

April, 2024

# Environmental and Social Risks and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in Climate and Nature Finance

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# Acknowledgements

We feel profoundly privileged to have conducted this study, a sentiment rooted primarily in the generosity and openness of the Indigenous Peoples we interviewed in the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Colombia. Our gratitude towards them is boundless, as it is towards all our interviewees who generously allocated time from their demanding schedules to speak with us.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our advisors, Professor Eric Henson and Professor Joseph Kalt, as well as to our seminar leaders, Professor Kathryn Sikkink and Professor Zoe Marks. Their support, guidance, patience, and expertise have been pivotal in the fruition of this study.

To our client team, Dianna M. Pizarro and Mayra Hoyos, we are immensely grateful for introducing us to such a fascinating and crucial field and for their unwavering guidance and support.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the entities that provided financial support to our research: the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, the Harvard University Real Colegio Complutense, the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, and the Harvard University Native American Program.

Lastly, to our family and friends we say: Thank you! We truly could not have done this without your unconditional support.

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# Abbreviations

EnABLE: Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions

ESSs: Environmental and Social Standards

FPIC: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

GCF: Green Climate Fund

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GEF: Global Environmental Facility

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

IPAG: Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group

IPEM: Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities Global Coordination

IPs: Indigenous Peoples

IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Others

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

NRDF: Natural Resources Development Foundation

NBS: Nature-Based Solutions

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PAE: Policy Analysis Exercise

REDD+: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SIDS: Small Island Developing States

SSI: Social Sustainability and Inclusion

UN: United Nations

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugees

VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls

# Executive Summary

The critical role of Indigenous Peoples in the world's responses to the climate crisis is highlighted by their guardianship of over 80% of the world's biological diversity and their rich climate and nature knowledge. Still, we find a striking disparity in climate and nature financing, where only 0.04% is allocated annually to support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' rights and stewardship of forests. This underinvestment underscores an urgent need for Indigenous Peoples to be strategically and rightfully engaged and empowered in the green and blue transitions, to both minimize risks of doing harm and maximize opportunities for impact.

This Policy Analysis Exercise is prepared for the Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities Global Coordination team within the Social Sustainability and Inclusion Global Unit at the World Bank. Our analysis and recommendations are intended to inform their understanding of critical environmental and social risks and opportunities faced by Indigenous Peoples amidst the increasing emphasis on climate and nature finance projects, alongside evaluating existing international standards.

We employ a methodology that combines primary and secondary research, including field research conducted in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Colombia, as well as consultations in Washington D.C., with diverse stakeholders to provide a comprehensive qualitative analysis. An emphasis is placed on interviewing indigenous leaders and peoples within these contexts, representatives of civil society, the private sector, and government.

Key findings include existing standard practices in climate and nature finance, notably through frameworks and policies established by the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund, and the Global Environmental Facility. Findings also reveal a dual risk typology of procedural and impact risks that pose threats to Indigenous Peoples.

To address these, this Policy Analysis Exercise suggests several policy recommendations that foster strategic alignment maximizing public value, operational capacity, and political feasibility. These include:

- 1) Empowering processes of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
- 2) Sensitizing stakeholders to our risk typology
- 3) Institutionalizing dialogues with Indigenous Peoples
- 4) Providing legal aid
- 5) Enhancing Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms

1

Introduction:

# **Climate and Nature Finance Cannot Work Without Indigenous Peoples**

# 1. Introduction: Climate and Nature Finance Cannot Work Without Indigenous Peoples

According to the United Nations (UN), Indigenous Peoples (IPs) are guardians of 80% of the world's biological diversity. However, only 0.04% of total annual climate and nature finance<sup>1</sup> is dedicated to funding IPs and Local Communities' tenure rights and forest guardianship.<sup>2</sup>

As the world moves forward with the green and blue transition, IPs must be engaged and empowered throughout all responses to the climate crises. This is necessary to prevent the unintended consequences of climate and nature finance projects unequally falling on IPs (i.e., doing harm) and to galvanize the opportunities presented by their traditional knowledge and expert role in our natural environment (i.e., maximizing impact).

