy to administer their territories in direct coordination with national ministries and non-Indigenous institutions. One ETI is the Jaguars of Yurupari, an alliance of Indigenous governments consolidating what is described as an “Indigenous province.”

The work is producing powerful tenure and governance results. Ten Indigenous territories are receiving political and technical support to implement their new rights and land management systems in line with their own knowledge and self-governance systems. Fifty-one percent of project funds are directly administered by the ten Indigenous governments. There is a specific focus on strengthening women’s leadership in decision-making, land use policy, and financial planning. The project targets 8.3 million hectares of intact rainforest by 2027, covering 45 communities, 41 living languages, and nearly 12,000 people. Twelve additional territories are in the recognition process; approval would roughly double the forest area under this governance mechanism.

“Since the beginning of time, we, the Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon, have been committed to maintaining the balance of the territory, to keep it alive and healthy, so that the people can live in coexistence and have peace... [In this way], we can consolidate our government and administration systems and continue to guarantee the well-being of the people and the protection of the forest.”

Antonio Matapi, Indigenous representative of the Macroterritory of the Jaguars of Yurupari

Case Study

Bolivia: Monitoring as an Act of Governance

Supported by the Netherlands; implemented by Tropenbos International and the Bolivian Institute of Forestry Research (IBIF) with the Indigenous Forestry Association of Guarayos (AFIG).

The Indigenous Forestry Association of Guarayos AFIG works with 32 community forest organizations that manage around 1.1 million hectares under recognized forest management plans. These communities have tenure recognition but face rising wildfire risk.

In 2025, AFIG established a Forest Monitoring Center that combines satellite-based early warning with coordinated local response. The center tracks fire hot spots across the Guarayos territory and shares real-time information with municipal authorities, risk management units, and community brigades, enabling faster and better-coordinated action. By linking advanced monitoring tools with local knowledge, customary institutions, and community-based forest management systems, it strengthens both tenure-based forest governance and Indigenous communities' capacity to safeguard their forests, livelihoods, and long-term resource use; this separates a title from a defended territory.



Photo by Sara Aliaga Ticona / If Not Us Then Who

Designing for Direct Finance Access

Direct financing is one of several complementary elements to support reaching secure tenure rights. Direct access means giving partners a choice in how they engage with philanthropy. In Brazil, Nia Tero invited Indigenous partner organizations to choose if they'd prefer to pursue funding directly from the Bezos Earth Fund, with proposal support if needed, or continue receiving funds through Nia Tero as a no-cost regrantee partner.

The Amazon Catalyst for Forest Communities (AMCAT) has a different approach. It channels UK funding through a single delivery partner (Tenure Facility) that has direct partnerships with IP and LC organizations. This allows the program to reach communities at scale while reducing intermediary costs. An IP and LC advisory body reviews and provides comments on AMCAT's approaches, directing those perspectives into program design and adaptive management.

Alongside Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and the UK, the Netherlands contributes to The Amazon Bioeconomy and Forest Management Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which targeted at least 25% of resources for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and traditional communities. By the end of 2025, approximately 41% of its portfolio was dedicated to IPs, LCs, and ADs, expanding participation in project design, implementation, and monitoring. Mechanisms included the MINGA co-creation platform for territorial defense and deepening partnerships with COICA, OPIAC, AIDSEP, COIAB, CONFENIAE and CONAQ.



Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

Since the COP26 Pledge, the funding ecosystem has grown to include a proliferation of Indigenous-led funds. Nia Tero and other FTFG funders have supported several—the Rutî, Rio Negro (FIRN), Podáali and Pakará funds—in the Brazilian Amazon with funding and technical support. Ford Foundation also sees a maturing ecosystem and notes that Indigenous, Quilombola, and traditional community-led funding mechanisms organizing under the Network Brazilian Amazon Network of Territorial Funds are flourishing, strengthening territories and social movements. Ford Foundation also spotlights the continued success of Indonesia’s Nusantara Fund.

