

MID-TERM REVIEW

Project ID:	10404
Project Name:	Inclusive Conservation Initiative
Countr(ies):	Global, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Congo DR, Tanzania, Kenya, Thailand, Nepal, Cook Islands, Fiji
Implementing Agency:	CI

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Inclusive Conservation Initiative

Country

Global, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Congo DR, Tanzania, Kenya, Thailand, Nepal, Cook Islands, Fiji

GEF ID

10404

Implementing Agency

CI

Executing Entity

CI Center for Communities and Conservation, IUCN Global Programme on Governance and Rights, Sotz'il, FENAMAD, Observatorio Ciudadano, FARN, ANAPAC, Ujamaa Community Resource Team, IMPACT, Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, House of Ariki-House of Lau-CI-Fiji

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

Enhance Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' (IPLCs) efforts to steward land, waters and natural resources to deliver global environmental benefits.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

1/6/2022

Agency Approval

12/13/2019

Implementation Start

2/15/2022

First Disbursement

12/31/2023

Expected MTR

1/1/2025

MTR Submission

1/3/2026

Actual MTR

9/30/2025

Expected Completion

10/27/2027

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

Project Results and Impact

During the evaluation, assessment of outputs and outcomes was complicated, as quarterly reports provide advances from the quarter based on the annual work plan but not cumulative progress toward the output from previous years or quarters. The Annual PIR provides a cumulative review of outputs; however, the latest PIR is almost 1 year old. A review of the 2024 PIR, Q2 2025 report, and the indicator progress tracking table were used to assess advances in outputs. Evaluation data reveals notable progress in advancing project outcomes, particularly in strengthening Indigenous governance systems, engaging communities, and promoting co-management frameworks.

In Component 1, all outputs are fully achieved or on schedule for implementation that is still underway. While the advances to outcomes were delayed by the startup of subprojects, but now subprojects are up and running and important progress is being made.

In Component 2, multiple outputs are in progress, two outputs have been completed, while other outputs have minimal advances. Outcomes for Component 2 are delayed, but they are on track to be completed. Other outcomes in the component, such as greater capacity for IPLC-led conservation, while observed, have not been measured yet.

In Component 3, all outputs are either in progress or complete. In this component, the outcomes are advancing as planned. In Component 4, one output has no advances reported, two are complete, and the rest are in progress. Outcomes for the component are also behind schedule, but changes in the communications team are expected to help progress towards these outcomes.

Outcomes were assessed for relevance, efficiency, efficacy, and sustainability. Across components, the evaluation generally assessed the outcomes as highly relevant, as the design is highly aligned with GEF priorities and country priorities. While certain outcomes were found to be implemented with effectiveness, especially those in Component 1 and 3, outcomes for components 2 and 4 were found to be mildly unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Almost all outcomes were rated to be likely or mildly likely to sustain the results.

The Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI) has demonstrated that strengthening Indigenous governance and securing rights-based outcomes are not just co-benefits but are foundational for achieving long-term environmental impacts. By enabling Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) to lead conservation efforts through their traditional governance systems and legal frameworks, the project has created the necessary conditions for sustainable resource management. The rights-based approach of ICI fosters community ownership, increases the likelihood of lasting change, and positions IPLCs as key partners in meeting national and global conservation commitments. The principal factors delaying the achievement of outputs and outcomes is associated with insufficient staff time allocated for the amount of work and high turnover rates in key positions.

Key Risks and Sustainability

The key risks as project approval were reviewed and an updated assessment of risks was completed through stakeholder interviews. While some risks remain the same (climate and natural disasters), others, like COVID-19 are less relevant than at project inception. The overall risk rating is Moderate. The risks are being monitored and mitigated by the project, though some opportunities remain to strengthen risk management, such as further support for Indigenous land defenders who are at risk for violence from governments and private sector.

The project has prioritized sustainability through targeted mechanisms at the institutional, technical, and policy levels. According to project documents, financial sustainability is pursued by developing financing plans tied to subproject impact strategies. These include avenues such as trust funds, private sector investment, and impact investing in IPLC-led enterprises. Complementary to these financial efforts are some, but not sufficient, capacity-building activities that aim to ensure IPLC organizations are prepared to pursue and manage such funding independently. Stakeholders consistently identified securing sustainable funding beyond the project period as a critical risk. While some subprojects are exploring future proposals or external donors, many depend on ICI's financial and technical support due to a lack of political interest in their countries, raising concerns about continuity once GEF funding ends.

Project Governance and Project Management

The ICI governance structure was designed to have the Global Steering Committee as the project's formal governance body; however the PMU is also a key component of project governance. While the GSC ensures alignment with global priorities and facilitates coordination at the highest level, implementation and executing agencies are responsible for day-to-day management, technical direction, and ensuring compliance with operational standards. The PMU, co-led by executing agencies Conservation International (CI) and IUCN, is responsible for day-to-day coordination, technical support, financial oversight, and reporting. It acts as the operational hub, ensuring that subprojects receive guidance, tools, and support aligned with the overall project framework.

While the governance structure of the ICI Initiative is built on collaboration between the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the Global Steering Committee (GSC), the evaluation revealed some challenges in the coordination between these two bodies. One recurring issue is the lack of clarity regarding their respective roles in decision-making.

In addition to the global project governance structure, each subproject has designed a governance structure for IPLC-led conservation.

The ICI Project has implemented a multi-layered communication approach intended to bridge the distance between local territories and global learning spaces. Across levels significant efforts have been made to ensure transparency, foster learning, and build visibility. Concerns about communications were expressed regarding inconsistency, limited follow-up, and lack of clarity in messaging.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E plan included output and outcome indicators with corresponding targets at the design time. These were organized by components and allowed for some consistency in quarterly reporting. The indicators selected prioritized biological and quantifiable outcomes, such as the number of hectares conserved or the number of participants as these are the outcome indicators defined by GEF. Evaluation interviews noted that several indicators did not track progress toward higher-level outcomes adequately, which is an opportunity to integrate indicators that measure systemic change in combination with the required GEF indicators.

Stakeholders highlighted that the global and subproject frameworks often operated like separate 'micro-universes,' making aggregation between subprojects difficult. Although the M&E plan served as a common reference point, implementation diverged due to varying capacities, understandings of M&E processes, and priorities among project partners. Ownership of the M&E system was often perceived to reside with the global coordinating agencies, with subprojects viewing their role as more of a data provider than co-designer or user of M&E outputs.

