



Proposal to the Green Climate Fund to Create a High Ambition Fund for Nature, Climate, and People: Setting up an Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Advisory Committee
FAQ & Background

1. What is the High Ambition Fund for Nature, Climate, and People (HAF)

Climate and biodiversity threats are often mutually reinforcing and have complex impacts that diminish human wellbeing, especially in vulnerable communities. Reversing this trend requires that solutions be deployed rapidly and strategically if they are to be effective. Robust scientific evidence confirms that protecting and restoring diverse and healthy ecosystems on 30-50% of Earth's land and ocean and sustainably managing natural resources by 2030 - the global target known as 30x30 - are essential for reducing risks associated with both biodiversity loss and climate change, and the negative impacts on human wellbeing (IPCC 2022). Countries have recognized this need and there is strong support for the 30x30 global target, as evidenced by the 196 countries that have adopted the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is submitting a proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to create a Programme, "The High Ambition Fund for Nature, Climate and People," (the Programme), to support a set of countries to meet their commitments to 30x30. This is envisioned as an approximately US \$1 billion co-investment platform bringing together a group of catalytic funding partners to support countries to meet their commitments to 30x30. Indigenous Peoples and local communities, civil society, governments, academia and businesses are key stakeholders and have to play a central role in this High Ambition Fund such that communities on the ground can meaningfully benefit from this resource. The GCF grants will blend with additional financial flows and instruments mobilized from other funding partners. If successfully deployed, the Programme is expected to further attract additional funding opportunities from other domestic and international public and private donors over the Programme period.

The proposal presents the concept for a Programme that takes an integrated, science-driven approach to meeting the global 30x30 target to maximize co-benefits for biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation for both ecosystems and vulnerable people, in full partnership with, while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LC). The funds will help ensure the system of protected and conserved areas is fully representative of the Earth's diversity of nature and ecosystems in the selected countries. This will enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of the world's intact ecosystems to climate change and that of the communities who depend on them and will boost climate change mitigation through biodiversity conservation and restoration of carbon-rich, fully functional ecosystems. A set of priority countries has been selected based on the best available data sets, climate models, systematic conservation planning tools, climate velocity metrics and a set of transparent science-based criteria.

2. What are the main HAF components?

The Programme will create a paradigm shift for nature, climate and people through the logic below. The Theory of Change Graphic is included below.

IF the High Ambition Fund for Nature, Climate and People is created and investments, policies and actions to conserve biodiversity, mitigate and adapt to climate change through conservation,

restoration, and climate-resilient IP&LC livelihoods are effective, **THEN** society will be able to achieve 30x30 as effectively and efficiently as possible by protecting the most important places for conservation and climate benefits, **BECAUSE** through systematic planning and analysis, synergies among climate, biodiversity and sustainable development solutions will be maximized and unintended consequences will be minimized.

Component 1: Finance Solutions: Co-Investment Platform

Output 1: Co-Investment Platform is created & operational to increase access to novel, diversified, sustainable finance solutions to support country commitments to 30x30.

Output 2: Legal recognition of land tenure & resource rights for IP&LC is increased

- Activity 1.1 Implement a set of bespoke, stacked debt & non-debt financial instruments to provide sustainable financing for 30x30 implementation
- Activity 1.2 IP&LC Grant Window is created and operational

Component 2: Implementation of integrated area-based 30x30 conservation and climate solutions in 20 priority countries.

Output 3: Expanded network of strategically located, well-connected, well-managed & climate resilient PAs, OECMs & Indigenous & traditional territories (ITTs) to meet country 30x30 commitments

Output 4: Biodiversity is present and connected across all ecosystems & ecological & climate-wise connectivity is doubled from baseline levels to facilitate species migration in response to climate change

- Activity 2.1 Ensure existing protected areas, OECMs and ITTs that protect climate-stable, intact ecosystems with important biodiversity, carbon stocks and high adaptation value have sufficient finance to ensure long-term management in the face of climate change.
- Activity 2.2: Expand existing, designate new and provide long-term financing for management of PAs, OECMs and ITTs in 20 countries to contribute to the global 30x30 global target.
- Activity 2.3 Restore degraded ecosystems to increase the area of intact ecosystems within PAs, OECMs and ITTs or to establish climate corridors to increase connectivity.
- Activity 2.3 Implement monitoring & analysis system to understand long-term impacts/feasibility of biodiversity persistence in PAs, OECMs, ITT across a range of ecosystems in the face of climate change & other human pressures.