“One of our key learnings has been that enhancing direct access requires building the administrative resilience of local IP, AD, and LC organizations rather than expecting them to conform to rigid philanthropic standards.”

Ford Foundation

“By centering partner choice, this approach put Indigenous self-determination into practice and ensured funding pathways were responsive to each organization’s priorities and circumstances.”

Nia Tero

More Direct Access: a Central Demand

“The COP26 Pledge implementation confirmed a historic challenge: the resources directed to those on the front line of the climate crisis are still insufficient and, in large part, do not directly reach Indigenous organizations and territorial mechanisms...the low proportion of direct financing shows that it is still necessary to transform the international financial architecture, reducing barriers and excessive intermediation.”

APIB (translated from Portuguese)

“Although resource availability for these issues increased, much of the financing continues to arrive through intermediaries, and few Afro-descendant organizations are able to access those funds directly.”

CEDET (translated from Spanish)

Case Study

Indonesia: How the COP26 Pledge Created a New Fund

Reported by the Nusantara Fund.

Established in May 2023, the Nusantara Fund describes itself as “a commitment from the COP26 Glasgow Pledge.” The Fund says that its founders—AMAN, KPA, and WALHI—are “working to establish a direct funding mechanism for IPs and LCs in Indonesia.”

To date the Nusantara Fund has distributed \$3.4 million managed directly by IPs and LCs and has intervened in 7.1 million hectares of territory spanning tropical forests, peatlands, and coastal ecosystems. Contributors include Ford Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and other philanthropies.

While most of the COP26 Pledge’s successes cite specific grants, the Nusantara Fund is an anomaly. The partners who created it celebrate it as a victory in and of itself and funders spotlight its operating record. For example, Ford Foundation notes that it is evidence of a maturing shift in direct-to-community financing and a demonstration that capital can be deployed safely, transparently, and effectively into communities’ hands. The Nusantara Fund does note that there is room for significant improvement: “...the amount of funding managed directly by IPs and LCs remains quite low, particularly in the Asia region, including Indonesia.”

Case Study

Brazilian Amazon: Building the Funds, Not Just the Pipeline

Supported by Nia Tero, with the Norwegian Embassy and the Legacy Landscapes Fund. Nia Tero notes that other FTFG donors also contributed to these funds.

There has been a proliferation of Indigenous-led funds since the COP26 Pledge. Nia Tero has provided funding and technical support to several in the Brazilian Amazon—the Rutî Fund in Roraima, the Indigenous Fund of the Rio Negro (FIRN), and the Podáali Fund—demonstrating how long-term partnerships can enable durable, self-determined financing systems rooted in Indigenous governance.

The Tumucumaque region’s Pakará Fund is a powerful example. Working alongside Indigenous leaders, Nia Tero co-developed the Fund’s structure, governance, and financing approach with priorities and resource use guided by Indigenous decision-making and the communities’ own FPIC protocol. Following Nia Tero’s initial investments, the Fund secured further support from the Norwegian Embassy to consolidate its structure and team and finance initial activities; this was an early signal of how catalytic, trust-based funding can unlock broader donor confidence. In parallel, Nia Tero and the Legacy Landscapes Fund committed \$1 million annually to the Tumucumaque region for the next fifteen years.

Nia Tero reports that over 90% of its 2025 grantmaking went directly to Indigenous Peoples and the trusted allies they selected.

Case Study

Indonesia: Customary Forests and the Capital to Keep Them

Supported by Ford Foundation.

With COP26 Pledge-aligned funding, Hutan Adat (customary forests) were mapped and legally recognized. This process secured thousands of hectares of community-managed land against corporate encroachment. Official recognition supported Indigenous women's networks such as PEREMPUAN AMAN, enabled women to lead participatory mapping processes, and gave them a real voice in village-level natural resource use decisions. In addition, youth academies combining traditional ecological knowledge with digital mapping tools equipped a new generation to legally document their territories, advocate for their rights using social media, and actively resist illegal logging and mining.