Subprojects highlighted a high reporting burden, with redundant formats and overlapping information requests. The quarterly reporting structure was perceived as time-consuming and detracted from

implementation activities. Some subprojects implemented digital tools such as KoboToolbox and cloud-based data sharing to strengthen M&E, but these efforts were largely local innovations rather than guided by the global plan. As such, their benefits were not uniformly realized or supported.

Project Implementation and Execution

The quality of work by the GEF Implementing Agencies—CI and IUCN—at the global level has been widely seen as supportive, responsive, and essential to the progress of the ICI. Across subprojects, CI was frequently recognized for providing structured guidance and close accompaniment throughout the design and implementation phases. Together, CI and IUCN GEF Implementing Agencies have played their anticipated role in enabling the ICI's success. The collaborative relationship between the agencies has helped ensure alignment across systems and strategies, and ongoing reflection continues to strengthen their shared approach to inclusive conservation.

Component 1 of the ICI has been executed highly across the subprojects, as evidenced by substantial progress in institutional, technical, and community-level activities. The execution has been characterized by strong ownership among IPLCs, intensive support by EAs, and measurable results in rights recognition, training, and local governance. Despite initial delays, the subprojects have built momentum, delivering outputs aligned with the project's goals.

The execution of Components 2-4 faced challenges in execution and these challenges caused significant delays in Component 2 and 4, reducing the overall quality of the work being delivered.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

The data shows diverse familiarity with the ESS Plan among global-level stakeholders. While a foundational level of ESS awareness exists at the global level, sustained training, simplified guidance and reporting, and broader dissemination of safeguard responsibilities would help ensure more consistent application. The ESS plan has been implemented in the subprojects. Implementation was strongest where safeguards were viewed as aligned with Indigenous governance and support from consultants or regional teams was available.

At the global level, the implementation of Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) mitigation measures has been guided by the ESMF, Impact Strategies, and the ESMP for Components 2-4, with the Project Management Unit (PMU) playing a central role in coordination, capacity building, and oversight. ESS mitigation at the global level has contributed to risk management through capacity building, tool development, and promotion of inclusive frameworks. However, implementation effectiveness is uneven and reliant on subproject-level adaptation, emphasizing the need for stronger systems of global-to-local feedback, monitoring, and institutional learning.

The evaluation identified both meaningful efforts and persistent gaps in advancing gender equity across the project. Organizational development efforts and capacity-building activities for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) around gender have yet to be fully established. Global-level governance and event representation did not always reflect gender parity, despite agreed-upon targets. Moreover, cultural and ideological resistance within organizations presented a significant barrier to gender integration. Despite the challenges faced in implementing the gender mainstreaming activities, incremental gains were made, notably where organizational culture and leadership showed genuine commitment to gender equity, through ongoing internal reflection and adaptations to improve practice.

The SEP demonstrates a strong commitment to the meaningful participation of IPLCs, including through culturally appropriate consultations and the application of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols. M&E, and administrative/financial roles, reported a high level of satisfaction

regarding the extent to which their views and concerns were considered by the ICI project at the global level. Multiple testimonies confirm that IPLCs influenced project planning and implementation at the global level (i.e. Interim steering committee). Stakeholders recognized the project's effort to integrate traditional knowledge into management plans and decision-making tools, especially at a subproject level, where IPLCs developed a sense of ownership over the initiative through their participation at the local level.

The ICI project established a formal grievance mechanism as part of its ESMF, aimed at ensuring accountability and addressing stakeholder concerns. This mechanism outlines a two-tier system where grievances can first be raised locally with the Executing Agency (EA) and subsequently escalated to the CI EthicsPoint platform if unresolved. The process includes multiple entry points, email, phone, postal mail, and online submission, and is designed to be accessible to IPLCs. In addition, each subproject had a locally adapted grievance mechanism.

Lessons Learned

The project demonstrated the critical importance of centering Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in conservation planning and implementation. Designing frameworks, processes, and strategies around Indigenous worldviews, including integrating traditional knowledge, languages, and governance systems, fostered stronger ownership, trust, and relevance of the project. However, standardized global reporting and indicators often failed to reflect local priorities, underscoring the need for flexible, context-specific approaches that are able to be integrated and consolidated to show the project's progress. Lessons learned related to project management include the need for clear communication channels, adaptive financial systems, and early, tailored capacity-building support.

Gender equality emerged as a priority, with effective strategies requiring structural integration of gender indicators, context-specific tools, and dedicated technical assistance. Inclusive approaches framed gender not just as women's empowerment but as part of broader social transformation within IPLC contexts.

While the initiative advanced knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation, opportunities to scale successful practices may be limited by sustained access to funding. While many subprojects strengthened community governance and conservation capacity, institutional fragility, financial dependency, political resistance, and land tenure insecurity continue to threaten long-term outcomes.

Recommendations

To strengthen the project's ability to achieve its objectives, the evaluation provides several key recommendations. At the project design and management level, we recommend implementing adaptive management milestones and dedicating a 'Year Zero' for future initiatives to ensure sufficient time for trust-building and to highlight Indigenous systems in the project's theory of change from the outset. We also suggest that future multi-institutional projects move away from a 50/50 budget split in favor of a clear lead institution with delegated roles, and ensure that key staff roles have adequate time allocation to prevent delays and staff turnover.

Additionally, to foster lasting impact and address existing challenges, we recommend shifting to an equity-based approach to gender rather than a parity-focused one and allocating dedicated resources for gender-specific responsibilities. The project should continue to prioritize activities that support land titling and tenure security as a cornerstone of sustainability and invest in targeted training on climate finance and fundraising to reduce financial dependency. Finally, to improve efficiency and relevance,

the project's M&E system should be redesigned to reduce reporting burdens, integrate qualitative indicators, and adopt a co-created, participatory approach that aligns with local realities and values.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement

10.3.1. Stakeholders' satisfaction with the level and mechanisms of engagement

The ICI project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), as outlined in the ESMF, establishes a robust and inclusive framework for engaging diverse actors throughout the project lifecycle. The SEP demonstrates a strong commitment to the meaningful participation of IPLCs, including through culturally appropriate consultations and the application of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols.

Civil society organizations are recognized as critical partners in ensuring transparency, monitoring, and advocacy, while private sector engagement is framed within the need for environmental and social due diligence. Overall, the SEP aligns with international standards and provides the necessary mechanisms for equitable and transparent engagement; however, its effectiveness depends on the consistency of implementation across regions and the continued monitoring of stakeholder inclusion and feedback processes.

The majority of stakeholders consulted, representing technical, gender, communications, M&E, and administrative/financial roles, reported a high level of satisfaction regarding the extent to which their views and concerns were considered by the ICI project at the global level. Out of 19 responses, 16 (84%) indicated satisfaction, suggesting that the project has successfully fostered an inclusive and responsive engagement process for most participants.

Technical staff in particular consistently expressed satisfaction, while a small number of stakeholders from M&E and administrative roles voiced dissatisfaction or uncertainty. These responses indicate that while the overall engagement process is perceived positively, there is room to improve how feedback loops and responsiveness are experienced by staff working in more operational or oversight functions.

Among GSC members, satisfaction with the project's responsiveness to their views and concerns was generally limited. Of the five respondents, only one indicated full satisfaction, . While GSC members largely agreed that their perspectives were acknowledged there remain areas for improvement in how feedback is integrated into decision-making processes or follow-up actions. Interviews revealed that members sometimes perceived a lack of responsiveness, particularly in contexts such as meeting follow-ups, communication between regional and global levels, and opportunities for more proactive roles in project leadership . While the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure clearly define the GSC's leadership responsibilities, including providing strategic oversight, approving annual plans, and participating in governance decisions, some members noted that in practice, expectations around their level of influence were not always clear. Additionally, interviewees reflected on their own roles, acknowledging that more frequent informal engagement and inter-member communication could have enhanced the GSC's collective impact. These reflections suggest a need to strengthen internal communication channels and clarify how GSC input is translated into actionable outcomes, particularly through more interactive feedback mechanisms and transparent decision-making processes.

The results indicate a need for more consistent engagement, greater transparency in decisions, and clearer communication loops between regional GSC members and the global coordination bodies.

10.3.2. Indigenous people and local communities as stakeholders

Stakeholder feedback reflects a mostly positive assessment of the project's efforts to include IPLCs through various engagement mechanisms. Respondents appreciated the responsiveness of project staff, regular updates via newsletters and meetings, and the facilitation of spaces for participation and dialogue. For instance, some subproject leaders reported that queries were addressed promptly, and communication with global teams was generally effective, albeit sometimes slow due to coordination back and forth.

Multiple testimonies confirm that IPLCs influenced project planning and implementation at the global level (i.e. Interim steering committee). Stakeholders recognized the project's effort to integrate traditional knowledge into management plans and decision-making tools, especially at a subproject level, where IPLCs developed a sense of ownership over the initiative through their participation at the local level. However, as previously mentioned, some GSC interviewees felt that communication and clarity regarding their role could be improved.

Key contributors, such as GSC members and regional coordinators, noted that having Indigenous focal points within CI and IUCN facilitated communication and trust, with some voices being particularly instrumental in ensuring respect for Indigenous processes.

Participants in Latin America and Asia emphasized the importance of local timelines, self-determination, and deeper integration of Indigenous leadership. While positive outcomes such as shared governance frameworks were achieved, others expressed frustration with inflexible administrative structures and limited influence over budgetary decisions. In summary, meaningful engagement at the global level was recognized as a defining feature of the project. Yet, stakeholders underscored the need for continued improvement in responsiveness, direct involvement, and mutual learning between Indigenous and institutional actors.

The ICI project has made notable progress in advancing inclusive stakeholder engagement across culturally diverse contexts, particularly among IPLCs. Subprojects in regions like Tanzania and Chile have implemented participatory approaches prioritizing local knowledge, community-driven planning, and respect for traditional governance.

The establishment of an inclusive GSC represents a significant institutional innovation and an important step toward IPLC-led governance in global conservation programming. Stakeholders view the GSC structure as a strong foundation, yet interviews revealed ongoing operational challenges remain, particularly regarding clarity of roles, consistency in participation, and mechanisms to ensure that all members have an equitable voice in shaping decisions. While GSC members appreciated being part of a formal governance body, several expressed uncertainty about how their input translated into implementation and noted that opportunities for more active engagement—such as initiating meetings or influencing project components—were not always fully utilized. This indicates a need to strengthen ownership within the GSC by providing clearer guidance on members' decision-making roles and encouraging more proactive internal communication. Additionally, participants consistently highlighted the importance of expanding beyond regional discussions and holding multi-strategy meetings that bring together all subprojects, fostering cross-learning and alignment. To fully realize the Stakeholder Engagement Plan's inclusive vision, further investments are needed in communication infrastructure, ongoing facilitation, and peer mentorship within the GSC to reinforce both its strategic and operational roles.

According to the field trips realized by the evaluation team, engagement efforts in Tanzania were community-initiated in many cases. Interviews reveal that stakeholders felt their voices were central to project decisions. Local structures, such as village councils, elders, and women's groups, were actively involved in co-designing and implementing activities. Women's participation grew significantly through leadership training and financial inclusion strategies like savings groups (VICOBAs). Stakeholders report a strong sense of ownership and pride.

Similarly, in Chile, the evaluation research reflects how engagement with Mapuche women has empowered them to recognize their value and possibilities. The project supported intergenerational learning, the preservation of traditional knowledge, and local autonomy in decision-making. The participants noted that they were "not just included" but were "leading processes", and their work reflects a strong community identity built around culture, food sovereignty, and land care. However, they also faced barriers, such as the need for technical accompaniment and the challenge of adapting institutional language to community realities.

Across regions, challenges emerged related to communication and role clarity. Despite these constraints, localized strategies, such as storytelling, radio, and separate dialogue spaces for women and men, have helped address barriers and build trust.

10.3.3. Private sector engagement

Evidence from interviews and documents indicates that the ICI project has pursued private sector engagement in specific cases, particularly through Indigenous-led economic initiatives. Additional efforts were made to connect subproject activities with other ongoing initiatives, seeking synergies in the broader landscape, including projects implemented by CI Peru. Despite these localized successes, stakeholders noted that private sector engagement was not a core component of the project's global strategy.

10.3.4. Government engagement

The ICI project envisioned meaningful engagement with government stakeholders as part of its Stakeholder Engagement Plan, particularly in enabling legal frameworks, facilitating recognition of IPLCs, and aligning subproject actions with national priorities.

At the global level, governments were not actively engaged in the design or governance of the initiative, as the funds did not flow through the national government GEF entities. Government participation was mostly restricted to information-sharing or ad hoc consultations. At the subproject level, some efforts were made to involve national, municipal or regional authorities, not all projects had success in governance engagement. Government involvement remained limited and uneven across some project sites, but in some others it was relevant and essential for enabling stronger recognition of Indigenous land rights and alignment with national conservation priorities.

Engagement with government institutions has been a critical component of the Inclusive Conservation Initiative's implementation strategy, enabling stronger recognition of Indigenous land rights and alignment with national conservation priorities.

In Tanzania, the UCRT subproject has collaborated closely with local and district government authorities to resolve land boundary disputes and secure Certificates of Village Land (CVLs) across 12 villages—efforts that have involved participatory land surveys and high-level political support during regional project launches. In Peru, the FENAMAD subproject has coordinated with public agencies to safeguard over 600,000 hectares of Indigenous territories, including those of Indigenous

Peoples in voluntary isolation, contributing technical expertise to national forest governance and conservation planning.

Similarly, in Guatemala and Panama, Sotz'il has engaged with municipal and cantonal authorities to support reforestation and agroforestry initiatives across 48 cantons, reinforcing Indigenous territorial governance within public environmental programs. In Argentina, the FARN subproject has promoted intercultural governance and dialogue between Mapuche communities and provincial and national authorities, including the formation of intercultural technical teams that help bridge traditional knowledge and public land management systems. In Chile, the Observatorio Ciudadano supported the historic signing of a Co-Governance Framework Agreement in Villarrica National Park between more than 13 Mapuche communities, the National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), and the Ministry of National Assets, marking the first time Indigenous territorial rights have been formally recognized within a State-Protected Wilderness Area. This agreement established a joint Governance and Management Council and represents a milestone for institutionalized Indigenous participation in the management of public conservation areas. These examples illustrate how effective government engagement strengthens the enabling environment for Indigenous-led conservation and fosters co-responsibility in protecting critical ecosystems.

At the global level, governments were not actively engaged in the design or governance of the initiative, and their participation was mostly restricted to information-sharing or ad hoc consultations. At the subproject level, some efforts were made to involve national, municipal or regional authorities, not all projects had success in governance engagement. Interviews highlighted challenges including frequent staff turnover in government offices, limited political interest in IPLC-led conservation, and fears among some IPLC stakeholders of state interference. While this cautious approach aligns with the project's emphasis on IPLC autonomy and rights-based implementation, it also constrains broader institutional integration.

In a specific subproject, for example, shifts in government ideology created a hostile environment for Indigenous participation, undermining previous collaboration and state support.

In Asia and Africa, local government entities were occasionally more supportive than national counterparts, although bureaucratic hurdles, such as delays in obtaining letters of no objection, created significant operational challenges. Some Indigenous organizations relied on informal connections through traditional leaders or intermediaries, yet formal partnerships with the government remained weak.

Government engagement across the ICI subprojects has varied depending on context, with some initiatives focusing more on local institutions and others engaging national actors. While collaboration has been essential in many cases, political shifts and institutional turnover present ongoing risks to sustained engagement. Overall, the project maintained its strong commitment to IPLC leadership, with government relations approached strategically and selectively. Engagement with state actors remained modest, reflecting both contextual limitations and a deliberate emphasis on strengthening community-led governance. Importantly, the ICI has also served as an entry point to highlight IPLCs' contributions to national biodiversity goals, particularly through the integration of their voices in discussions around National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). This has helped position IPLCs not only as local stewards but as key partners in achieving national and global conservation commitments.

Table 18: Stakeholder Engagement Rating

Rating	Justification
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Satisfactory	The project established a comprehensive and culturally appropriate stakeholder engagement framework, with strong participation from IPLCs and civil society. Most stakeholders reported high satisfaction with the mechanisms and responsiveness of engagement, particularly at the subproject level. However, uneven implementation across regions, limited feedback loops for some roles, and challenges in GSC and government engagement indicate areas for improvement.
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C. Gender Equality

10.2 Gender

10.2.1. Gender Analysis and Project Design

The Gender Mainstreaming Framework for Component 1 as the Global Mainstreaming Plan for Components 2-4, were made before having specific details about the context of the local organizations and communities where the subprojects would be implemented. Based on this documents, each subproject must implement activities and meet minimum indicators already foreseen. These mandatory actions include: developing a Gender Action Plan (GAP), conducting a gender analysis and assessment to identify barriers and opportunities, with budget included and staffing for gender, capacity building assessment to identify gap in organization gender institutionalization, ensuring that activities address women's land and natural resource rights, guaranteeing their participation in decisions on economic sustainability and in project governance bodies with at least 50% female representation. In addition, gender capacity building actions must be implemented, e.g. leadership training for women, and sex-disaggregated data must be collected.

These requirements are minimum standards that must be met and reported annually; however, the goal of 50% of beneficiaries being women (GMF target) has not been easy to achieve at subproject level due to contextual differences, but this has not been taken into account by PMU to adjust the global targets to comply with the different realities.

The subprojects shared frustration with the focus on participation, as parity in participation will not always lead to equitable benefits. Jumping straight to gender parity skips key steps, such as the application of equity measures to level the playing field between men and women. Gender mainstreaming is present and clear in the GMF and GMP documents; however, this does not ensure that it is substantive in the project. Global targets are focused more on quantitative data which do not measure meaningful involvement, institutional shifts, and decisions taken as qualitative data. Furthermore, the fact that the subproject organizations have carried out their gender assessment and planning does not ensure an understanding of the issue.

After receiving training and technical assistance, most of the subprojects moved from viewing gender analysis and planning as a mere requirement to understanding it as a necessary and valuable process. There were important advances in awareness and planning, although challenges remain for gender integration to be fully effective and sustainable.

10.2.2. Gender Mainstreaming Implementation

The evaluation identified both meaningful efforts and persistent gaps in advancing gender equity across the project. While some women have taken on leadership roles within subprojects, there remains a fundamental misconception equating gender mainstreaming with solely women's participation. In several subprojects, the individuals tasked with gender-related activities were women community leaders. While deeply committed and respected within their territories, they were not

gender specialists and often lacked the technical training or institutional support needed to fully implement gender strategies. We also observed that organizations with prior experience managing international funds, such as those from GEF-type mechanisms, tended to demonstrate a stronger understanding of gender approaches aligned with global standards. This reflects a limited institutional (PMU) and organizational (subprojects) understanding of gender as a systemic issue, one that intersects with power, knowledge, and representation, not simply as the presence of women. Moreover, not all subproject staff have received adequate training in gender concepts and haven't had adequate staff during the elaboration of the impact strategy even though it was advised by PMU, causing little clarity on the objectives or strategies for advancing gender equity in practice.

Organizational development efforts and capacity-building activities for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) around gender have yet to be fully established. The learning academy, which aims to support this work, is still in process. Critical tools for advancing gender-responsive programming, such as post-training assessments, and gender-sensitive budgeting, were not in use at the time of review.

Members of the Global Steering Committee (GSC) expressed frustration that gender equity in leadership at the international level is a challenge. While the GSC has a woman co-leading, her situation also reflects systemic challenges. She is simultaneously responsible for multiple roles, including monitoring and evaluation, safeguards, and leadership within her own subproject, as well as involvement in other initiatives apart from the ICI project. This heavy burden is emblematic of a broader reality for many women in the environmental field, where leadership often comes with "double and triple shifts" rather than distributed responsibility or institutional support. Despite these constraints, the Project Management Unit (PMU) has taken steps to facilitate women's involvement in global learning opportunities. Notably, women from subprojects have participated in international spaces such as the Women's Global Training, and regional exchanges, offering moments of recognition and engagement beyond their immediate territories.

Global-level governance and event representation did not always reflect gender parity, despite agreed-upon targets. Moreover, cultural and ideological resistance within organizations presented a significant barrier to gender integration. Interviewees noted that gender institutionalization, including dedicated gender policies, budgets, and trained staff, remains weak in several partner organizations and is a critical area for strengthening. As one informant explained, it is difficult for institutions without a foundational equity commitment and trained personnel to advance gender integration. In some subprojects gender activities for the project were appointed by a woman just for being a woman, not for having gender experience.

In addition, many organizations (40%) do not completely agree with the gender focus of the global project. While several communities embraced the gender focus, concerns about the gender focus emerged in 4 of the 10 subprojects. These four subprojects articulated that their traditional gender systems, often based on principles of complementarity and interdependence, did not align with the project's externally-defined gender targets. The PMU has responded to these discussions with an open mind towards adapting gender actions to be in line with Indigenous values and world views, but some tensions on the topic remain. In some cases, gender strategies were perceived as promoting separatist feminism, where women are seen as needing to form exclusive spaces. While this perception may stem from misunderstandings about gender perspective and feminism, the creation of women-led spaces is often a necessary corrective, given that men in many communities already enjoy exclusive forums for decision-making. Importantly, several subprojects are actively working with both men and women to foster shared understanding, dialogue, and culturally appropriate pathways toward gender equity grounded in local realities rather than externally imposed models.

In Component 4, efforts to make Indigenous women leaders more visible through communications platforms represent a positive shift. Project activities have begun to integrate women's perspectives and representation into materials, as reports, guidelines, training resources, and communication tools; and participation in international programs has been highlighted, as GMP established. However, communication strategies explicitly addressing gender concerns have been unevenly implemented. While the 2023 communications plan included initiatives such as the "16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence," these efforts had not yet translated into visible outputs or public content at the time of evaluation.

The implementation of the gender perspective across subprojects faced a series of complex challenges. A prominent issue was the influence of cultural norms and traditional beliefs, which often defined leadership and decision-making roles as male-dominated. For example, traditional governance structures in Fiji and other Pacific islands restricted women's participation in key community meetings, despite their recognized differences in different societal domains. Similar tensions emerged in Latin American and African contexts, where women's involvement was sometimes seen as disruptive or questioned by male community members. However, several subprojects have shown significant progress in fostering women's leadership and participation. In the Mapuche territories of Chile and Argentina, current programs like the Escuela Itinerante and Guardianes de la Biodiversidad are further strengthening their visibility and involvement. In East Africa, women from the Women's Rights and Leadership Forum (WRLF) have begun securing leadership positions, while in SSA communities like Londnddlwo, women now exercise more decision-making power over finances, land, and community meetings.

Institutional and human resource constraints were also significant. Many subprojects reported that gender tasks were assigned to overburdened staff or lacked dedicated personnel and funding to implement gender plans effectively. Gender mainstreaming is also a big challenge for the assigned personnel since they must comprehend and participate in all subproject components. At the same time, they have little time for specific gender-dedicated actions.

Gender teams felt they had to remind other staff to integrate gender into activities constantly, and often faced limited understanding of gender beyond a focus on women alone. Even though IP were involved in the elaboration of the ICI project, the GMF, and GMP and during the elaboration of subprojects GAP there were adjustments to respond to community context, the high expectations for 50/50 participation of women and men in all activities was unrealistic in some cases, leading to frustrations and adjustments. Despite these challenges, subprojects implemented several adaptive strategies. These included participatory capacity building, community dialogue, efforts to build shared understanding of gender concepts, and adjusting plans to accommodate cultural contexts.

The gender focus also helped bring attention to the unpaid labor and structural disadvantages faced by women. In some regions, men began recognizing their roles in supporting gender equity, and discussions on masculinities and inclusion were introduced.

To overcome some of these challenges, the project adopted several adaptive strategies. These included respecting cultural frameworks and local epistemologies, such as acknowledging the authority of traditional male chiefs while creating parallel spaces for women's engagement in Fiji and the Cook Islands, and strengthening gender content within safeguards training. The team also used institutional diagnostics, like the organizational capacity assessment tool, to map capacity gaps in gender policies, accountability mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement across all subprojects. To build internal systems and close these gaps, the project supported planning grants that allowed partners to improve their operational readiness and hire staff, although often budgets remained insufficient to fund full-time gender specialists. Finally, to foster cross-organizational learning and

shared standards, the project promoted communities of practice and learning exchanges, despite challenges like language barriers and the need for translation to ensure equitable participation.

10.2.3. Gender-Responsive Participation, Benefits, and Impact

Despite the challenges faced in implementing the gender mainstreaming activities, incremental gains were made, notably where organizational culture and leadership showed genuine commitment to gender equity, through ongoing internal reflection and adaptations to improve practice.

There is evidence of increased participation and leadership among women. In general, women report greater autonomy, such as making decisions on livestock sales and participating in savings groups, contributing to household income decisions. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women trained through Women's Rights and Leadership Forums (WRLF), where men have been sensitized in this space as well, have been elected into local leadership roles. In the Mapuche territory (LATAM), traditional female leadership was reinforced through culturally rooted programs like itinerant schools and biodiversity guardianship, fostering intergenerational knowledge exchange. In FENAMAD, the project's update of the Indigenous Women's Agenda increased visibility and participation of female leaders in project activities. Multiple women community members across subprojects expressed that now they don't have to ask permission to speak in public meetings.

However, some participants expressed uncertainty about the extent of women's involvement in decision-making, as in the Sotzil subproject, when asked whether women's organizations actively participated, indicating potential gaps in awareness or documentation. In other territories, leaders noted that although women were often visible in community spaces, their roles were sometimes framed more as support rather than decision-making leadership, and in several cases, cultural norms shaped expectations of complementarity rather than explicit leadership roles for women. Also, persistent barriers such as time poverty, isolation, or lack of support still affect women's ability to participate fully, for instance, in some Mapuche communities, women's participation was described as occurring largely because they had been "left alone" with responsibilities, rather than as a result of deliberate empowerment, highlighting how isolation and heavy workloads can both drive and constrain engagement

Regarding capacity building and enabling conditions, women received training in leadership, conflict resolution, and financial management, which enhanced their confidence and decision-making abilities. Dedicated childcare spaces during multi-day events have facilitated the participation of mothers and caregivers. Also, mentorship between elder women and youth has promoted leadership continuity and the transmission of ancestral knowledge. Additionally, some subprojects pre-existing gender policies and institutions (e.g., the area of Indigenous Women) were strengthened and updated under ICI. In Guatemala, workshops targeted women and men, explicitly addressing patriarchal mindsets and the importance of shared decision-making at the household and community levels.

Women in subprojects received training in leadership, financial management, and their rights related to land and markets. In SSA, women highlighted their newfound ability to make decisions about livestock sales and market participation, which were previously reserved for men. This indicates a growing sense of agency and capacity to influence household and community economic decisions. Access to land ownership and awareness of land rights were significant outcomes, particularly in SSA. Reports of women receiving individual land titles or gaining institutional support to claim land highlight progress in shifting gender norms around asset control.

In several SSA and LATAM subprojects, women engaged in microenterprises supported by ICI. Interviewees reported that income from such initiatives was used for household needs like school supplies and fuel, reducing dependence on unpaid labor such as wood collection. These efforts

generated income and supported time-saving, autonomy, and solidarity among women's groups. However, in some places communities, women felt judged negatively for being manly or a feminist for engaging in activities that do not historically correspond to women.

Subprojects reported varying degrees of success in shifting local gender norms. In Guatemala, for example, ICI helped consolidate and validate an Indigenous Women's Agenda and update local gender instruments. Similarly, in LATAM and SSA, women participated in training and project activities. They began implementing practical changes, such as collective ownership of projects and decision-making in natural resource management, which shifted perceptions of women's roles in communities.

The project recognized and revitalized traditional concepts of gender complementarity in Latin American Indigenous communities. It built capacities through intercultural training and recovering women's historical roles in conservation and economic life. These approaches resonated more with local values and helped challenge colonial gender dynamics.

In Latin American subprojects, efforts to shift norms were grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. Women's roles as knowledge holders and guardians of biodiversity were uplifted in culturally respectful ways, promoting changes from within rather than imposing external models. The Mapuche subproject, for example, emphasized 'traülün' (dialogue) as a tool for inclusive decision-making, where two encounters, the last one of just women, resulted in a deep sharing of violence experiences, challenging their traditional view of complementarity.

Men's involvement was an intentional element in many subprojects. In Tanzania and Kenya, men participated in WRLF events and shared responsibilities in economic and governance initiatives. These joint actions helped challenge perceptions that women's participation is secondary or symbolic, promoting a more equitable division of roles and respect for women's contributions.

Despite progress, resistance was especially noted in places where gender equality was not traditionally framed as a collective value. In a few subprojects, interviewees indicated that not all men were comfortable with new expectations or shifts in traditional power dynamics. Additionally, resource limitations and a lack of sustained support mechanisms posed challenges for long-term norm change. In some areas, gender roles remain rigid, with limited access for women to conservation work or formal employment. Capacity-building efforts varied in depth and reach, and some women expressed the need for additional tools, training, and institutional gender policies. Persistent challenges include a lack of human and financial resources to address gender-based violence, internalized resistance among male stakeholders, and difficulty in transforming entrenched beliefs within communities.

Nonetheless, early-stage dialogues catalyzed by ICI laid the groundwork for longer-term shifts by opening safe spaces for women to express concerns and fostering cross-cultural learning on gender justice.

One prominent positive unintended outcome was the growing openness among men to reflect on and support gender equity. Several subprojects reported increased male participation in gender training and local governance. In some Indigenous contexts, men appreciated how women's traditional knowledge contributed to conservation outcomes. Though not initially planned, these shifts enhanced collaboration and mutual respect across genders.

Another notable result was the empowerment of youth through gender dialogues. Projects that engaged youth saw a cross-generational impact, where younger participants became advocates for

equity and inclusion. This has fostered a new generation of leaders grounded in gender-sensitive approaches.

As for the adverse outcomes, in some settings, gender-focused activities led to discomfort or skepticism. Participants noted that introducing gender agendas was sometimes seen as foreign or disconnected from local traditions. This caused tension, especially when changes in women’s roles were perceived to undermine established hierarchies or customary practices. There were also reports of limited or tokenistic involvement of women in some governance activities. While nominal participation increased, the depth of engagement was uneven, and some community members questioned whether women’s inclusion was symbolic rather than substantive. This calls attention to the importance of distinguishing between presence and influence.

These unintended outcomes are not being captured as results at the global level since the indicators of all projects are captured as quantitative, compelling the project targets. Even though Global Quarterly Reports have notes where details can be added, this is not equal to globally reported outcomes.

As with other concepts, women’s leadership is sometimes viewed as foreign or externally imposed, though traditional female roles exist and are respected. This is especially true in Mapuche communities, where leadership is often viewed as horizontal and complementary rather than hierarchical; women and men contribute to decision-making. That’s why some subprojects focused more on visibility and support than on structural changes in some communities with strong pre-existing female participation.

11.2.4. Gender-Disaggregated Data and Monitoring

ICI developed and applied diagnostic tools like the Organizational Capacity Assessment and gender policy mapping across all subprojects. These tools enabled the identification of institutional gaps in gender sensitivity, stakeholder engagement, and accountability. As the global staff described, these tools informed planning grants that helped strengthen gender capacity in line with GEF standards.

Gender data has been collected and reported accordingly. The quarterly reports include numerous data points with gender disaggregation. Since the data is primarily about women’s participation it is difficult to use the data to make concrete steps or strategies to address topics related to gender in each subproject. While the monitoring of indicators has not been clearly used in the project, the gender requirements have raised discussions between subprojects, the GSC, and the PMU, which have generated important learnings about gender in IPLC-led projects.

As of the 2024 PIR, some of the gender indicators were reported complete or on track. For example, all subprojects completed their GMPs and approximately 50% of participants in community activities were women. Despite near parity in participation, in leadership roles, only 36% were women. Some gender indicators are delayed due to delays in Component 2, however, as seen in Table 17, the overall rating of the gender component is moderately satisfactory

Table 17: Rating of the implementation of gender requirements.

Rating	Justification
Satisfactory (S)	The gender approach was consistent with GEF mandates, agency policies, and many country priorities. Subprojects often built on pre-existing local initiatives (e.g., Indigenous Women’s Agendas), though some communities felt the frameworks needed cultural adaptation. The project achieved meaningful improvements: women’s participation increased, some norms shifted, and new protocols were created. However, not all participation targets were met, and lack of gender specialists limited consistent implementation. Nonetheless, partial achievement of targets, efficiency constraints, and sustainability risks suggest a Moderately Satisfactory rating.

D. Knowledge Management

7.4. Knowledge Management

7.4.1 Global Project Knowledge Management

ICI's knowledge management consists of the project website (internally called the ICI Knowledge Platform), social media platforms, and reports and publications. Additionally, a ICI Hub was created for internal knowledge management between the PMU and Subprojects. The ICI Hub is a group of SharePoint folders hosted by CI for uploading documents, reports, storing project documentation, financial records, territorial maps, and reports.

Despite the existence of these platforms, subproject teams reported limited access, with some able to view only their files (even though subprojects designed who had access) and others unaware that the platforms existed. This was seen as a key factor limiting cross-learning among subprojects, even though that was not the intention of the SharePoint.

ICI's communication strategy has supported knowledge management and sharing by generating and distributing content that reflects the voices, experiences, and leadership of IPLCs through the Knowledge Platform and social media platforms. IPLC representatives have actively contributed to developing knowledge modules on gender and environmental linkages through blog posts written by Indigenous organizations and video documentation of regional exchanges, hosted on the project website. The project has also connected with broader knowledge-sharing platforms such as UNDP's Learning for Nature and IUCN's Panorama, further expanding its reach.

7.4.2 Subproject Knowledge Management and Learning Between Subprojects

Interviewees also acknowledged that the project offered multiple opportunities for learning, such as regional meetings and technical orientations. However, a challenge identified for learning was the use of highly technical language in global project spaces. Representatives from local communities and Indigenous Peoples noted that they found it challenging to engage in discussions, which limited their participation.

Several interviewees also pointed out that while regional exchange events were intended to promote collaboration, they often fell short of that goal. Participants described the time allocated as too limited, with packed agendas that left little room to share lessons or learn from peers in similar roles (e.g., gender specialists with gender specialists, finance teams with finance teams) across subprojects, this limited opportunities to transfer effective practices between territories.

By contrast, the subprojects in Chile and Argentina have established regular coordination meetings, holding monthly sessions to align goals, share progress, and exchange lessons learned. Participants described these meetings as highly valuable for both sides.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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300000	4551701	1898967.62	
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Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	783000		

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
Ewaso Ng'iro River Basin ICCA				783,000.00	0.00	

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
300000	3768701	1898967.62	

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Annapurna Conservation Area	10091	Habitat/Species Management Area		381,450.00	195,450.00			37.00	
Choshuen co Mocho National Reserve	94118	Habitat/Species Management Area		3,768.00	0.00				
Huapi National Park	2497	National Park		21,198.00	0.00				
Huerquehue National Park	9418	National Park		6,264.00	0.00				
Indigenou s and Community Conserve d Areas in the Kahuzi Biega and Maiko National	0				53,882.00				

Parks corridor									
Indigenous Conserved Areas	0				29,280.00				
Lanin National Park	7	National Park		206,007.00	0.00				
Makame Wildlife Management Area	555549301	Habitat/Species Management Area			372,000.00				
Parque Nacional Alto Purús	303316	National Park		1,255,347.00	0.00				
Parque Nacional Bahuaja Sonene	127825	National Park		545,708.00	0.00				
Parque Nacional del Manu	257	National Park	300,000.00	858,148.00	0.00				
Reserva Comunal Amarakae ri	303317	Habitat/Species Management Area		201,168.00	402,355.62			54.00	
Reserva Madre de Dios	0	Habitat/Species Management Area			829,000.00			54.00	
Reserva Nacional Tambopata	3370	Habitat/Species Management Area		137,345.00	0.00				
Santuario Nacional Megantoni	20186	Natural Monument or Feature		107,934.00	0.00				
Villarrica National Park	91	National Park		22,245.00	17,000.00			59.00	
Villarrica National Reserve	10706	Habitat/Species Management Area		22,119.00				0.00	

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
180000			

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
180000			

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
NA	0	Others	180,000.00		0.00			0.00	

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
75000	14314	10280.24	

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland	37,500.00	5,000.00	5,108.00	

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
37,500.00	9,314.00	5,172.24	

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
2600000	2883851	2141321.63	

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,600,000.00	1,541,302.00	1,265,137.63	

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
1,000,000.00	1,342,549.00	826,184.00	

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
High Conservation Value Forest			50,000.00	

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	165,200.00	119.00	

Indicator 5.1 Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
		119	

Type/name of the third-party certification

Indicator 5.2 Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE

Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	12000000	20862368		
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)	12,000,000	20,862,368	0	
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting		2041		
Duration of accounting		20		

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO₂e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	35,000	71,133	24,336	
Male	35,000	71,381	28,262	
Total	70,000	142,514	52,598	0

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
GEF Agency	Conservation International	Grant	Investment mobilized	18,000,000.00	9,286,867.00
GEF Agency	Conservation International	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	7,000,000.00	8,406,545.00
GEF Agency	IUCN	Grant	Investment mobilized	14,574,060.00	7,972,736.00
GEF Agency	IUCN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10,000,000.00	
Donor Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,000,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	Global Wildlife Conservation	Grant	Investment mobilized	4,200,000.00	
Private Sector	National Geographic	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00	

Civil Society Organization	Tenure Facility	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00	
Donor Agency	NICFI	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	Nia Tero	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	Maliasili	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00	
Beneficiaries	NEFIN	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00	251,908.00
Beneficiaries	Tingaule Thakali Sewa Samaj (Nepal)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,460,000.00	
Beneficiaries	Tamu Hyula Chhoja Dhin-Gurung Rastriya Parisad (Nepal)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,460,000.00	
Beneficiaries	Nepal Magar Sangha (Nepal)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,460,000.00	
Beneficiaries	NEFIN DCC Kaski (Nepal)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,460,000.00	
Beneficiaries	NEFIN DCC Manang (Nepal)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,460,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	National Trust for Nature Conservation (Nepal)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,000,000.00	
Beneficiaries	ANAPAC-RDC	Grant	Investment mobilized	359,440.00	160,900.00
Civil Society Organization	WFD-World Peace Service	Grant	Investment mobilized	300,000.00	
Other	USIP-United States Institute of Peace	Grant	Investment mobilized	97,500.00	
Civil Society Organization	IWGIA-Indigenous working Group on Indigenous Affairs	Grant	Investment mobilized	88,000.00	

Civil Society Organization	Misereor	Grant	Investment mobilized	35,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	PFR-Partners for Resilience	Grant	Investment mobilized	300,000.00	
Other	University of Birmingham	Grant	Investment mobilized	24,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	Mapuche del territorio de Kurarewe	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00	413,821.00
Beneficiaries	Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	112,622.00	112,622.00
Beneficiaries	Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT)	Grant	Investment mobilized	793,834.00	
Beneficiaries	Sotz'il	Grant	Investment mobilized	378,400.00	
Beneficiaries	Sotz'il	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	172,000.00	172,000.00
Beneficiaries	IPF Thailand	Grant	Investment mobilized		133,523.00
Beneficiaries	IPF Thailand	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		27,853.00
Total Co-financing				90,384,856.00	333,376.00

Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Medium/Moderate	Medium/Moderate	

6.1.1. Risk Mitigation

Findings from interviews and project documentation indicate that while many risks have been effectively mitigated through strategic, context-sensitive actions, financial risks remain a prominent concern throughout the project. For example, since co-financing targets are behind schedule, it has had to be addressed through forward-looking financial planning and retroactive documentation of co-financing secured.

Stakeholders also reported improvements in financial oversight and prioritization mechanisms to enhance resource efficiency, alongside deliberate pacing of activities and component-specific adjustments to offset early delays. However, shifting funding landscapes (i.e. US withdrawal from Paris Agreement and pause on climate finance contributions^[11] and speculations around shifting donor policies after US cuts aid^[12]), and no prospects for follow-up financing through ICI2 have introduced significant uncertainty to subprojects seeking continuity in funding for their work. These factors have made the risks associated with co-financing particularly evident, reinforcing the need for continuous monitoring and adaptive financial strategies to maintain project continuity and ensure long-term sustainability.

Security threats were highlighted in multiple territories, including increased pressure from illicit economies like coca cultivation and illegal mining. These threats contribute to the vulnerability of Indigenous defenders and populations living in or near protected areas. The project has taken steps to protect environmental defenders and safeguard sensitive community data, particularly in politically sensitive or conflict-prone regions where the risk of state backlash or association with contentious narratives is high. Specific safety protocols have been developed and implemented in response to persistent and severe security threats, especially in Latin America and the DRC, where environmental defenders and IPLC actors face ongoing risks. Despite these efforts, the volatile and context-dependent nature of the security environment means that threats remain very real and continue to affect implementation timelines.

At the same time, cultural and ideological risks, such as transitioning communities from extractive practices to conservation-based approaches, have been approached with caution. Facilitators and local leaders have emphasized gradual, culturally appropriate engagement to support these transitions respectfully and effectively. Together, these dynamics underscore the need for constant vigilance, flexibility, and responsiveness from project teams to navigate the complex and evolving risk landscape.

Across all ICI subproject proposals, risk identification and mitigation planning are present and generally aligned with the initiative's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). All subprojects have articulated potential environmental, social, and governance risks as identified in the ESMPs. Common risks identified include land tenure disputes, limited access to basic infrastructure, threats to biodiversity, and challenges related to community health or internal governance. While some subprojects provide highly detailed risk mitigation plans with monitoring indicators and stakeholder responsibilities, others address these areas more generally. Overall, the inclusion of Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or equivalent frameworks demonstrates a strong baseline of awareness and risk preparedness.

Moreover, community feedback indicated that contributions tied to cultural heritage were frequently sidelined, overlooked by project implementers or community decision-makers, in favor of externally imposed priorities. This disconnect risks alienating key actors, particularly women, and undermines the depth and cultural legitimacy of conservation outcomes.

[1] <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2025/01/21/trump-orders-us-to-quit-paris-agreement-and-pause-all-foreign-climate-finance/>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/22/health/usaid-who-trump-china.html>

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category M and E Document	Title 20251027_ICI MTR_10404_Management Response Matrix
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20251021_ICI GEF Core Indicator Reporting MTR
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20251013_ICI_10404_MTR_cover sheet
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250917_10404_MTR Report_EarthEmpower