Component 3: Technical Assistance Facility

Output 5: Capacity for direct access to public climate and biodiversity finance by IP&LC organizations is increased.

Output 6: Technical Assistance Facility is established and operational to accelerate the development of investable opportunities, reduce risks, and increase financial, climate, nature and social impacts, with a separate IP&LC-led and operated TAF.

- Activity 3.1 Investment support at critical project stages, from pre-investment to post-investment, to promote financial viability and impact of projects.
- Activity 3.2 Project assessment & due diligence, including compliance with human rights
- Activity 3.3 Investment & impact monitoring to strengthen the capacity of project recipients to monitor their impacts and practice adaptive management
- Activity 3.4 IP&LC capacity building for financial and administrative management

Component 4: Policy Reform

Output 7: Policies and activities that contribute to climate change and are harmful to biodiversity are reformed.

- Activity 4.1. Increase NDC ambitions to minimize tradeoffs between mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity; align NDCs, NBSAPs and NAPs.
- Activity 4.2: Incorporate specific, measurable & robust IP&LC tenure & resource rights into NDCs, NAPs & NBSAPs.
- Activity 4.3 Increase national-level efforts to identify, assess and track public expenditure harmful to biodiversity.
- Activity 4.4 Reform policies that lead to harmful finance flows.

3. Types of funding instruments and options for receiving funding

- Component 1: Finance Solutions: Co-Investment Platform
 - Financing instrument: co-investment platform to be designed with partners, which will include a bespoke set of financial instruments that will be sequenced and stacked in different ways to provide novel, diversified, and sustainable finance tailored in each country/context and could include grants, loans, guarantees, debt swaps, etc
 - We will develop an IP&LC Grant Window to support activities to secure legal recognition of land tenure, resource rights and access.
- Component 2: Implementation of integrated area-based 30x30 conservation and climate solutions in 20 priority countries
 - Financing Instrument: Grant
- Component 3: Technical Assistance Facility to accelerate the development of investable opportunities, reduce risks, and increase financial, climate, nature and social impacts
 - Financing Instrument: All grants, with large portion from co-financing, parallel financing for international and national technical assistance and support
- Component 4: Policy reform by countries to reduce harmful financial flows
 - Financing Instrument: to be funded outside of this Programme

4. GCF Background

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) – a critical element of the historic Paris Agreement – is the world’s largest climate fund, supporting developing countries to raise and realize their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions. GCF is a global platform responding to climate change by investing in low-emission and climate-resilient development. GCF was established by 194 governments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in developing countries, and to help vulnerable societies adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Given the urgency and seriousness of this challenge, GCF aims to make an ambitious contribution to the united global response to climate change and has already committed approximately \$11.3 billion. The GCF achieves this goal by investing across four areas – built environment; energy & industry; human security, livelihoods and wellbeing; and land-use, forests and ecosystems. Learn more about the GCF [here](#).

The GCF has an [Indigenous Peoples Policy](#) and, in accordance with this policy, established and recently hosted the first Indigenous People’s Advisory Group (IPAG) meeting in September 2022, a first step in mainstreaming the voices of indigenous peoples into its operations. The meeting



provided a direct avenue for IPAG members to have dialogues with GCF's operational and programming teams, as well as GCF's Independent Evaluation Unit. This presented opportunities to share knowledge, address process gaps, and open opportunities for bolstering indigenous peoples' consultative capacity in GCF's projects (see more [here](#)). There is much work yet to be done and for this Programme, we aim to significantly increase participation and meaningful consultation in co-design as much as possible.