The Value of Convening and Learning

FTFG members consistently identified that there was tremendous power in coming together as a group. They were able to compare and speak candidly about practices. Norway said the COP26 Pledge enriched dialogue beyond the established Germany-Norway-UK cooperation, strengthening collaboration with CLUA, Ford Foundation, and other philanthropies; it also gave focus to donor-coordinated dialogue with the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities. At the regional level, AMCAT helped strengthen Indigenous engagement with the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), supporting the establishment of a permanent mechanism for dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and Amazonian governments.



Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

“The COP26 Pledge created a space for direct consultation between funders and Indigenous Peoples, bringing Indigenous-led funds, UN mandate holders, and territorial community representatives into the same conversations as major donors. It surfaced clear, unanimous guidance on what accountable funding should look like: direct access, flexible terms, transparency, and real decision-making power for communities.”

The Christensen Fund

Case Study

Brazil: Unblocking a Stalled Pipeline

Supported by Protect our Planet Challenge members and Ford Foundation.

Two foundation members report complementary progress in Brazil over the same period. Moore Foundation had success with demarcation technical machinery, and Ford Foundation facilitated a favorable policy environment.

POP donors collectively supported FINATEC, a Brazilian research NGO, to help FUNAI—the federal agency responsible for Indigenous lands—establish and coordinate successful working groups of anthropologists and other specialists; these groups advanced critical demarcation technical studies and collaborated with the responsible government agency. There is a measurable result: over the past two years FUNAI advanced more territories through key milestone steps than in the previous ten to fifteen years. The collaboration model has since been adopted by other COP26 Pledge donors—an example that practices can also be adopted across the group.

Ford Foundation reports that the COP26 Pledge’s funding and global visibility helped drive systemic policy reform within national governments. In Brazil, momentum, including an organized movement with strong advocacy capacity helped reactivate federal land-titling procedures that were stalled until 2023. As a result, 41 Indigenous lands and 74 Quilombola titles were secured, and the government committed to protect an additional 63 million hectares by 2030. Moore reiterates that these results reflect the work of Indigenous organizations, governments, civil society partners, and other funders over many years, and should not be solely attributed to the Pledge.



Photo by Joel Redman / If Not Us Then Who

“[T]he Pledge, as a public commitment, gave IP and LC organizations (but especially IPs’ organizations) a platform to make more targeted demands of funders (“Are you meeting your commitments?” “Are these commitments good enough?”).

Ford Foundation

“...consultation only translates into impact when it’s matched by structural follow-through. The COP26 Pledge’s most lasting contribution may be the clearer expectation it set—that genuine partnership means letting Indigenous feedback shape outcomes, not just inform them.”

The Christensen Fund

Public Reporting for External and Internal Learning

Because the COP26 Pledge was public and annually reported, it became an important tool IPs’ and LCs’ organizations could use to hold funders accountable. Ford Foundation notes that the reporting created an annual opportunity for this and a body of data that the IP and LC movements could leverage.

The COP26 Pledge also made funders examine their own practices. One donor shared that the annual reporting process improved their internal portfolio tracking on tenure outcomes; this exposed gaps on direct funding to IP and LC organizations and the absence of a cohesive forest strategy across regions. Ford Foundation reported that the new practices of annually monitoring and reporting on its commitments improved internal program knowledge and produced more transparent grantmaking communications. This includes improving support for institutional strengthening.

Regional Balance

“The COP26 Pledge enabled many Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, particularly in Latin America and, to a lesser extent, Asia, to strengthen their work. Unfortunately, Africa benefited far less, highlighting the need for a more equitable geographical distribution of resources.”

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim

“Because Asia has the highest number of Indigenous Peoples, The COP30 Pledge must allocate a larger portion of its funding directly managed by IPs and LCs... particularly in the Asian region, including Indonesia.”

Nusantara Fund

“...we want the COP30 Pledge to embody a lasting commitment to Indigenous leadership and ensure an equitable and proportional flow of funds between regions, so that communities across Asia, Africa, and Latin America can advance climate solutions on equal footing.”

IPAS Fund

Collective Results

COP26 Pledge members and partners are helping advance roughly eight million hectares of Amazon land through formal recognition processes. Decades of Indigenous advocacy also produced powerful results. For example, 2.2 million hectares within the Kaxuyana-Tunayana Indigenous Land were demarcated with support from Nia Tero and Bezos Earth Fund. The funding supported the Indigenous-led organizations, helping them map and monitor land alongside Brazil's Indigenous government agency, lobby decision-makers, and build political momentum. Small grants enabled negotiations and major Indigenous events—which helped unlock political decisions and secure results. In 2025 alone, AMCAT, through the Tenure Facility, helped strengthen tenure security and territorial governance for 805 Indigenous, Afro-descendant and traditional communities across nearly 40 million hectares.

Members also connect tenure directly to safety. Norway points to the 2022 law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which protects and promotes of Indigenous Pygmy peoples' rights. Looking to the next pledge, Moore Foundation cautions that support must extend beyond funding to timely information, legal assistance, and protection. Ford Foundation makes this case as it advocates for an explicit legal defense fund and protection mechanisms to support IP and LC leaders.

"The Pledge has underscored tenure recognition and security as an important pillar for preventing violence against historically marginalized groups, and for delivering fit-for-purpose climate and biodiversity finance."

Norway

Case Study

Brazil: Collective Land Title for Women

Supported by the UK through AMCAT and the Tenure Facility.

AMCAT supported work of the Inter-State Movement of Babassu Coconut Breakers, which helped secure one of Brazil's first collective land titles specifically granted to women. The title benefits 62 households, and the UK reports that it "sets an important precedent for women's land rights."

Case Study

Latin America: A Groundbreaking Conversation

Reported by CEDET (Centro de Desarrollo Étnico). Translated from Spanish.

CEDET believes the COP26 Pledge is a study in partial progress. It credits the Pledge commitment with opening “a space that was previously very limited for speaking about the territorial rights of Afro-descendant peoples in discussions on forests and climate change.” The organization also notes that international attention was focused mainly on Indigenous Peoples, and that the COP26 Pledge made it possible to begin a dialogue about why it is essential to include Afro-descendant communities in efforts to conserve and manage highly valuable ecosystems.

CEDET remains candid about realities: many Afro-descendant organizations still face difficulties directly accessing conservation funds and are often prevented from equal participation in the spaces where decisions are made. Advances in Afro-descendant territorial rights remain limited in several of the region’s countries.

In CEDET’s view, the COP26 Pledge successfully launched, publicized, and made permanent a critical debate. It also strengthened communication among Afro-descendant organizations, allowing them to share experience, build common proposals, and have greater visibility in international climate, biodiversity and collective rights spaces.

“The overall assessment is therefore positive, but incomplete.”



Photo by Hugo Metz / If Not Us Then Who

Case Study

Burundi: Bolstering Batwa Women

Supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through RRI's Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI).

CLARIFI is a rightsholder-led regranteeing mechanism that funds communities' projects to secure and promote rights, livelihoods, gender justice, and sustainable resource management. During the COP26 Pledge period, Germany supported 26 CLARIFI projects across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These projects benefited nearly 1.66 million community members and trained 11,000 people. CLARIFI partners point to myriad successes, including tenure security for 1.18 million hectares. In addition, over 80 rightsholder organizations strengthened their institutional capacity to design and implement initiatives, and more than 250 community-led enterprises were established or expanded.

In Burundi, CLARIFI regranted funds to Unissons-nous pour la Promotion des Batwa (UNIPROBA). This organization works with Indigenous Batwa communities, including women who are community cornerstones. UNIPROBA received a \$30,000 grant to strengthen women's resilience and advocate for land rights, climate-resilient agriculture, and women's economic empowerment. It also reached more than 480 community members through awareness and knowledge-sharing activities and established 14 women-led savings and credit groups. The project's sustained engagement with local and provincial authorities also advanced advocacy to support land allocation commitments and improved Indigenous Batwa women's access to land and productive resources.

Case Study

Kenya: Women as Decision-Makers, Not Just Stewards

Supported by The Christensen Fund.

Customary systems have long denied pastoralist women land and inheritance rights. The Samburu Women Trust helps remedy this and advocates that women be recognized as community land decision-makers and not just stewards. The Christensen Fund pairs support for the Trust with resources to the Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas (FIMI), a global network of Indigenous women leaders working to ensure women have a voice in international policy spaces such as UN forums and tenure-finance discussions.

The Christensen Fund emphasizes the funding modality rather than the project itself. Because it provides unrestricted general operating funding to both entities, the Christensen Fund sustains them and bolsters credibility, allowing them to advance women's decision-making in everything from local customary governance to international policy. This work goes beyond a single project.

A photograph of a traditional thatched-roof hut in a dense forest at sunset. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper right corner, casting a warm, orange light over the scene. The forest is composed of many tall, slender trees with lush green foliage. The hut's roof is made of numerous dry, light-colored sticks or branches, layered to create a textured, conical shape. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

SECTION 4

Looking Ahead

In this final COP26 Pledge report, we can state that the past five years were dotted with successes. While difficult to measure globally, our partners secured millions of hectares of territory; governments made commitments to secure and strengthen at least another 160 million hectares; and we made efforts to ensure our funding supports the enabling conditions, policies, and direct financing required for sustainable tenure security.

The COP26 Pledge also produced important systems-level change. Tenure laws were reformed. National policy recognized rights. There were meaningful consultation processes. And governments increased their capacity to implement rights already enshrined in law. Although many of these wins were secured by partners that were neither Indigenous-led nor re-granters, they played an invaluable role in gaining land recognition for IPs and LCs.

The next pledge is already being implemented. In November 2025, the World Leaders Summit was held in Belém. A total of 39 donors, including government and philanthropies, committed \$1.8 billion for the COP30 Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities Forest and Land Tenure Pledge. In direct response to requests from rightsholders, the COP30 Pledge has a wider scope and extends beyond forests to all relevant terrestrial ecosystems, including drylands, rangelands, peatlands, mangroves, and littoral forests. For the first time, reporting will name Afro-descendant communities and be disaggregated by IPs, LCs, and ADs to the extent feasible. Reporting efforts will seek alignment with Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership country plan monitoring efforts.

Secure community tenure is increasingly recognized as foundational across all three Rio Conventions: UNCCD recognizes tenure security as critical to halting land degradation and restoring degraded landscapes; the CBD and its Global Biodiversity Framework commit governments to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030 while recognizing Indigenous and traditional territories; and in the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement preamble calls on Parties to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities when taking climate action.

The COP30 Pledge differs from the COP26 Pledge in looking beyond funding disbursement mechanisms to show how resources impact communities. Because it is deliberately aligned with the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment, we expect that the COP30 Pledge will “contribute to the recognition and sustained management of at least 160 million hectares of Indigenous Peoples', local communities', and Afro-descendant communities' lands by 2030.”



Photo by Sara Aliaga Ticona / If Not Us Then Who

Equally important, the COP30 Pledge acknowledges the difficult realities of this moment. Global Witness reports that 124 land and environmental defenders were killed in 2025. Over three-quarters of the killings were of Indigenous People, Afro-descendants, and small-scale farmers.³¹ IP, LC and AD territories face growing pressure over resources and attempts to limit or reduce their tenure rights. Civic space has narrowed in many countries. Development budgets decreased. And the organizations working at the intersection of gender and land rights face mounting pressure as they work to secure tenure for women who have never had the same rights as men.

We will focus on increasing our impact. That means advancing the recognition and strengthening of community land and forest tenure rights. It means meeting risk and safeguarding requirements without placing the burden on communities. It means strengthening the growing landscape of Indigenous-led funding. It means increasing the funding share that reaches women's and youth-led organizations and prioritizing gender equality in tenure programming. We also need to secure support from new government donors and philanthropies from underrepresented regions, particularly across Africa and Asia.

We will seek opportunities to partner to grow our collective impact. The FTFG remains open for additional likeminded donors to endorse the COP30 Pledge.

As always, we are indebted to the Indigenous Peoples, local community, and Afro-descendant organizations who held us to account over these five years. We pledge to keep listening to them and working together to build a more just world.

³¹ Global Witness (2026). Collective Power. <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/collective-power/>

Looking Towards 2030

“Over the next five years, we expect greater financial ambition, specific and measurable direct financing targets, transparency, and effective Indigenous participation in governance. Allocations must be proportional to our contribution to confronting the climate crisis and to protecting biodiversity.”

APIB (translated from Portuguese)

“Success should be measured not only by funding mobilized, but by stronger territorial governance, greater leadership by community women and youth, more direct funding reaching rightsholders, and lasting climate, biodiversity, and livelihood solutions.”

Rights and Resources Initiative

“We hope to see a greater emphasis on implementation, accountability, and equitable financing, as well as monitoring of the placement of funds, genuinely reaching IPs and LCs.”

Indigenous-led Funds Network of the Global South

“The first Forest Tenure Pledge represented a major shift, the second pledge has the opportunity to push the field forward, by ensuring Indigenous peoples and local communities have the support and flexibility they need to manage their territories the way they see fit, including increasing funding to territorial funds.”

Rainforest Foundation US



Photo by Sara Aliaga Ticona / If Not Us Then Who

APPENDIX 1

Methodology and Definitions

Each COP26 Pledge signatory was asked to provide a list of 2025 calendar year Pledge-aligned funding, compiled and coded in a common format.³² 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.³³

Where funding for a given project or grant was not entirely COP26 Pledge-aligned, donors estimated the relevant percentage. The FTFG secretariat carefully reviewed these percentages, and donors were asked to confirm figures if project relevance was unclear. Donors reported COP26 Pledge contributions in their own currencies; these were converted 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.

Our conversations and reporting focus on direct funding and intermediary accountability. We are certain 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 COP26 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 can influence and control. Together, these figures provided a clearer picture of the funding landscape.



Photo by Alfred Mtumba / If Not Us Then Who

³² Submissions also included COP26 Pledge-aligned funding from 2022–2024 that was not previously reported, as well as a small number of adjustments reflecting funding amendments to previous grants, which were allocated to the relevant year.

³³ 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 7

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 COP26 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 selected by Indigenous Peoples

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 COP26 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 project design role.

Primary delivery partner type:

This refers to 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: "Direct support" includes fiscal sponsors Indigenous Peoples select to receive funds on their behalf. The intended recipient/ sponsored organization should be selected as the delivery partner.

Gender equality and youth targeting:

Gender equality 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 it is closely aligned with other initiatives, the COP26 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 other two Glasgow Pledges—the Global Forest Finance Pledge (GFFP) and the Congo Basin Pledge (CBP). These three 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 2025, overlap amounts are not yet available. A second “double-counting” risk may occur because several COP26 Pledge signatories act as intermediaries who receive funds from other Pledge signatories.³⁴ We verified that each donor who received funds from another FTFG member excluded that funding from their 2025 reporting.



Photo by Sara Aliaga Ticona / If Not Us Then Who

³⁴ Pledge signatories are primary donors; four members of the Protecting Our Planet Challenge, which signed the Pledge as a group, are exceptions to this rule.

