



Principles for Inclusive Nature Action: Background Briefing Papers

Principle 5

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About this paper

The Principles for Inclusive Nature Action were developed during a [Wilton Park conference](#) on 'Transformative change for global biodiversity: the role of gender equality and social inclusion' hosted by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in September 2024.

They draw on the [principles for locally led adaptation](#) and on the [Shandia Principles \(PDF\)](#), developed by the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, as well as the outcomes of discussions during the conference. They are also in line with the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Gender Plan of Action](#).

About the Nature Facility

The Nature Facility provides advice to help FCDO staff and partners put nature at the heart of their work. It aligns with the UK's international climate and environment commitments and aims to make FCDO's work more effective and sustainable.

About the REDAA programme



Reversing Environmental Degradation in Africa and Asia (REDAA) is a programme that supports locally led research and action for nature restoration and climate resilience in Africa and Asia. It is funded by UK International Development from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and managed by IIED.

For more information, visit www.redaa.org.

Principle 5: Provide direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding

Ensure the provision of adequate, direct, transparent, gender-responsive funding – including core support – for long-term biodiversity protection, restoration and sustainable management.

Provide longer-term, predictable funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, people of African descent, women and youth groups, with a focus on supporting sustainable outcomes rather than short-term results.

Funders and intermediaries should be prepared and supported to hold risk, take a holistic and cross-sectoral approach, and invest in strengthening capacity at all levels.

This brief aims to support uptake of the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action, offering insights into the relevance of Principle 5, with evidence that its implementation can support nature action that also respects and empowers local and marginalised actors while highlighting challenges and means for implementation. Together with a separate brief for Principle 6, this serves as a pilot for a series of briefings on the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action to ensure they are implemented in an integrated way.

Why is the provision of direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding important for effective biodiversity action?

Reversing biodiversity loss will not be achieved without transforming how conservation is financed. While global targets such as the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) aim to mobilise US\$200 billion annually by 2030 (target 19), the effectiveness of this funding hinges not only on scale, but on how resources are allocated and accessed. It is widely understood, and emphatically clear in the text of the GBF, that effective action for nature will not be achieved solely through expanded private investment in market-based solutions such as biodiversity offsetting, nor committing and distributing additional funds to states and international organisations to expand current practices (Young 2024). With the increased recognition of the importance and effectiveness of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) as custodians of nature has come increasing recognition of the importance of nature finance to reach and strengthen or revitalise grassroots IPLCs institutions that support custodianship. For nature action to be inclusive, equitable and sustainable, finance must be direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible — particularly for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and young people who steward much of the world’s biodiversity yet remain structurally marginalised in decision making and funding flows.

Around 2.5 billion IPLCs have customary tenure over approximately half of the world’s remaining biodiversity (WRI 2024). IPLCs contribute approximately \$5 billion annually in unpaid conservation efforts (AIPP et al. 2022). However, they receive less than 1% of international climate and biodiversity finance directly (RFN 2021). Currently the vast majority of nature finance is allocated to strategies including protection of areas by governments and NGOs, incentive schemes or market initiatives providing credits and offsets (Young 2024). Many territorial tenure rights and governance efforts of

IPLCs are unrecognised in law, unfunded and not even counted within global conservation databases, which are heavily biased towards government and private led actions (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN 2025).

Rather than being direct and accessible, funding mechanisms designed to support IPLCs often prioritise intermediary organisations, offer short-term project grants, and impose technical and linguistic barriers that restrict participation — especially from historically excluded or unregistered community actors (Paul et al. 2022). Even among the funding allocated specifically to IPLCs land tenure and forest management, only 17% of almost \$50 million per year reached IPLCs organisations from 2011-2020 (RFN 2021). This misalignment undercuts both the effectiveness of biodiversity action and the rights and autonomy of local actors.

The priority actions to fund depend on a community or social group's political, ecological, economic and cultural context and needs, often representing indirect pathways to impact nature, and through longer term dynamics requiring adequate and sustained resourcing (Hill et al. 2025). For example, local priorities to which direct funding is allocated include to document and revitalise traditional knowledge, to restore local language, to educate and engage young people, empower women in leadership roles, and strengthen capacities for autonomous financial decision making and management as foundations, rather than focusing directly on actions or technologies to manage habitats or species (Blue and O'Faircheallaigh 2018). Various social groups, particularly women, hold specific but varying livelihood or leadership roles and knowledge that can be key to traditional practice, social resilience and sustainability. Therefore, it can be important for funding to differentiate local recipient groups and be responsive to their changing needs, to enhance or even provide a catalyst for their inclusion and empowerment (Elias et al. 2021).

Longer-term, core and unrestricted funding — designed with and for communities — can address these challenges. It enables local institutions to strengthen territorial governance, protect cultural knowledge systems, and invest in youth and women's leadership, which are essential foundations for sustained conservation (Charapa Consult 2022). Principle 5 of the Inclusive Nature Action framework recognises that changing not only how much money flows, but how it flows, is central to enabling transformational biodiversity outcomes.

Enabling conditions for direct funding

Effective nature action requires not only devolution of responsibilities and funds, but also support from state, non-governmental and private organisations (including the capacities and collaborations to empower local action), laws and policies recognising local rights and institutions, and cohesion across sectors, so that local institutions are 'nested' in wider political structures rather than isolated or impeded (Dempsey et al. 2022).

Historically, responsibilities for conservation have often been separated (such as governments primarily overseeing protected areas), but initiatives have become diverse, with increasing local roles and more complex types of cooperation. For example, community-based natural resource management projects comprise many different collaborative arrangements and are funded through various finance mechanisms, including direct project funding from donors, public-private partnerships, through civil society networks and blended finance (eg see Smith et al. 2022). In turn this increasing localisation and customisation requires capacity building to ensure timely development of the appropriate institutional qualities and support, such as respect for rights and customary tenure systems, the burden of which should not fall upon IPLCs and their civil society partners (Buzzard 2024). Although capacity is primarily needed in the environmental sector, other sectors are connected through overlapping land uses, incentives, development priorities and resource demand. This is recognized in the GBF, through targets to redirect subsidies, scale up incentives, and promote enhanced private sector accountability and finance through greater assessment and disclosure (CBD 2022). Effective long-term action for nature therefore involves an intersectoral perspective, cohesive strategies and collaborations, division of responsibilities, and monitoring and accountability mechanisms across sectors and scales.

Relevant initiatives

The importance of directing resources to the local level is increasingly recognised across international frameworks and donor standards. The frameworks and standards are quite consistent, and provide

guidance for funders and philanthropists, NGOs or civil society groups who may act as intermediaries, and for IPLCs themselves. Examples include:

- **The Shandia Platform:** launched in 2022 by the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (a coalition of Indigenous and community organisations), is explicitly designed to promote direct, predictable, effective and sustainable funding for IPLCs. The Shandia Platform has articulated a set of donor principles (often referred to as the “Shandia Principles”) to ensure funding is fit for local realities (GATC 2023). These principles echo the values of meaningful local control, inclusion and patience in financing.
- **Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA):** In the climate adaptation field, over 80 organisations (governments, NGOs and donors) have endorsed eight Principles for LLA, which closely parallel those for inclusive nature action. Notably, LLA Principle 3 calls for “providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily” by local actors (Soanes et al. 2021).
- **Donor Pledges and Standards:** Several public and private donors and donor coalitions have made commitments to increase direct support for IPLCs, include multi-year core funding, and raise donor risk tolerance. For instance, at UNFCCC COP26 in 2021, a group of governments and foundations pledged \$1.7 billion specifically for IPLCs’ land tenure and forest guardianship. This pledge — now coordinated by the Forest Tenure Funders Group — explicitly recognises the need for long-term, flexible backing of IPLC initiatives (Tenure Facility 2025). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) — a major biodiversity funder — has, in its latest strategy, set targets for channelling more resources to Indigenous peoples, women, young people and local groups. Meanwhile, the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (launched 2023) commits to allocate at least 20% of its resources to Indigenous-led initiatives (GEF 2025). While implementation is still evolving, these policy shifts signal that international donors are beginning to internalise inclusive funding principles in line with Principle 5.

In response to the greater recognition of the roles and contributions of IPLCs, two broad categories of funding initiative are emerging to facilitate more direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding: Indigenous-led or territorial funds, and funds managed by international or national NGOs (Young 2024). Territorial funds are established and managed through coalitions of IPLCs in a particular region or country, and distribute funds directly to those communities primarily to support their territorial governance, cultural empowerment and environmental custodianship. Funds established by international NGOs tend to fund work in multiple regions and may aim to use a proportion to directly fund applicant communities. International and national funding initiatives may also act as intermediaries, receiving funds from state, private and philanthropic funders and distributing to a range of recipients for a wider variety of purposes. For example, as well as providing direct funding to IPLCs networks and territorial funds, they may also fund national civil society organisations representing social groups and issues such as women’s land rights, or advocating for political change such as to recognise communally conserved areas. The shift towards providing more direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding may be more achievable in the short term for philanthropic or private foundations than for government agencies for whom rules may be more complex to amend, and states may use international funding platforms as intermediaries for this reason (Paul et al. 2022). International tools and resources

Table 1. A selection of key funds led by IPLCs or operated by intermediary organisations with the intention of reaching IPLCs. (Numerous others exist, including numerous philanthropic funds and foundations.)

Funds led by IPLCs / territorial funds	
APIB (Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil)	Network of IP organisations founded in 2020 to create a national fund for Brazil’s Indigenous Peoples.
The Podáali fund, Brazil – (COIAB, Coordination of the Indigenous Organisations of the Brazilian Amazon)	Supported by government of Norway, the Ford Foundation, Conservation International, The Tenure Facility and the Pawanka Fund.

The Pawanka Fund (Miskitu word meaning ‘growing and strengthening’)	Global Indigenous-led fund disbursing grants for the self-determined development of Indigenous Peoples and revitalisation of knowledge systems. Since 2015 has funded over 300 projects across 60 countries with more than 270 Indigenous Peoples.
REPALEAC (Network of Indigenous and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa)	Represents over 200 indigenous organisations in Central Africa within the Congo Basin, supported by the Rights and Resources Initiative.
Nusantara Fund, Indonesia	Established May 2023 through AMAN (Indigenous Peoples’ Alliance of the Archipelago), KPA (Agrarian Reform Consortium) and WALHI (Friends of the Earth Indonesia) with initial funding from the Ford and Packard Foundations.
The Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS)	Set up in 2022 to provide direct funding for IPs across 14 countries in Asia, cofounded through AMAN.
The AYNi Indigenous Women’s Fund, Peru	Established through the International Indigenous Women’s Forum, based in Peru.
The Mesoamerican Territorial Fund	An alternative financial mechanism operated by AMPB (Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests).
International and national funds (with key role for state, NGO or private organisations)	
The Tenure Facility	Established in 2017 Swedish registered non-profit organisation implementing legal recognition of tenure rights.
The Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI)	Launched in 2022 by Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) and Campaign for Nature (CfN).
The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)	Launched by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2023 to scale up funding for implementation. Up to 20% to be allocated to Indigenous-led initiatives.
The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Fund	Provides individual grants up to \$50,000 to local civil society and community-based organisations.
The Inclusive Conservation Initiative	Established in 2022 through the Global Environment Facility, managed by Conservation International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
The Podong Initiative	Set up in 2023, co-led by IUCN, the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), and IUCN Indigenous Peoples Organisations (IPO) members.
The Cali Fund - Global Biodiversity Benefit-Sharing Mechanism	Launched at COP16 in 2024, channels private-sector contributions (1% profits or 0.1% revenues) from companies using digital sequence information. At least 50% of funds ring-fenced for IPLCs initiatives, with Indigenous board representation.
Synchronicity Earth Living Endowment	Invests private donations and uses them to provide unrestricted long-term funding for selected individuals and partner organisations.
The Chrysalis Youth Fund, administered by Synchronicity Earth	Launched in 2023, the fund provides direct funding to youth-led and youth-inclusive initiatives focused on conserving species and ecosystems; supports projects to that respect and revitalise Indigenous and traditional knowledge, led by or inclusive of youth, and aims to strengthen youth organisations, networks and their influence and advocacy.
The Forests, People, Climate (FPC) collaborative	Established in 2022, hosted by the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA), FPC is a collaborative of philanthropic donors, civil society and community-based organisations.
Legacy Landscapes Fund	Multi-donor (including UK government) conservation trust fund established in 2020. Provides core, multi-year grants of ~US\$1 million per site per year for at least 15 years to support protected areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)	Founded in 2000 through l’Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environmental Facility, the government of Japan and the World Bank. CEPF selects regional intermediaries to deliver finance to CSOs working in prioritised biodiversity hotspots. Globally has distributed more than US\$243 million to 2,500 CSOs working in 25 of the world’s 36 biodiversity hotspots.
The Forest and Farm Facility	Operating since 2012, provides direct funding and support to forest and farm producer organisations representing smallholders, rural women’s groups, IPs and

	LCs. A partnership between FAO, IIED, IUCN and AgriCord funded by Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland, the United States of America, the Netherlands and IKEA.
The Community Conservation Fund of Namibia	National NGO-managed trust fund launched in 2020 for community-based conservation and natural resource management (CBNRM) in Namibia. Board includes government, community and NGOs, funders include German and Namibian governments and local private donors. A hybrid endowment and sinking fund - endowment covers core operating costs for conservancies and sinking fund for specific projects.
Seychelles – Conservation & Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)	Independent environmental trust fund emerged from a 2016 debt-for-nature, uses blended finance (public debt relief, philanthropy, private investment) for community-level conservation.
Deshkan Ziibi Conservation Impact Bond, Canada	Established 2020 to finance restoration of the Carolinian Zone through pay-for-success. Investors are repaid plus returns when ecological targets are met. Governance includes varied stakeholders from Indigenous communities to financial institutions. Early stages, focused initially on 400-hectare area.
Agri3 Facility via Rabobank – Nature-Based Forest Finance	Under UNEP FI guidance and funded by the German government, the Agri3 Facility promotes private-sector investments in forests. Rabobank extends low-cost loans and technical assistance to IPLCs forest enterprises.

Key evidence for the effectiveness of direct, patient, flexible, predictable and accessible funding

Many of the funds established to provide alternative forms of funding, focused on direct forms of support for IPLCs have been recently established. There is limited experience to enable quantitative synthesis of outcomes and success factors, particularly because direct funding tends to work on longer timescales, focusing initially on institutional strengthening and with indirect, gradual impacts on biodiversity (Jonäll et al. 2025). Yet numerous case studies are emerging and the evidence base will increase quickly. For example, Hill et al. (2025) provide a qualitative synthesis of case studies in Australia, Canada, Paraguay and Chile, finding that communities have diverse needs but that direct, flexible funding based on long-term relationships with mutual understanding is crucial to strengthen local organisations and knowledge systems so as to assert rights and protect territories against degradation driven by resource extraction.

Experience from adaptation finance demonstrates that *how* funding is delivered (in line with the characteristics set out in the principle) — not just how much — is often the decisive factor in whether locally led efforts succeed. For example, the Climate Investment Funds’ (CIF) Forest Investment Programme has provided direct funding to IPLCs since 2010. However, as a foundation, it was essential to invest time to gradually establish relationships of trust and mutual understanding between funders and recipient communities, to ensure local control to tailor the use of funds to local priorities, strengthening local institutions, and to set aside proportions of funds for flexible and responsive use (Indufor North America and ICF 2024). These insights from the LLA community are highly transferable to biodiversity finance and reinforce the rationale behind Principle 5.

Numerous fund reports do outline the types of spending areas prioritised within directly funded nature projects, reflecting the values and knowledge systems of IPLCs, and these include strengthening of territorial governance, food sovereignty, valuing traditional knowledge and promoting sustainable land use practices (Scott-Enns 2020). This highlights the importance of flexibility to tailor priorities to local values and context (Berghöfer et al. 2017).

Case study: Flexible, patient funding adapted to local priorities, social dynamics and institutional needs

The Xavante community in Brazil have been able to access funds across 14 territories through the Podaali Fund. A long initial phase was necessary to strengthen their local governance to enable cooperation, fund management and inclusive decision making, and this highlights the importance of

patient and flexible funding that can cover core organisational functions and strengthening, which provide indirect foundations for effective nature action. The focus of the Xavante communities then turned to the restoration of traditional crop knowledge and use, such as sweet cassava and cerrado fruits, to help restore food sovereignty and sustainable forest management. In some territories, women's groups were the primary focus and the funding helped to re-elevate their inclusion and roles within the community, such as through managing traditional seed collection — emphasising the importance of gender-responsive funding (Podáli and TNC 2024).

Case study: Land tenure as a priority for IPLCs nature funding

One key priority for many of the funds and related projects is to enhance tenure security and land rights for IPLCs as a prerequisite for nature action, which can sometimes involve long-term legal, political and bureaucratic struggles that require patient and predictable financial support. Accordingly, large proportions of funds are allocated to further tenure recognition. The Tenure Facility is a key example, with partners having secured formal recognition of IPLCs rights to almost 4.4 million hectares of land, and made advances to tenure security and governance of 34 million hectares in 2024 (Tenure Facility 2025).

In Australia, the Indigenous Dja Dja Wurrung in Australia required direct but long-term, predictable and flexible support to undertake a long process of advocating for territorial rights, eventually overturning the colonial land tenure system by achieving a Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the regional Victorian Government that enabled them to restore traditional harvesting and management practices and revitalise their culture as well as restoring biodiversity (Hill et al. 2025).

Some funders highlight important differences experienced between direct funds and those channeled through intermediaries, noting that intermediary risk aversion can often prevent the provision of funds on long-term and flexible basis and impede local control and action (Tenure Facility 2025). For example, just 1% of funding from the Forest Tenure Pledge went directly to IPLCs and their local organisations in 2023 (FTFG 2023). FTFG note this as an area they aim to improve on through better selection and training of intermediaries, or more direct funding. The issue with intermediaries can be compounded where intercultural understanding, relationships and trust are absent or take a long time to establish, meaning many direct funding opportunities for IPLCs are accessible, but may be on short-term basis without patience, predictability, flexibility and inadequate for the scale of aspirations to address challenges faced (Buzzard 2024). Use of intermediaries can also increase transaction costs, impose burdens on communities and complicate transparency and accountability, which the Mesoamerican Fund state as strong motivations for their preference for offering direct funding. Due to these barriers, some funds led by international NGOs (see Table 1) have struggled, particularly in their early phases, to allocate their aspired levels of direct funding to IPLCs (Sorsby et al. 2025).

Furthermore, some funders focus on quite distinct geographies or specific groups of IPLCs risking a regional bias and a focus on “low-hanging fruit” rather than supporting IPLCs who have faced greater disruption and face greater challenges to rights, recognition, tenure and advocacy (Monterosso 2025). For example, the Inclusive Conservation Initiative focuses funding on 10 “geographies” or subnational regions through longer term projects with established relationships (CI and IUCN 2024).

Data is lacking to assess the evidence of the effectiveness of specifically addressing gender within funding mechanisms. Most funders allude to the importance, with several stating a need to improve their focus in this area. Others note success in terms of including gender-related objectives in all projects, but without any qualitative validation (GEF 2025). These are major gaps given the well acknowledged role of gender inclusion in project success.

Case study: The importance of ensuring finance reaches women

The NGO Women4Biodiversity has supported funding of six pilot restoration projects with a focus on gender inclusion. In the Chomes community in Costa Rica women mollusc-harvesters took proactive steps since 2022 to restore and sustainably manage their mangrove ecosystem, which was being severely degraded through extractive livelihoods that they had limited ability to influence. In response,

through the targeted funding received, they established a women's cooperative and developed participatory management plans integrating traditional knowledge with scientific approaches, assigning no-take zones for juvenile molluscs, implementing harvest size regulations and monitoring the replanted mangroves. Funding has also been utilised to advocate for their rights and developing an Agenda for Fisherwomen, to ensure greater policy recognition in future (<https://women4biodiversity.org/restoration-sites/costa-rica/>).

The funds being established and allocated to local actions for nature appear to be rising rapidly. However, the proportion with a focus on IPLCs and marginalised social groups remains small relative to mainstream funding, at around 6% overall (OECD 2024). Allocations to the ICI (\$22.5million) and GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) are small relative to GEF's overall \$5.1billion funding allocation for environmental projects from 2022-2025 (GEF 2025). The GBF Fund may provide a possibility for more rapid scaling of funds and applying these inclusive and integrated principles (Young 2024).¹

Overall, the changes promoted through emerging funds and evidence highlight the scale and multiple complementary levels on which transformation of nature finance must occur. That entails structures and external capacities supportive of local and customary tenure and practices, collaborations that support maximum localisation of funds while keeping burdens low, and flexible, long-term and patient funding promoting inclusive institutional strengthening and self-determined priorities, enabling restorative justice and empowerment as foundations for biocultural sustainability.

Gaps and challenges

Direct biodiversity finance to IPLCs, women and youth groups is a rapidly evolving area of practice, yet with considerable gaps in evidence and application. Case studies are continually emerging through the numerous territorial, international and national funds that have been established in recent years as well as philanthropic foundations. However, many reports tend to be superficial rather than providing the in-depth analysis of financing characteristics, allocations and impacts required to constructively synthesise success factors and barriers across varying contexts. Future synthesis of such cases should pay specific attention to the characteristics of direct funding such as the importance of flexibility, patience/long-term support, accessibility and predictability (Jonäll et al. 2025). Further, despite financial innovations, many mechanisms still involve high transaction costs and complex compliance demands, effectively excluding grassroots IPLCs, women's collectives, and youth-led groups from meaningful participation (Jang et al. 2025).

There is a clear role for monitoring and evaluation of funded projects to provide the evidence about the impact of funding on specific groups, and how funding can work to reach, include, support, empower and benefit them. Currently, few projects embed participatory monitoring systems or data governance frameworks, creating a reliance on external evaluators and a lack of community data sovereignty (options for IPLCs control over data generated and influence over how it is used and held) that reinforces extractive dynamics — despite calls for Indigenous data governance frameworks across the data lifecycle (Jang et al. 2025).

Cost effectiveness is an important criteria for many funders in supporting actions for nature. Knowledge is very limited regarding the costs of supporting IPLCs leadership in conservation, given different historical contexts, starting points with respect to cultural status and governance quality and barriers to overcome. Monitoring of funded projects may help to close this gap, though support for locally led social and ecological monitoring, costs and contributions involved would be more valuable.

There are regional biases and gaps, with priority ecosystems such as the Amazon and regions or countries with politics and coalitions supportive of IPLCs leadership featuring in territorial funds and international programmes. Parts of West Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and other areas require specific attention and programmes tailored to the known barriers to broaden impact. Additionally, public and private funding remains heavily skewed — over 80% flows to tropical and biodiverse regions,

¹ As stated by Giovanni Reyes, Indigenous Kankanaey-Igorot from the Philippines, President of ICCA Consortium Philippines and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility's Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (GEF-IPAG) in the Ministerial Dialogue and Pledging Session for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) COP 16 Venue, Cali, Colombia, October 28, 2024 *"May the GBFF be known and remembered as having shaped Direct Access to Funding with the wisdom of an indigenous elder, the industry of an entrepreneur, the zeal of an economist, and the conscience of an ecologist."*

leaving temperate, urban and fragile political zones underfunded. Transaction costs in these less-served areas are significantly higher (OECD 2024).

Trends in funding (and the discussion above) focus on the role of IPLCs and their territories in conservation — lands in which self-determination of IPLCs is appropriate and feasible. Yet the ambition and direction set out in the GBF and environmental policy implies a broader transition in implementation and funding of *all* conservation initiatives towards equitable and effective, cohesive and integrated governance, not only for IPLCs, but for women, youth and other marginalised social groups with distinct rights, knowledge or vulnerabilities. This has implications for the world's protected and conserved areas, managed primarily by the state or privately but sometimes co-managed, and alongside which traditional and non-traditional local communities live. Funding should also be available to transition towards more equitable governance in these areas, with some focus on capacity building to facilitate greater respect for rights and influence of communities (Stevens et al. 2024). Furthermore, nature finance innovation has largely prioritised large-scale financial instruments like debt-for-nature swaps (≈\$1 bn since 1987) and conservation impact bonds, which often bypass local leadership and compound debt burdens (Weston 2024) — highlighting a need for grant-based, non-extractive finance focused on IPLC-led governance. Such transitions are rarely a focus of funders yet hold potential to transform conservation across a large proportion of the world's land and sea. Such transitions may also be linked to targeted shifts away from extractive-based economies towards greater sustainability, resilience and living in harmony with nature.

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