5. What is the role of WCS and partners in the HAF Programme and how can it support Indigenous Peoples and Local communities?

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to saving wildlife and wild lands through science, international conservation, education, and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks. For more than 125 years, WCS has been one of the world's leading conservation organizations and currently works to conserve and sustainably manage more than 100 million hectares of wild landscapes and landscapes worldwide, supporting management of more than 600 protected areas in 65 countries globally. WCS works in partnership with more than 205 indigenous groups, over 1500+ local communities. WCS has a successful track record implementing large projects for forest and biodiversity conservation, land management, and livelihood improvement. WCS is leading several other 30x30-related projects (two GCF Readiness projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo and two 30x30-related projects with the Bezos Earth Fund).

WCS proposes to serve as the Accredited Entity for the HAF Programme, responsible for the overall oversight, management, and implementation, including technical, financial, and administrative monitoring and supervision, reporting to the GCF and working with partners, as well as helping to lead on key components, including the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF). The Programme hopes to involve key partners including Indigenous Peoples and Local Community organizations; government; NGOs; and private-sector actors, which may include strategic guidance, technical assistance, and receiving funds. It is imperative that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities play a meaningful and effective role in advising on matters that directly or indirectly affects their lands, territories, and resources. We aim to create an IP&LC advisory committee that is globally representative to advise us on the design of the IP&LC Grant Window and overarching Programme design. A core goal of the Programme is to ensure strong country ownership among both Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and governments and ensure success in furthering 30x30 goals.

6. What is envisioned in the Programme process and timeline for this High Ambition Fund proposal?

Timeline for involvement of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee

- Public call for participation in the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee – February 2023 (phase 1); phase 2 March-June 2023
- Initial formation of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee – March 2023, and continued via phase 2 through July 2023
- Initial meeting – TBD July 2023
- Engagement in design of the IP&LC Grant Window and high-level review of HAF Programme approach– June-October 2023

Timeline for the HAF Programme

- *What has been completed to date:*
 - Work on GCF proposal began in June 2022
 - Country consultations July – December 2022 (particularly at African Protected Areas Congress in Kigali, July 2022; GCF Programming Conference, September 2022; CBD COP15, December 2022; One Forest Summit, March 2023)
 - Ongoing development of feasibility study and reports to feed into GCF proposal – ongoing, September 2022 - May 2023
 - Submitted initial Full Programme Proposal to the GCF: May 12, 2023
- *Still to be completed:*
 - Target presentation to the GCF Board for Decision – October 2023

7. Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities Advisory Committee: Potential role, scope, and time commitment

At a global scale, compared with areas managed by governments or private entities, research shows that when IP&LC hold secure land rights, their territories are associated with lower rates of deforestation, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, better biodiversity protection, and improved livelihoods, however there is a gap of legally recognized ownership. This lack of land and resource rights places IP&LC livelihoods, as well as the ecosystems they are best placed to manage sustainably at risk. It also limits opportunities for climate resilient IP&LC livelihoods. Increasing land tenure and resource rights security for Indigenous Peoples is an output of the GCF Programme.

We see this as a critical strategic advisory role to review the overarching Programme design, as well as be engaged in the design of the IP&LC Grant Window as part of the proposal development process. This will help ensure the IP&LC Grant Window is designed in a way that could support activities to secure legal recognition of land tenure, resource rights and access. The role will entail strategic guidance in:

1. Designing and structuring the IP&LC Grant Window
2. Strategic review of the IP&LC Grant Window proposed in the full proposal
3. Oversight and review of the IP& LC Grant Window during the Programme period
4. Review of the HAF Programme approach

We will hold at least one meeting to kick-off and review Programme design and IP&LC Grant Window, and potentially more meetings, time allowing, for the final review. If the Programme is funded, we will also explore the potential of this group to hold periodically scheduled meetings to review progress and implementation.

8. Advisory Committee honorarium

Members will receive honoraria for the time spent preparing for and contributing to meeting outcomes, in addition to travel and per diem for participation in meetings.

Theory of Change:

