

**Mainstreaming WWF Principles on Indigenous Peoples and  
Conservation in Project and Programme Management**

*2007*

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This document is intended as a resource to support the WWF Standards of Conservation Project and Programme Management when indigenous peoples, territories and resources are affected.

We believe it is important to continuing learning and improving these guidelines over time, and would be pleased to receive comments, criticism and additional examples from field experience.

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## **Introduction**

This document is intended as a resource to support the implementation of WWF's Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation. The principles contained in this WWF Network policy govern:

- i) WWF conservation activities within indigenous peoples' lands, waters and territories
- ii) WWF partnerships with indigenous peoples' organizations
- iii) WWF partnerships whose activities may impact upon indigenous peoples

The document suggests practical ways of mainstreaming the WWF policy commitments to indigenous peoples and their rights in the context of applying WWF Standards for Project and Programme Management.

## **Who are indigenous peoples?**

Numbering around 370 million people worldwide in more than 70 countries, indigenous peoples are estimated to include at least 5,000 different socio-linguistic groups. While there is no single globally-recognized definition of indigenous peoples, WWF adopts the statement of coverage contained in International Labour Organization Convention 169 ([ILO](#)), which includes both **indigenous** and **tribal** peoples. Characteristics of indigenous and tribal peoples include social, cultural and economic ways of life different from other segments of the national population, traditional forms of social organization, political institutions, customs and laws and long-term historical continuity of residence in a certain area. In some regions, the term indigenous also refers to residence prior to conquest or colonization by others. WWF also, in accordance with ILO 169, recognizes self-identification as indigenous or tribal as a key criterion in identifying indigenous peoples.

Two other characteristics recognized as important in identifying indigenous peoples are: relative **political marginalization** and special ties, and **relationships with their customary lands and resources**, closely connected to their cultural identity. The widely-used "Cobo definition"<sup>1</sup> notes that indigenous peoples "form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis for their continued existence as peoples..."

The non-dominant/marginalized characteristic has been particularly emphasized in the Asian and African contexts to distinguish indigenous peoples from majority groups. In many Asian and African countries, other categories such as *adivasi*, *hunter-gatherers*, *pastoralists*, *nationalities*, *ethnic minorities*, *janajatis* may be employed.

The close ties of indigenous peoples with their customary lands, waters and resources are particularly relevant for conservation organizations, leading to recognition of indigenous peoples as important stewards of high-biodiversity areas and to the identification of natural resource-related characteristics often associated with indigenous communities. These include:

- natural resource-dependent customary livelihoods including subsistence economies
- traditional ecological knowledge
- traditional systems of control, use and management of lands, waters and resources
- traditional institutions and leadership structures for self-governance and decision making

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed in a UN Special Rapporteur study by José Martínez-Cobo

The Convention on Biodiversity uses the terminology “indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles” in recognition of these resource-related characteristics found often, though not only, among indigenous peoples. WWF’s policy refers specifically to indigenous peoples, reflecting specific protections afforded under international law; however, the policy principles and guidance outlined in this document are also highly relevant and applicable to conservation partnerships with traditional peoples.

In identifying indigenous communities in practice it is important to:

- √ Apply an **inclusive identification** process not limited to government definitions of indigenous peoples
- √ Make particular **use of self-identification** and consulting with indigenous organizations and social scientists when identifying indigenous peoples
- √ Adapt **identification processes to regional and national categories** such as hunter-gatherers or pastoralists in Africa, scheduled tribes, hill tribes and ethnic minorities in Asia.

Click [here](#) for more information on identifying indigenous peoples and their territories and resources.

### ***Why is it important to have specific guidance on work with Indigenous Peoples?***

Indigenous peoples are distinct from other stakeholders. They have particular rights and concerns as well as ties of ancestry and stewardship to many areas of biodiversity importance.

In 1996, the WWF network adopted the landmark [“Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation”](#) (hereafter “WWF policy”) in recognition of the need to make special efforts to respect and protect indigenous rights in relation to conservation initiatives. The WWF policy is “rights-based” in that it recognizes indigenous peoples as right-holders (rather than just as vulnerable) and states specifically that, “without recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, no constructive agreements can be drawn up between conservation organizations and indigenous peoples groups.”

Rights and interests of indigenous peoples recognized by WWF are described in Section I of the policy, and derive from key international agreements regarding indigenous rights endorsed by WWF.

<b>WWF recognizes indigenous rights to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customary lands, territories, and resources</li><li>• Cultural and intellectual heritage</li><li>• Free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting indigenous lands, territories and resources</li><li>• Decision-making regarding management and governance systems and technologies for their territories</li><li>• Decision-making regarding development strategies and priorities for their lands</li><li>• Improved life quality and equitable benefit-sharing from conservation, sustainable use and traditional knowledge use</li><li>• Not to removed from territories or – in exceptional circumstances -- only with their free, prior informed consent</li><li>• Remain isolated, in the case of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation, and maintain</li></ul>

- their lands and territories and cultural values
- The protection of their environment and customary territories

Click [here](#) for further information on indigenous rights.

The WWF policy also emphasizes that WWF's mission and conservation objectives are the basis for partnership with indigenous peoples and others. Section II of the policy presents WWF's mission and objectives and states that activities WWF supports must be consistent with them.

#### **WWF Mission and Conservation Objectives:**

WWF bases all its conservation work on the principles contained in its mission statement: to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

WWF seeks out partnerships with those who share WWF's commitment to the following conservation objectives:

- Conservation of biodiversity
- Sustainable use of resources
- Pollution prevention

Recognition of indigenous rights combined with implementation of WWF's conservation objectives entail certain actions on the part of WWF. Therefore, the policy's third section on Principles of Partnership states commitments regarding how WWF will engage with indigenous peoples and their organizations. It includes both core **safeguard requirements** – focused on avoiding negative impacts on the human and customary resource rights of indigenous peoples – and **positive commitments** to develop lasting partnerships with indigenous and traditional peoples for conservation and sustainable management of their lands, waters and territories, as long as these are **consonant with WWF's conservation objectives**.

#### **Safeguard requirements**

Make special efforts to **respect, protect and comply with basic and customary rights** (as set out in national and international law) in conservation initiatives.

**Prior to initiating conservation activities** in an area WWF will:

- seek out information about the historic claims and current exercise of customary rights of indigenous peoples in that area; and
- inform itself about relevant constitutional provisions, legislation, and administrative practices affecting such rights and claims in the national context.

Presence of **customary resource rights and/or historical claims** obliges WWF to:

- Identify, seek out and consult with legitimate representatives of relevant indigenous peoples organizations at the earliest stages of program development.
- Provide fora for consultation between WWF and affected peoples so information can be shared and problems, grievances and disputes can be resolved in a timely manner.

Presence of **indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation** obliges WWF to not seek contact, and to work through appropriate channels responsible for the demarcation and effective protection of their lands.

Conservation, research and development interventions **without Prior Free and Informed Consent or with negative impacts on indigenous territories and rights** will not be promoted or supported, and may be actively opposed by WWF.

Prior to starting work in an area, WWF will establish agreements with communities and organizations ensuring full indigenous participation and equitable benefit-sharing regarding the **use and management of knowledge** acquired.

WWF will ensure that **partnerships with national governments, donor agencies, private corporations and NGOs** do not undermine, and if possible promote, indigenous rights, share relevant information with indigenous representatives, and ensure consultation in advocacy or fundraising activities related to indigenous peoples.

#### Positive commitments

Whenever it promotes conservation objectives, and in the context of its involvement in conservation activities affecting indigenous peoples lands and territories, WWF will encourage governments to take steps to guarantee effective protection of indigenous land and territorial ownership and possession rights.

Consistent with achievement of conservation objectives, WWF will be ready to:

- assist indigenous peoples' organizations in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of conservation activities, and to invest in strengthening such organizations and in developing relevant human resources;
- assist them in gaining access to other sources of technical and financial support to advance development objectives that fall outside WWF's mission;
- assist indigenous peoples to protect, through legally accepted mechanisms, their resources;
- seek out and/or invest in the development of legitimate and transparent mechanisms to resolve conflicts at local, regional, national, and international levels, as appropriate;
- seek to ensure that the primary rights and interests of indigenous peoples are well represented in such fora;
- actively seek inclusion and engagement in relevant international, as well as national fora;
- initiate an ongoing process of dialogue with indigenous peoples' groups on WWF's principles for partnership.

The emphasis on rights in the WWF's policy is in line with much recent sustainable development and conservation thinking. In particular, an emerging set of "rights-based approaches" to development and conservation seek to explicitly promote the recognition, protection and inclusion of rights with "rights-holders" as well as with "duty-bearers" – meaning the institutions, groups or persons responsible for the realization of rights. Although mainly a State responsibility, the WWF policy acknowledges the important role of its Network, programmes and projects in recognizing and facilitating realization of the rights of indigenous peoples.

Click **here** for more information on rights-based approaches and their relevance to the WWF policy.

#### **Philippines** – *Supporting territorial rights as a basis for co-management*<sup>2</sup>

Many large intact forests in the Philippines coincide with the ancestral lands of the country's approximately 12 million indigenous peoples. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, enacted in

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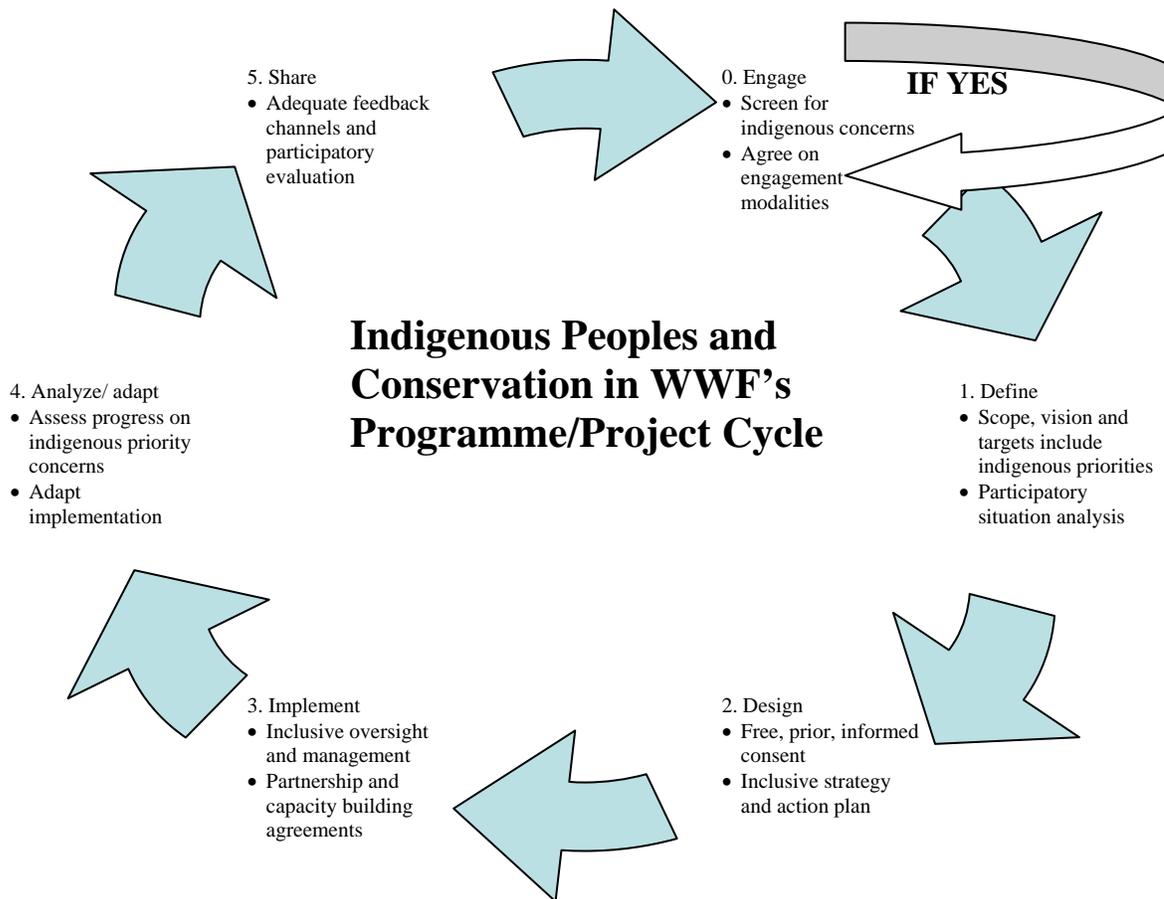
<sup>2</sup> Information from Edgardo Tongson and Thomas McShane, *Securing Land Tenure for Biodiversity Conservation in Sibuyan Island, Romblon, Philippines* (Helsinki, Finland: EGDI and UNU-WIDER, 2004). <http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2004-2/conference-2004-2-papers/Tongson.pdf>.

1997, created unprecedented opportunities for improving indigenous tenure security and strengthening rights-based conservation planning. Yet, it quickly became clear that additional financial and technical capacity was needed to secure effective implementation. In 1997, WWF began implementing an Integrated Conservation and Development project in Sibuyan Island, with a focus on facilitating the ancestral domain claim as well as an “Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan” for the indigenous Sibuyan Mangyan Tababukid (SMT). This involved working closely with the indigenous organization as well as support organizations with anthropological, legal and other technical expertise. In 2001, ancestral land title was granted. Project activities also facilitated dialogue between indigenous communities and park officials of the Mt. Guiting-Guiting National Park, which had been established in 1996. Sixty percent of the ancestral domain lies within the park, and indigenous access and rights had not been taken into account in the design process. The combined work on ancestral domain titling *and* management planning created a strong formal and technical basis for negotiating a co-management framework and joint activities with protected area authorities. According to WWF staff members, government officials now see the Sibuyan experience as a model for civil society and government collaboration. In situations of scarce resources for both conservation planning and indigenous titling, on-the-ground activities and support by WWF to strengthen territorial recognition, conservation planning and conflict resolution are of critical importance.

## Indigenous Peoples & Conservation in WWF's Programme/ Project Cycle

The following sections outline practical guidelines for mainstreaming implementation of WWF's Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation in programme and project management. Each section describes recommended activities linked to steps of the WWF Standards framework, and key benchmarks of policy implementation. Core requirements of WWF's Statement of Principles are presented in shaded boxes at relevant points. Often, there are several points in the planning cycle at which policy requirements can be met. In keeping with best practice, these guidelines recommend addressing them at the earliest possible point.

**Figure 1. Indigenous Peoples & Conservation in WWF's Programme/ Project Cycle: Steps and benchmarks**



## 0.1 Engage stakeholders

The WWF Standards identify “engaging stakeholders” as an overarching practice that applies to each stage of the program cycle. This emphasis on consistent engagement is particularly important in relation to indigenous peoples because of their particular rights and vulnerability considerations. Ideally, engagement should be initiated as part of a wider effort by WWF offices and programmes to understand indigenous concerns in relation to WWF geographical and thematic focal areas and build relationships of trust. This foundation of understanding and longer-term working relationships is important to successful collaboration in specific project contexts. In relation to particular projects or initiatives, a screening for indigenous concerns is essential in order to know if WWF’s indigenous policy is “triggered,” to ensure that relevant policy principles will be applied in the development and implementation of that project.

Key questions at programme and project levels include:

### **Are indigenous peoples concerned?**

A very first step involves generating a quick understanding of whether indigenous peoples are present, have customary ties to and are concerned with the area or resources affected by a programme or project.

#### **Benchmark 1: Initial screening of indigenous concerns undertaken**

In practice, this would involve a very preliminary screening effort to identify whether there are indigenous issues and concerns relevant to a programme or project. At the programme level, this can be done in relation to the overall scope of an office/programme; presence of indigenous concerns will indicate that indigenous peoples are an important constituency for that office. At the project level, screening can be conducted based on an initial project scope and vision. *Presence of indigenous concerns at a project level indicates that the WWF policy needs to be applied in the context of that project.* While scope and vision are defined in Step 1 of the WWF Standards, screening for indigenous concerns is recommended in advance so these can be taken into account in relation to scopes and visions, and so policy relevance is established at the earliest possible stage.

Key questions to determine the presence of indigenous concerns are:

- Is there an overlap between biodiversity priority areas identified by the programme or project and customary lands and waters?
- Will the programme or project involve partnerships with others – including governments, private sector actors – that may or already impact on indigenous territories or rights?
- Who are indigenous peoples, communities, organizations and regional associations in the region? Will the project involve work with them?

### **What are their major issues?**

Once the indigenous “factor” has been established, it is often necessary to invest in a more detailed assessment allowing WWF to familiarize itself with indigenous concerns and vice versa. It is particularly important to fulfil the WWF policy commitment to seek out information on customary land and resource rights, and legal contexts for their recognition.

**Principle 22:** “Prior to initiating conservation activities in an area, WWF will exercise due diligence to:

- seek out information about the historic claims and current exercise of customary rights of indigenous peoples in that area; and

- inform itself about relevant constitutional provisions, legislation, and administrative practices affecting such rights and claims in the national context.”

In addition, assessment of major issues may involve:

- ✓ Understanding the history of relationships between conservation actors and indigenous peoples
- ✓ Sharing information with indigenous peoples about WWF objectives and priorities
- ✓ Assessing commonalities and differences between indigenous and WWF objectives
- ✓ Understanding different perspectives of indigenous men and women

### **How can indigenous communities and organizations be engaged?**

Once indigenous concerns have been identified and WWF has informed itself about the wider context, it is useful to plan with indigenous communities and their organizations about how working relationships and dialogues can be established, either more broadly at a programme level or for the purpose of developing specific projects. Effective engagement with indigenous communities is rarely a given, and requires particular attention and planning. One critical consideration is WWF’s own capacity to engage effectively with indigenous peoples. Where lack of cooperation or even conflicts exist between indigenous peoples and other WWF partners including governments, it may also be necessary to clarify with all parties WWF’s interests, positions, and modalities of engagement with each group. Rendering explicit how WWF will work with indigenous peoples and their organizations is a basic building block for trust-based relationships, and contributes to fulfilment of the WWF policy commitments on consultation and information-sharing.

**Principle 23:** “When WWF conservation activities impinge on areas where historic claims and/or current exercise of customary resource rights of indigenous peoples are present, WWF will assume an obligation to:

- identify, seek out, and consult with legitimate representatives of relevant indigenous peoples’ organizations at the earliest stages of programme development; and
- provide fora for consultation between WWF and affected peoples, so that information can be shared on an ongoing basis, and problems, grievances, and disputes related to the partnership can be resolved in a timely manner.”

**Principle 29** further commits to sharing relevant information on partnerships with others that may affect indigenous peoples’ territories or rights, and to consult with indigenous representatives on national or international advocacy and fundraising activities related to indigenous peoples.

Experience shows that it is also important to recognize differences within communities, including differences in the perspectives and concerns of men and women. Indigenous men and women often relate differently to land and resources and differ in their levels of participation in decision-making and representation in indigenous organizations. Click [here](#) for more information on recognizing and incorporating gender issues in relation to indigenous peoples and natural resource management.

### **Benchmark 2: Modalities for engagement planned and refined**

Modalities of engagement may address how WWF will seek further understanding of indigenous concerns, how information will be shared, how joint visions will be sought and how participation in specific project development processes will take place. This may lead to formal agreements such as Memoranda of Understanding in cases where indigenous peoples are well-organized and

represented or may take the form of statements of principle or plans for consultation processes, where communities are less organized or programmes are only relevant to indigenous peoples in a limited way.

In general, knowledge and relationship-building with indigenous peoples require iterative approaches. Initial assessments are likely to reveal needs for further learning down the road. Issues may be identified that will require more in-depth analysis as part of the situation analysis. The more information, understanding and relationship-development done at a programme level, the better-positioned programmes will be in applying policy provisions in specific contexts – this becomes especially important where timeframes or resources for project development may be limited.

#### **Indigenous conservation issues, capacity building and policy level support: 3-year agreement with an indigenous federation in Peru**

WWF increasingly works with national and regional indigenous organizations particularly in large-scale conservation and policy initiatives recognizing the importance of participation, capacity and alliance building. In 2005, WWF and AIDSESEP, a national federation of indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon, signed a three-year agreement to work together. In the agreement, WWF agrees to strengthen the capacity of AIDSESEP members to defend their rights and ensure conservation and sustainable management of the natural resources of their territories and communal reserves. The lines of action include WWF assistance with delineation, land use zoning, and titling of territories; strengthening indigenous capacities to negotiate with private-sector parties whose decisions affect their territories; facilitation of indigenous involvement in decision making that directly or indirectly affects their territories; assistance with developing policy and legislation proposals; and promotion of compliance with existing legislation and policy related to indigenous peoples.

Core principles listed in the agreement include transparency; respect for indigenous cultures, knowledge, and intellectual property; respect for human rights and gender equality; direct dialogue without intermediaries; and respect for indigenous organizations and autonomous collective institutions at local, regional and national levels. Specific commitments of actions include at least two meetings a year; collaborative monitoring of agreed-upon actions; joint working groups for themes of mutual interest (for example, issues related to forestry concessions operating on, or adjacent to, indigenous territories; proposed water laws; actions of regional government bodies, etc.); and giving priority to hiring indigenous experts.

## **1. Define**

The Define step involves specifying the basic parameters for your project including its scope, vision, and targets. If initial screening indicates the presence of indigenous concerns, it will be important to include indigenous communities and representatives in a process of revisiting and defining these parameters. This process will vary according to the nature of the initiative. A field project directly targeting conservation within indigenous territories will require a fully-fledged participatory process and community ownership. A national policy reform process involving multiple actors may be less centrally focused on indigenous interests; however, engaging indigenous interests helps to ensure against negative impacts and promote opportunities for positive collaboration. In practice, such a process will generally involve dialogue and negotiations to determine a common agenda, as well as to clarify differences in perspectives.

### ***Initial team composition***

Effective engagement with indigenous peoples relies on technical capacity within the project team. Project leaders should be familiar with the WWF Statement of Principles and wider guidance material available. It is critical that project teams include social science expertise to engage with indigenous peoples and establish working relationships with relevant indigenous organizations and non-indigenous expertise. Where possible, hiring indigenous expertise has proven particularly beneficial and WWF has had good experiences with bringing indigenous professionals on board. Gender-related capacity is also important in this respect. It is important to provide adequate time, financial and human resources for team members to engage with indigenous peoples and their organizations on the ground. This may also involve ensuring adequate communication channels and resources for complementary teams of indigenous representatives, experts and organizations to represent the indigenous perspective rather than depending on individual experts or a single “WWF team”.

### ***Inclusive scope, vision and targets***

Indigenous peoples have their own visions and targets, in relation to many geographical and thematic areas of interest to WWF programs. Taking these into account when setting project and programme targets creates a basis for collaboration and minimizes the risk of conflicts. A major challenge involves moving beyond “narrow” scopes and conservation visions and taking into account related indigenous concerns such as the recognition of indigenous territorial rights and development needs. In practice, this may be done as an iterative process, working from initial targets drawing on global scientific perspectives, towards joint targets reflecting indigenous concerns. This process can be informed by participatory approaches to make sure that:

- ✓ The geographical and thematic scope of the initiative reflects indigenous concerns. Do geographical boundaries of project reflect priority areas from an indigenous perspective? Do thematic or policy areas reflect indigenous concerns such as rights and equitable cost and benefit sharing?
- ✓ The project vision statement takes into account indigenous biodiversity and development visions for indigenous lands, territories, waters and resources.
- ✓ Targets reflect indigenous biodiversity targets -- priority concerns with regards to the sustainable use of particular species, habitats and/or ecological processes, which are not always identical with priorities identified from global, scientific perspectives.
- ✓ Thematic targets to address major threats or enabling conditions are linked to wider indigenous development targets. This may include targets to reduce external threats such as extractive industries or to increase policy support for community management.
- ✓ Gender aspects and other differences within and between indigenous communities are taken into account

Indigenous concerns may be more or less explicit - and may be more or less in accordance with WWF priorities. There may also be a multitude of different priorities and visions within communities, between communities and conservation interests and between communities and government. This may require project teams to:

- ✓ Facilitate the development and mapping of different biodiversity and development visions for an indigenous territory, through an inclusive process taking into account

- perspectives from gender, youth and other different segments of and between communities;
- ✓ Better understand the links between conservation and indigenous visions, and engage in negotiations, trade offs and consensus-building where disagreement or different priorities exist;
  - ✓ Promote increased understanding by government partners of how indigenous visions and practices are relevant to the development and sound management of the conservation initiative.

<b>Benchmark 3: Project scope, vision and targets include indigenous priorities</b>
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WWF policy emphasizes the importance of engaging indigenous peoples from the very start. Reflecting indigenous priorities in the wider project scope, vision and targets provides a foundation for constructive conservation partnerships with indigenous peoples.
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### ***Context and Stakeholders***

While preliminary contextual data will already have been gathered in order to identify and work with indigenous communities, a **participatory situation analysis** is critical to identify factors and stakeholders affecting joint targets including direct threats and opportunities and indirect threats.

<b>Benchmark 4: participatory situation analysis</b>
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Conduct a participatory situational analysis with indigenous communities and their representative organizations as part of the wider contextual and stakeholder analysis. Facilitate inclusion of indigenous perspectives on threats and opportunities at a local scale, as well as drivers and enabling factors operating at multiple levels. Identifying strengths and weaknesses of indigenous institutions in relation to natural resource management and the sustainability of practices is also important as a basis for understanding how WWF can support indigenous partners to realize joint visions and targets.
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A participatory situation analysis is likely to generate new insights with regards to direct and indirect drivers behind the particular conservation challenge, as well as key entry-points to address them. While project development often implicitly focuses on a particular conservation strategy, a participatory situation analysis will often reveal new insights shifting the strategic focus. Opportunities presented by existing community management efforts as well as factors constraining them may be uncovered. Additional indirect drivers may be identified such as lack of tenure security, social conflicts or outside-driven extraction. Shared threats to conservation and indigenous concerns may be identified, providing a foundation for alliances and collaborative efforts. The situation analysis also provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of the context of policies, institutions and practices affecting customary land and resource rights and of indigenous organizations, representation and decision-making processes, in fulfilment WWF policy commitments. In many countries, there are considerable differences between international and national policy frameworks related to indigenous peoples. The situation analysis is therefore critical to map out this policy context, and identify national constraints and opportunities for WWF action.

## 2. Design

### ***Inclusive conservation strategies and action plans***

Once you have described the basic parameters for your project, the next step is to design specific strategies and interventions. In its policy, WWF commits to assist indigenous peoples' organizations in the design and implementation of their conservation initiatives where these are relevant to WWF conservation priorities. WWF policy also commits, as a core requirement, to secure the **free, prior and informed consent** (FPIC) of indigenous communities to conservation and development interventions affecting their territories or rights.

**Principle 27:** WWF will not promote or support, and may actively oppose, interventions which have not received *the prior free and informed consent* of affected indigenous communities, and/or would adversely impact – directly or indirectly – on the environment of indigenous peoples' territories, and/or would affect their rights.

Click [here](#) for more information on free, prior, informed consent.

A key element of FPIC is provision of information on likely impacts of proposed interventions, including positive and negative impacts. However, too often, these impacts are not well assessed, understood and communicated prior to project implementation. Therefore, it is recommended to build a social impact assessment into the design of conservation strategies, through participatory processes with indigenous communities.<sup>3</sup> The Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity has produced the [Akwe: Kon Guidelines](#) for cultural, environmental and social impact assessments, as part of the work program of the Open-ended Working Group in Article 8j (see below) and in cooperation with indigenous and local communities.

In practice, FPIC processes provide opportunities to transform consultation into joint conservation strategy and action planning. Joint strategies should particularly be sought where indigenous territories, lands, waters and resources are targeted in the effort. If indigenous development and conservation strategies formally exist, strategies may be based on supporting these; or, alternatively, strategies can be developed using the situation analysis and employing participatory strategy development tools. Critical elements include that strategies are:

- Not pre-cooked solutions, but developed jointly with indigenous counter-parts in a transparent fashion
- Open to changes suggested by indigenous partners before and during implementation
- Realistic and reflect actual opportunities for action within the scope of the project
- Not limited to local scale, but seek to address needs and opportunities for change at different levels
- Validated by representative institutions and fora (vs. dependence on individuals)
- Developed as an integral part of the wider conservation strategy, rather than as a side project.

Such an approach does not hinder project teams in exploring and assessing the costs and benefits of different conservation strategies, but it should counter tendencies to merely seek “consultation” and “inputs” to a pre-defined strategy (for example, to establish a protected area), as this is a

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<sup>3</sup> Further guidance on SIA for conservation initiatives is forthcoming.

major divisive factor in working relationships between conservation organizations and indigenous peoples.

#### **Benchmark 5: Conservation strategies developed with free, prior, informed consent**

Developing strategies based on free, prior, informed consent is a critical benchmark where strategies may impact on indigenous peoples, their territories and their rights. Especially where indigenous lands, territories, waters or resources are specifically concerned, FPIC processes should serve as a foundation for development of fully collaborative conservation strategies, or technical assistance to indigenous strategies. It is important that project goals clearly reflect desired status of “indigenous” targets in terms of being specific, measurable and impact-oriented (e.g. fish-stock recovery in xx rivers by yyyy, equitable cost and benefit sharing of protected area establishment); objectives reflect short and medium-term joint priorities (specific policy changes, land under effective management, strengthened institutions) and immediate results and activities reflect indigenous priority milestones (such as capacity needs assessment undertaken, participatory planning processes, number of community members trained).

Collaborative strategies can relate to a wide range of conservation programme areas—including protected areas, community-based natural resource management outside protected areas, and prevention and control of environmental impacts—and take a range of forms. As one distinction, strategies may employ targeted and/or mainstreaming approaches (Danida 2004). Targeted efforts include indigenous territorial management planning, capacity building, land demarcation or conflict resolution linked to a specific geographical area. Mainstreaming approaches involve integrating indigenous priorities into wider policy and eco-region initiatives such as regional landuse planning, protected area systems design, implementation of poverty reduction strategies and collaborative efforts with the corporate sector. The key point is that working with indigenous communities is not limited to one type of intervention, but may take a wide range of different directions.

#### **Arctic collaboration on toxic pollution and climate change**

In the Arctic, WWF has collaborated closely with indigenous peoples and their organizations in research and campaigning on toxics and climate change issues. Both affect livelihoods and human health as well as wider ecosystem health.

In Alaska, for example, WWF has worked with Yup'ik and Chu'pik communities to study the health effects of chemical contaminants dumped, spilled or released into the Kokechik Bay. The research program has been run entirely by the people of the four villages, who selected the species and the sites for collection and took the lead in collecting all the samples and shipping them to analytical laboratories. At the policy level, WWF has, among other things, facilitated dialogue between European parliamentarians, Arctic indigenous peoples and conservation researchers to highlight the environmental contamination effects of pollution from the EU. Results from the first study of newer, current-use chemicals, show that brominated flame retardants (BFRs) and perfluorinated chemicals (used in household items such as televisions, computers and cooking pans) were detected in the blood of all 20 pregnant women tested in the northern town of Bodø, Norway, and in Taimyr, a town in the Russian Northern Siberia where there are no local sources or uses of these pollutants.

In its climate change work, WWF is working both to raise the voice of indigenous peoples and to build resilience. The so-called “Climate Witness” projects give voice to people who are already experiencing climate change. The first “Climate Witness” involved high school students from the Native Athabaskan community of Huslia in interior Alaska producing a series of four radio programmes, letting community members tell the world about how they are being affected by climate change. In the Nenets region in

Northwest Russia, WWF is working with indigenous and other organizations to strengthen models for resilience building against climate change.

For more information see

[www.panda.org/about\\_wwf/where\\_we\\_work/europe/what\\_we\\_do/arctic/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/europe/what_we_do/arctic/index.cfm)

Where significant conflicts exist between indigenous peoples and governments, collaborative strategies may raise concerns for programs about entering into conflicts with governments, with which they must also maintain good relationships. In such situations it is often useful to:

- Maintain dialogue with indigenous partners about these concerns and their implications for thinking about tactics or approach
- Maintain dialogue with government partners including building understanding of international frameworks on indigenous rights and experience elsewhere on resolution of conflicts and collaborative approaches to conservation between indigenous peoples and States.

### ***Monitoring Plan***

Two issues are important with regard to the **Monitoring Plan**. One issue is participation of indigenous institutions and representatives in monitoring and overseeing project progress. Second, types of data monitored should reflect indigenous concerns, in terms of process (e.g. levels of collaboration) and in terms of impacts (e.g. on levels of protection of indigenous territories, human well-being, implementation of rights). In practical terms, this often requires additional data collection specifically designed to measure social impacts as relevant for a particular project.

### ***Operational Plan***

Many conservation projects with indigenous peoples have suffered from inadequate operational planning. The **Operational Plan** should ensure that:

- Adequate financial resources are in place to finance activities such as customary resource use mapping, participatory planning, capacity building and representation in policy processes, as well as any compensation agreements
- Adequate human resources are available to engage with indigenous partners on a continual basis including by hiring indigenous staff
- Working modalities, roles and responsibilities of different types and levels of indigenous organizations are clearly spelled out in relation to specific operational activities
- Exit strategies are in place, for example to institutionalize participatory approaches and ensure sustainable financing of indigenous management institutions.

## **3. Implement**

### ***Workplans, Budgets and Fundraising***

As general strategic, monitoring, and operational plans are turned into short-term workplans and detailed budgets, teams will need to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are provided to engage with indigenous partners and implement key collaborative activities (as noted above under **Operational Plan**). Many projects have involved indigenous communities having to adapt to the implementation rhythm of conservation projects rather than vice versa; therefore, a key consideration in developing workplans is the timeframe required to accommodate the decision-making processes and pace of implementation of indigenous partners. WWF policy also

states that international fundraising activities will be undertaken in consultation with indigenous representatives (see **Principle 29** box below).

### ***Inclusive implementation partnerships***

Once action, monitoring and operational plans have been agreed upon with indigenous partners, it is timely to consolidate collaborative arrangements in a partnership agreement. Key decisions relate to who will undertake activities, who will oversee and manage activities and how they will be undertaken. Within the last couple of decades, indigenous organizations, representative structures and enterprises have become increasingly involved in directly implementing conservation activities at all levels. Adequate inclusive representation in project oversight and management, with attention to equitable gender representation, is also a critical element. For site-specific efforts targeting indigenous territories, this may involve working directly with indigenous organizations, decision-making bodies and representative institutions or establishing joint project oversight committees and decision-making processes. Inclusive governance of eco-region planning, protected area systems and policy reform processes may involve facilitating indigenous representation and inputs to existing committees, including establishment of specific sub-committees on indigenous concerns. As with other partnerships, it is important to generate a good understanding of representativity, capacities and local ownership as part of the process of establishing collaborative arrangements:

- What are the specific mandates, roles and responsibilities of the institution?
- Are gender, age and the variety of community perspectives reflected in institutional structures and leadership?
- What are the specific technical and administrative capacities of the institution?
- What characterizes the relationship between the institution concerned and communities as well as government agencies?

Partnership agreements should also ensure that communities fully participate in decisions about use of traditional knowledge, as stated in WWF policy.

**Principle 28:** WWF will establish agreements with indigenous organizations... to ensure they are able to fully participate in decisions about the use of knowledge acquired in or about the area they inhabit, and equitably benefit from it. These agreements will explicitly determine the ways and conditions under which WWF will be allowed to use such knowledge.

### **Benchmark 6: Partnership agreement developed**

This agreement should spell out working procedures, roles and responsibilities with regard to project oversight, management and implementation, and conflict resolution mechanisms. WWF, in its policy, assumes an obligation to “provide fora for consultation between WWF and affected peoples, so that information can be shared on an ongoing basis, and problems, grievances, and disputes related to the partnership can be resolved in a timely manner.” Partnership agreements may also contain provisions regarding capacity building and collaboration with non-indigenous organizations (see below).

### ***Indigenous capacity building***

In some cases, indigenous organizations and community-level structures may not have the technical or organizational capacity to immediately engage in project implementation activities.

WWF policy recognizes indigenous institutional capacity-building as a key area for proactive collaboration. Critical aspects of capacity building with indigenous organizations include the need to:

- Avoid setting-up parallel representative structures
- Undertake a rapid capacity needs assessment before agreeing on work plans
- Ensure that capacity building, where necessary, forms an integral part of project plans and partnerships with non-indigenous institutions
- Facilitate coordination and linkages with government agencies

### ***Partnerships with non-indigenous organizations and institutions***

WWF policy recognizes that partnerships with non-indigenous organizations have potential to affect the rights and resources of indigenous peoples, and these potential impacts need to be addressed.

**Principle 29.** In the context of its partnerships with organizations other than those specifically representing the interests of indigenous peoples such as national governments, donor agencies, private corporations, and non-governmental organizations, WWF will:

- ensure that such partnerships do not undermine, and if possible serve to actively promote, the basic human rights and customary resource rights of indigenous peoples;
- ensure that all relevant information developed through such partnerships and accessible to WWF, is shared with the appropriate representatives of indigenous peoples;
- ensure that any national or international advocacy or fundraising activity related to indigenous peoples will be undertaken in consultation with representatives of relevant indigenous peoples' organizations.

Three clusters of non-indigenous institutions are typically involved in conservation projects. This includes, first, government agencies at national and local levels. Their conservation and natural resource management mandates typically extend beyond the geographical scope of specific indigenous communities and their territories. Practical avenues of action may involve:

- ✓ Building capacity of indigenous organizations to engage with government agencies and vice-versa
- ✓ Strengthening indigenous participation in and implementation of government conservation programmes
- ✓ Facilitating the integration of indigenous rights and concerns in public policy and programming processes
- ✓ Facilitating conflict resolution processes

Second, a range of different local NGOs and consultants are often involved in providing technical services and, in some cases, become implementing agencies of conservation initiatives. It is recommended to agree with indigenous partners and representative institutions about:

- ✓ the potential roles and responsibilities of non-indigenous organizations in implementing activities
- ✓ how to build joint implementation arrangements with gradual capacity building of indigenous institutions
- ✓ how to ensure that non-indigenous organizations have the capacity to work with indigenous communities
- ✓ how to proceed with conflict resolution processes where necessary
- ✓ how to mobilize further commitments and resources for strengthening indigenous involvement.

Third, partnerships with the private sector may require pro-active efforts to:

- ✓ explore with indigenous representatives the extent to which indigenous rights and concerns may be affected by the partnership, and how to address concerns
- ✓ sensitize private sector partners about indigenous needs and rights
- ✓ ensure that WWF indigenous policy principles are reflected in partnership strategies and approaches
- ✓ facilitate ongoing information-sharing and indigenous participation in relevant fora

#### **4. Analyze & Adapt**

Conservation efforts with indigenous peoples offer both important advances and new challenges compared to traditional conservation approaches. Knowledge regarding community interactions, effective participatory approaches and the context for recognition of rights often needs to be built up over time through “learning by doing.” Even with good preparation, projects may underestimate timeframes, capacities and resources required for collaborative implementation. Changing socio-political contexts may create both bottlenecks and new opportunities for strengthening the engagement with indigenous peoples. It is therefore critical to:

- Render explicit the role and value of the conservation partnership as a learning process
- Assess progress being made on indigenous priority concerns including socio-economic targets
- Monitor contextual changes (new policies, stakeholder influence etc)
- Revisit core assumptions, e.g., related to the situation analysis and the project’s theory of change
- Be ready to change the scale of project ambitions and shift focus
- Tackle implementation gaps – for example related to land rights, conflicts regarding use practices and consent procedures – in a head-on manner
- Allow for flexibility to adapt action plans and working procedures along the way

<b>Benchmark 7: Assess progress and adapt approaches on indigenous priority concerns</b>
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Assess progress on indigenous priority concerns, on a regular basis and in consultation with indigenous partners, and pursue opportunities for improvement. Remember in particular WWF’s commitment to resolving “problems, grievances and disputes” with indigenous partners.
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#### **5. Share**

##### ***Lessons and Products***

The final step in the WWF Standards Management Cycle involves sharing lessons and formal products with key internal and external audiences. Learning from conservation partnerships is critical for both conservation agencies and indigenous peoples. Learning questions addressing key collaboration aspects and assumptions – for example, related to the effectiveness of community-driven efforts, adequate participatory approaches, or mainstreaming rights in conservation – contributes to strengthening as well as replication of partnership approaches. To enable learning it is important to:

- Ensure resources are available for two-way learning exercises

- Learn from positive experiences as well as problems encountered
- Produce and disseminate lessons learned in relevant local languages.

### ***Feedback and Evaluations***

Regular, informal feedback, through channels appropriate to the local context, is crucial to ensure steady progress and improvement in partnerships between conservation organizations and indigenous peoples. In keeping with the overall learning approach of such projects, it is recommended that informal feedback be complemented by more formal periodic evaluations or audits specifically including indigenous representatives and concerns. Key considerations for evaluations or audits include that:

- Evaluation criteria, questions and indicators emphasize indigenous concerns such as those identified in the monitoring plan, such as progress made in terms of realizing indigenous rights or well-being indicators adapted to the local context
- Audits are based on the standards and principles contained in WWF's Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation
- Indigenous experts and relevant social science expertise form part of the evaluation team
- All those directly affected by activities (including both men and women) are consulted in the process.

<b>Benchmark 8: Open feedback channels and participatory evaluations</b>
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WWF policy recognizes assistance to indigenous organizations for monitoring and evaluation of their conservation activities as a key area for proactive collaboration. Because conservation-community partnerships often involve negotiation of multiple agendas as well as cultural differences, open, two-way channels for informal feedback are especially important. It is also recommended that these be complemented by formal feedback processes, including evaluations and audits against the partnership principles contained in WWF's policy.
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## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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