With climate change acting as a “multiplier of existing vulnerabilities” and exacerbating development challenges,<sup>3</sup> IPs face the double threat of being negatively impacted by climate risks as well as risks related to the implementation of climate responses. These include but are not limited to the risk of losing access to their native land and being forcefully displaced, as well as the risk of undermining food security by increasing monoculture crops and plantations in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These are compounded by disrespect for and/ or lack of effective recognition and channels for participation. Furthermore, IPs face specific barriers to accessing climate and nature finance due to a system of complicated multilateral funds that has been labeled as “obsolete” by the former head of the Green Climate Fund, not least as it creates “bottlenecks that harm communities and the climate.”<sup>4</sup>

Conversely, the importance of engaging and empowering IPs in designing and delivering climate and nature finance projects is not limited to risk prevention measures. It also relates to the likelihood that such projects will have a maximized impact on their intended goal. As noted

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1 “Climate Finance in the Negotiations | UNFCCC,” accessed March 28, 2024. <https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/the-big-picture/climate-finance-in-the-negotiations>.

2 “Indigenous Peoples & Finance,” Climate Champions, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/system/indigenous-peoples-finance/>.

3 “Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: From Victims to Change Agents through Decent Work,” accessed February 14, 2024. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004322714\\_cclc\\_2017-0161-001](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004322714_cclc_2017-0161-001).

4 “Indigenous Peoples & Finance,” Climate Champions, accessed February 10, 2024. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/system/indigenous-peoples-finance/>.

by the UN, “when the rights of IPs are recognized, secured, and protected, rates of deforestation tend to be lower, and carbon stocks tend to be higher than in forests managed by other actors.”<sup>5</sup> Involving IPs can help improve ecosystem integrity, protect biodiversity, and enhance public health. Their status as “fundamental partners and crucial agents of change for achieving effective climate action, sustainable development and green growth” is primarily based on two principal characteristics: “their wealth creation based on principles of a sustainable green economy and their unique knowledge.”<sup>6</sup>

From an economic perspective, IPs mainly depend on natural resources and ecosystems but do so in a way that guarantees sustainability. Studies have found that natural resources provide a large proportion of the income of those belonging to the group of the *absolute poor*, “the demographic group to which most IPs belong,” sometimes as high as 75% in Indonesia or 89% in Brazil.<sup>7</sup> Still, these cases highlight a noticeable minimizing of emissions from deforestation. Again, in Brazil, from 2000 to 2012, only 1% of forests managed by IPs experienced deforestation, whereas those not controlled by these groups were deforested at a rate of 7%.<sup>8</sup>

From a knowledge perspective, a study by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) found that indigenous knowledge features many traditional and innovative adaptive practices. These include shoreline reinforcement, improved building technologies, increased water quality testing, rainwater harvesting, supplementary irrigation, traditional farming techniques to protect watersheds, changing hunting and gathering habits and periods, crop and livelihood diversification, the use of new materials, and community-based disaster risk reduction.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these valuable contributions, IPs still face significant risks in accessing and benefiting from climate and nature finance. This Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE) looks at the specific risks faced by IPs in climate and nature finance and introduces a risk typology based on our field research findings. These serve to design key policy recommendations for multilateral actors and development institutions, including the Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities Global Coordination (IPEM Global Coordination) within the Social Sustainability and Inclusion Global

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5 “Indigenous Peoples & Finance.”

6 “Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: From Victims to Change Agents through Decent Work.”

7 Anaya, S. James. 2000. *Indigenous Peoples in International Law*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.1.

8 “Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change.”

9 *Ibid.*

Unit (SSI Global Unit) at the World Bank, that can help ensure a risk-sensitive approach to climate and nature finance that does no harm to IPs and maximizes impact. In doing so, this PAE addresses two principal research questions:

1. *What are the key environmental and social risks and opportunities inherent to growing pressures and agreements for carbon markets and climate and nature finance for Indigenous Peoples?*
2. *What are existing international standards for development agencies, governments, and the private sector on environmental and social risks, particularly as they relate to Indigenous Peoples?*

#### Box 1

### Climate and Nature Finance

- Local, national, or transnational financial support from public, private and alternative sources that aims to fund actions for both mitigation and adaptation to address climate change.
- Developed countries are expected to provide financial resources to assist developing countries in meeting the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with the Paris Agreement encouraging voluntary contributions from other parties.<sup>10</sup>
- Efforts supported by climate and nature finance that are evaluated through our field research include:
  - **Carbon markets:** Financing directed to IPs through the buying and selling of permits representing emission allowances in their customary land, incentivizing emission reductions while providing flexibility for businesses to comply with regulatory targets.<sup>11</sup>
  - **Renewable energy projects:** Financing directed to IPs through the development and implementation of technologies such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal,

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10 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "Paris Agreement" (2015).

11 "What Are Carbon Markets and Why Are They Important?" UNDP Climate Promise accessed March 28, 2024. <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-are-carbon-markets-and-why-are-they-important>.

and biomass energy generation in their customary land to produce electricity or heat while reducing reliance on fossil fuels and mitigating environmental impact.<sup>12</sup>

- **Minerals mining:** Financing directed to IPs through the extraction of minerals in their customary land that are essential for various high-tech industries, such as electronics, renewable energy, and defense, and are deemed critical due to their economic and strategic importance, often requiring advanced technology and expertise for extraction and processing.<sup>13</sup>
- **Biodiversity conservation:** Financing directed to IPs through the establishment of protected areas for biodiversity conservation in their customary land, supporting the preservation of threatened or endangered species.<sup>14</sup>
- **Preventative resettlement:** Financing directed to IPs for the voluntary movement of individuals, communities, or populations within or away from their customary land to mitigate the impact of climate change, such as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, droughts, and other environmental changes, sometimes leading to the loss of livelihoods, land, and homes.<sup>15</sup>

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12 United Nations, "What Is Renewable Energy?" United Nations, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-renewable-energy>.

13 "Critical Minerals – Topics," IEA, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.iea.org/topics/critical-minerals>.

14 "Why Biodiversity Matters | UNFCCC," accessed March 28, 2024. [https://unfccc.int/news/why-biodiversity-matters?psafe\\_param=1&gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwh4-wBhB3EiwAeJsppOFB6sdD5mmpFpytSAo1MhQ6onjR0lwk0kF4oFWeetekGvtK6n-VRxoCcm4QAvD\\_BwE](https://unfccc.int/news/why-biodiversity-matters?psafe_param=1&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwh4-wBhB3EiwAeJsppOFB6sdD5mmpFpytSAo1MhQ6onjR0lwk0kF4oFWeetekGvtK6n-VRxoCcm4QAvD_BwE).

15 "Planned Relocations, Disasters and Climate Change: Consolidating Good Practices and Preparing for the Future." Brookings, accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/planned-relocations-disasters-and-climate-change-consolidating-good-practices-and-preparing-for-the-future/>.

2

Context

# **Standard Practices for Climate and Nature Finance**

## 2. Context: Standard Practices for Climate and Nature Finance

In the realm of climate and nature finance, international development institutions have created standard practices specifically tailored to guide interactions with IPs. The literature widely establishes that IPs possess distinct cultural characteristics and rights to self-determination under international law,<sup>16</sup> making them a unique group of stakeholders.<sup>17</sup>

In this section, we examine the key factors emphasized and prioritized by the standard practices of prominent development institutions actively engaged in climate and nature finance mechanisms. This analysis lays the groundwork for evaluating risks and opportunities in the upcoming case studies.

Indeed, since standard practices within these institutions are shaped by conventions and treaties established in the last fifty years under international law, these policies have significant similarities.<sup>18</sup> They prioritize involving the beneficiaries in the process by consultation mechanisms, assessing the cultural, spiritual, and environmental impact of projects, and evaluating the unintended consequences of actions on communities. More recently, there has been a need to emphasize the effects of these policies on women and youth. Having identified the crucial components that shape these policies, we now evaluate each in detail. A summary of these and other standard practices can be found in the Appendix (see table 1).

### 2.1 The World Bank Environmental and Social Framework

The Environmental and Social Framework of the World Bank is a fundamental policy document that sets out its commitment to sustainable development to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. This goal is achieved through a Bank Policy and a set of ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) designed to support borrowers' projects.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Anaya, Indigenous Peoples in International Law.

<sup>17</sup> Green Climate Fund, "Indigenous Peoples Policy," Green Climate Fund, March 1, 2018. <https://www.greencclimate.fund/document/indigenous-peoples-policy>.

<sup>18</sup> Anaya, Indigenous Peoples in International Law.

<sup>19</sup> "Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)," World Bank, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-social-framework>.

The Bank Policy is meant to enhance the capacity of funded projects to “assess and manage the[ir] environmental and social risks and impacts.”<sup>20</sup> The ESSs contribute to this end by ensuring a design that avoids, minimizes, reduces, or mitigates the adverse environmental and social risks and impacts of projects.

Whereas the entire Framework is relevant as a standard practice for risks and opportunities for IPs in climate and nature finance, ESS 7: Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities is paramount to this study’s goals. On paper, the ESS 7 ensures that projects supported by the World Bank respect these communities' dignity, human rights, economies, and cultures. It does so by recognizing the need for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and highlighting the importance of protecting and preserving the cultural heritage of IPs and Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities. ESS 7 also addresses other critical issues faced by IPs, such as land and resource rights, the need for measures for risk mitigation and benefit-sharing to ensure that projects contribute to the well-being of IPs, and standards promoting community development and empowerment to recognize the role of IPs in decision-making processes.

Besides ESS 7, other ESSs that are relevant to the risks and opportunities faced by IPs include ESS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, ESS 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement, ESS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources, and ESS 8: Cultural Heritage.

## 2.2. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) Indigenous Peoples Policy

The GCF - the world’s largest fund dedicated to accelerating transformative climate action in developing countries<sup>21</sup> - features its own Indigenous Peoples Policy emphasizing the value of FPIC, cultural sensitivity, community engagement, and overall protection of indigenous rights throughout project implementation. Among the most relevant aspects of the policy, we find specific protections for IPs at risk, such as “collective attachment,” “cultural heritage,” “involuntary resettlement,” and “meaningful consultation.”

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Green Climate Fund, “About GCF,” Text, Green Climate Fund (December 8, 2023). <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about>.

The GCF policy commits to upholding IPs' rights by implementing FPIC and recognizing their rights to lands, territories, and resources. These commitments align with international human rights and principles and acknowledge IPs' traditional knowledge in decision-making.

This policy document is particularly relevant to our study, as there are multiple projects in the Solomon Islands and Fiji that have benefitted from funding contributions from the GCF, including but not limited to the "Tina River Hydropower Development Project" in Guadalcanal.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.3. The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards

The GEF is a multilateral environmental fund created to support projects related to biodiversity conservation and preservation and climate change in developing countries.<sup>23</sup> As the largest source for multilateral funding for biodiversity in the world, it plays a key role in ensuring that IPs are engaged and invited to participate in international financial institutions. To that end, the GEF has adopted Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and, more recently, developed the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards. Within this Policy, minimum standard 5 requires all GEF partner agencies to demonstrate that they have everything necessary to ensure FPIC in projects that relate to IPs as well as further preventative measures that relate to risks, mitigation, and compensation plans designed through meaningful consultations. The minimum standard also calls for the establishment of grievance mechanisms and thorough benefit-sharing programs.<sup>24</sup> In 2012, the GEF established its own Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) to provide guidance and partnership to the Secretariat. The membership of the IPAG is aimed at representing IPs.<sup>25</sup>

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22 Green Climate Fund, "FP044: Tina River Hydropower Development Project," Green Climate Fund (April 6, 2017). <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp044>.

23 "Who We Are," Global Environment Facility, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are>.

24 Global Environmental Facility (GEF) "Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards." [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/gef\\_environmental\\_social\\_safeguards\\_policy.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/gef_environmental_social_safeguards_policy.pdf).

25 Global Environmental Facility (GEF) "Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group to the GEF-Terms of Reference." [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/file\\_attach/IPAG-TOR-Final.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/file_attach/IPAG-TOR-Final.pdf).

3

Methodology  
**and case study  
selection**



### 3. Methodology

Having clarified the problem statement regarding the potential risks and opportunities faced by IPs in climate and nature finance, this section addresses comments on methods. Our PAE addresses the research questions by providing a qualitative analytical framework through a combination of primary research, including field research and secondary literature. Our goal is to gather findings that help identify and design specific policy recommendations for our client, the IPEM Global Coordination within the SSI Global Unit at the World Bank.

Consulted primary sources include official policy documents, reports, and speeches from multilateral organizations, national governments, and development institutions. These contribute to more detailed findings gathered through semi-structured interviews during two research trips. In January 2024, we conducted a field trip to Fiji and the Solomon Islands, where we gathered detailed findings through semi-structured interviews with leaders and members of IPs, as well as with civil society, private sector, and government representatives in both archipelagos. In March 2024, we undertook a research trip to La Guajira Department in Colombia, further contributing to our research efforts, as well as a final research trip to Washington D.C. to assess preliminary findings together with our PAE client and colleagues at the World Bank. Whereas this study includes references to information and quotes gathered through our field research, we have decided to anonymize our list of interviewees in order to protect their privacy and avoid compromising their past, present, and/ or future engagement with climate and nature finance projects.

During our field research, we focused on interviewing professionals working on climate and nature finance-related topics, including, but not limited to, carbon markets, renewable energy projects, critical minerals mining, and preventative resettlement. Noting how access to official and reliable primary data on these topics as they unfold, particularly in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), is heavily limited, it was imperative to our work that interviews were conducted with as diverse and representative a group as possible, for they provided the opportunity to gather accurate information regarding trends and developments. This PAE introduces the findings of our field research in the form of a risk typology highlighting the interconnected challenges pertaining to climate and nature finance for IPs.

The qualitative methodology employed in this study also contributes to this PAE's section on policy recommendations. Our efforts aim beyond identifying a problem statement and collecting the latest evidence to better understand its complexities and challenges. This PAE is meant to

feature a pragmatic approach that seeks to inform multilateral and development actors, including the World Bank, on how to implement a risk-sensitive, impact-maximizing strategy that engages and empowers IPs throughout the entire life cycle of climate and nature finance projects, from their conception to their implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, it is incumbent upon us to disclose the identified limitations of this Policy Analysis Exercise. Similar to numerous social studies, our research is limited in its capacity to establish cause-and-effect relationships, and any potential correlations suggested in our arguments should be interpreted with due consideration. Furthermore, whereas our outreach was successful at connecting with representatives of a diverse set of fields, including vulnerable groups such as youth, women, and people with disabilities, we were unable to gather perspectives from representatives from the LGBTQ+ community.

### 3.1. Case Study Selection

This study examines climate and nature finance in the context of two Small Island Developing States (SIDS), analyzing case studies in Fiji and the Solomon Islands and an additional non-SIDS case study in La Guajira Department in Colombia. The reasons behind our case study selection relate to the compounded prevalence of climate risks, IPs, and the need for climate and nature finance projects in these territories. A summary of the presence of IPs in our case studies can be found in the Appendix (see table 2).

#### 3.1.1. SIDS: At the Frontline of the Climate Crisis

The experience of SIDS has been selected to better understand the risks and opportunities presented for IPs in climate and nature finance because: 1) climate risks disproportionately impact them, 2) they require a significant number of climate and nature finance projects, and 3) IPs in SIDS face interconnected challenges.

Due to their condition as inhabitants of low-lying island nations, the 65 million people who live in SIDS are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as floods and sea-level rise, despite being responsible for less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>26</sup> According to the United Nations, USD 153 billion were lost by SIDS between 1970 and 2020 due to weather, climate, and water-related hazards. This represents a striking figure compared

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<sup>26</sup> "Snapshot: Small Island Developing States," UNDP Climate Promise, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://climatepromise.undp.org/research-and-reports/snapshot-small-island-developing-states>.

to the average GDP for SIDS at USD 13.7 billion.<sup>27</sup> Besides economic and social burdens, SIDS lying five or fewer meters above sea level face a direct existential threat by projected sea-level rise. The Solomon Islands are the second-most at-risk nation for natural disasters,<sup>28</sup> with 65% of the population living within one kilometer of the sea, making rising sea levels a clear and present threat to land and water supplies and negatively impacting 47% of households that rely on fishing for food and income.<sup>29</sup> Like the Solomon Islands, Fiji experiences a heightened risk of natural disasters, particularly tropical cyclones, amplified by its geography, as well as of rising sea levels that threaten coastal communities where a significant portion of the population resides, jeopardizing land, freshwater resources, and livelihoods dependent on fishing and agriculture.<sup>30</sup>

In light of the faced (sometimes existential) challenges, external financial support is critical for building climate resilience within the social and economic systems and natural environments of SIDS. Their governments have been vocal about their exceptional circumstances<sup>31</sup> and have become leading advocates for more just and inclusive responses to the climate crisis.<sup>32</sup> The 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that SIDS present “the most urgent need for investment in capacity building and adaptation strategies but face barriers and constraints which hinder the implementation of adaptation responses.”<sup>33</sup> The report also notes that international climate and nature finance has increased in magnitude, but SIDS continue to “face challenges in accessing adaptation finance to cope with slow- and rapid-onset events.”<sup>34</sup> Estimates from the Asian Development Bank peg economic losses of up to 4.7% of GDP in the Solomon Islands by 2100, highlighting the urgency for policy intervention and increased climate and nature finance investments. Addressing social risk in the climate and

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27 Ibid.

28 “WorldRiskReport 2021 - Focus: Social Protection - World | ReliefWeb,” September 16, 2021. accessed February 14, 2024. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/worldriskreport-2021-focus-social-protection>.

29 “Climate Change and Conflict in Solomon Islands,” United States Institute of Peace, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/11/climate-change-and-conflict-solomon-islands>.

30 “Climate Risk Country Profile: Fiji (2021),” The World Bank Group.

31 David Gelles, “A Powerful Climate Leader From a Small Island Nation,” The New York Times, December 14, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/14/world/americas/mia-mottley-climate-change-barbados.html>.

32 “Island States Have Had an Outsized Influence on Climate Policy,” The Economist, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://www.economist.com/international/2019/09/19/island-states-have-had-an-outsized-influence-on-climate-policy>.

33 “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Sixth Assessment Report, 2021” accessed February 14, 2024.

34 United Nations, Accessing Climate Finance: Challenges and Opportunities for Small Island Developing States, 2022. accessed February 14, 2024. [https://www.un.org/ohrrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrrls/files/accessing\\_climate\\_finance\\_challenges\\_sids\\_report.pdf](https://www.un.org/ohrrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrrls/files/accessing_climate_finance_challenges_sids_report.pdf).

nature finance mechanisms is necessary to boost funding levels and enhance national development efforts.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, in the Pacific, all Pacific islands' populations are made up of at least 50% (in cases such as Solomon Islands, of 97%<sup>36</sup>) IPs.<sup>37</sup> In light of existing existential threats, IPs risk losing the basis for their “cumulative local and indigenous knowledge systems that enshrine a wellspring of wisdom of sustainable practices.”<sup>38</sup> The *wantok* system, a deeply rooted cultural practice in the Solomon Islands, must be recognized to analyze any aspect of its society and institutions. This system, which revolves around mutual support among people who speak the same language or dialect, offers substantial advantages and challenges.<sup>39</sup> Studying it is beyond the scope of our work, but we recognize this cultural institution can affect some of the findings in our field research. The majority of Fijians are of indigenous iTaukei heritage,<sup>40</sup> with diverse cultures and languages stemming from the island's varied landscapes.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, we believe that understanding traditional knowledge systems and community structures is crucial when assessing climate vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies.

### 3.1.2. La Guajira: Common Challenges

La Guajira, a department in the northeast region of Colombia, is the ancestral home of the Wayuu People. It is located at the northernmost tip of South America and shares borders with Zulia State in Venezuela, where 11% of the population self-identifies as Wayuu.<sup>42</sup> The Wayuu

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35 Asian Development Bank, “Solomon Islands Climate Change Losses Could Reach 4.7% of GDP by 2100 – ADB.” November 26, 2013, accessed February 14, 2024.

<https://www.adb.org/news/solomon-islands-climate-change-losses-could-reach-47-gdp-2100-adb>.

36 Minority Rights “Solomon Islands,” November 2, 2023, accessed February 14, 2024.

<https://minorityrights.org/country/solomon-islands/>.

37 “Cutting Edge: Small Island Developing States: Cultural Diversity as a Driver of Resilience and Adaptation | UNESCO,” accessed February 14, 2024. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-small-island-developing-states-cultural-diversity-driver-resilience-and-adaptation>.

38 Ibid.

39 Francis Fukuyama, “State Building in Solomon Islands,” *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2008, p.18. [https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/157918/1/233\\_state.pdf](https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/157918/1/233_state.pdf).

40 “Fiji, The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, accessed February 13, 2024. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/fiji/>.

41 “Fijian Culture,” Cultural Atlas, accessed February 15, 2024. <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/fijian-culture>.

42 Boletín Ecológico, Serie Indígenas de Venezuela, Pueblo Wayuu, PDVSA. accessed March 18, 2024. [http://www.pdvsa.com/images/ambiente/Pueblo\\_wayuu.pdf](http://www.pdvsa.com/images/ambiente/Pueblo_wayuu.pdf).

are a binational people, although Venezuelan Wayuu lack formal recognition in Colombia because of the lack of recognition of their binationality and are treated as migrants in a land they have inhabited since pre-colonial times.<sup>43</sup> This represents a distinct challenge that complements our analysis of risks and opportunities faced by IPs in SIDS. La Guajira's socioeconomic conditions and the significant presence of the Wayuu offer interesting similarities with SIDS cases regarding climate change impacts, large IPs affected by these challenges, and the proposed climate and nature finance interventions that stand to impact IPs and their lands.

The inclusion of La Guajira allows for a comparison of different geographical and cultural contexts. SIDS are, generally speaking, geographically isolated and vulnerable to sea-level rise, while La Guajira faces desertification and water scarcity. Comparing these contexts provides a more comprehensive understanding of how climate and nature finance interacts with IPs' rights and visions. Despite not being SIDS, La Guajira shares vulnerabilities with these island nations, such as reliance on natural resources, susceptibility to extreme weather events, and challenges in exerting their rights in climate and nature finance projects. Examining how climate and nature finance initiatives are implemented and their impact on Indigenous communities in La Guajira can offer insights applicable to SIDS.

La Guajira's case study can provide valuable lessons that may be applicable to other non-SIDS regions with Indigenous populations facing similar challenges. This broader applicability enhances the relevance of our PAE and its recommendations beyond SIDS, contributing to a more inclusive and comprehensive analysis of climate and nature finance impacts on IPs globally.

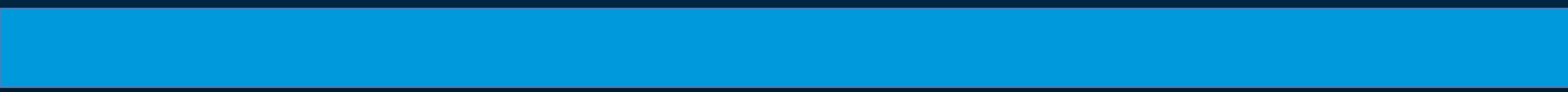
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43 "The Binationality of the Wayuu People: The Pending Debt of Venezuela and Colombia." Dejusticia Accessed March 18, 2024. <https://www.dejusticia.org/en/column/the-binationality-of-the-wayuu-people-the-pending-debt-of-venezuela-and-colombia/>.



Findings

# A Risk Typology



## 4. Findings: A Risk Typology

Findings gathered during primary and secondary research, including during interviews conducted as part of the field research, point to a number of risks that IPs face when exposed or involved in climate and nature finance projects. These are presented in the form of a risk typology - a classification system used to categorize types of risks faced by IPs as a way to identify, understand, and consequently manage these more effectively. This risk typology is presented as a knowledge product contribution for the World Bank's IPEM Global Coordination, responding to the needs expressed by this team.

The typology consists of two categories of risks: 1) procedural risks, and 2) impact risks. Procedural risks are those that relate to the experience of IPs during their engagement with climate and nature finance projects, including their conceptualization, design, delivery, and implementation. Impact risks are those that relate to the experience of IPs as a consequence of the implementation of climate and nature finance projects, and they can sometimes be triggered by the presence of prior procedural risks. For a total of 12 identified risks, each is presented with a case example gathered through our primary or secondary research, including our field research.

### Box 2

## Typology of Risks Faced by Indigenous Peoples in Climate and Nature Finance

### Procedural Risks:

1. Lack of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)
2. Lack of Recognition or Violations of Land Tenure
3. Vision and Capacity Misalignment
4. Legal and Institutional Violations
5. Lack of Inclusive Participation: Women, Youth and Other Vulnerable Populations
6. Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

### Impact Risks:

7. Cultural and/ or Spiritual Transgressions
8. Social and Community Tensions: Intra- or Inter-Tribal Disputes and Conflict
9. Economic, Financial, and/ or Livelihood Harm
10. Forced Displacement
11. Health-Related Harm
12. Gender-Based Violence

## 4.1. Procedural Risks

### 4.1.1 Lack of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

FPIC stands as a fundamental right acknowledged in the UNDRIP, aligning with the broader principle of self-determination.<sup>44</sup> Through this mechanism, IPs have the right to grant or withhold consent regarding projects affecting their territories, allowing them to actively participate in negotiations shaping project design, implementation, and evaluation.<sup>45</sup>

FPIC, at its core, is a participatory process that seeks to establish a more equitable treatment of indigenous and affected communities in development and resource initiatives. This involves ensuring freedom from coercion, intimidation, or manipulation (Free), obtaining early consent with ample time for local decision-making processes (Prior), providing access to sufficient and pertinent information for informed decision-making regarding the nature, size, pace, reversibility, scope, rationale, duration, and location of the activity, as well as its likely impacts (Informed), and respecting the right to consent or withhold consent, taking into consideration customary institutions, gender, and age.<sup>46</sup>

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44 Cathal Doyle, *Indigenous Peoples, Title to Territory, Rights and Resources: The Transformative Role of Free Prior and Informed Consent*, Routledge Research in Human Rights Law (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

45 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework," 2011, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/720245>.

46 Mahanty, Sango, and Constance L. McDermott. "How does 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent' (FPIC) impact social equity? Lessons from mining and forestry and their implications for REDD+." *Land Use Policy* 35 (2013): 406-416.

In this regard, one critical risk stems from dynamics that do not integrate or undermine FPIC by means of bribes, corruption, and soft coercion of tribal leaders, affecting tribal dynamics and tainting traditional decision-making structures within a specific community.<sup>47</sup> Domestic political dynamics and institutions significantly influence the strength of FPIC mechanisms in the national context, and these can be outside of the control of multilateral financial institutions.<sup>48</sup>

### Box 3

## Windpeshi Wind Project: Indigenous Voices and the Challenge of Consultation

The Windpeshi project, a 200 MW wind farm planned for construction in the Maicao municipality of La Guajira, was suspended by its sponsor in 2023, despite being 35% completed at the time.<sup>49</sup> A field visit to Jororo in the municipality of Uribia in March 2024, where road adaptation and improvement works for the project were conducted, provided clear evidence of an ineffective FPIC process.

During an interview conducted in the Wayuunaiki language with the assistance of an interpreter, a community elder expressed deep dissatisfaction with the consultation process, noting that while many expectations were raised, few were met. He specifically mentioned instances such as the initial agreement for a community jagüey (water raft), which was later denied. He also mentioned that he and others in nearby rancherías (traditional Wayuu settlements) perceived efforts by consultation emissaries to “divide the communities”. The indigenous leader also recounted promises of employment and food aid that were fulfilled for only a few months. He lamented that during consultations, community leaders were taken to Uribia, outside

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47 Doyle, Cathal. “Free prior and informed consent and Indigenous rights: a bulwark against discrimination and platform for self-determination.” *Research Handbook on the International Law of Indigenous Rights*, pp. 96-128. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022.

48 Falleti, Tulia G., and Thea N. Riofrancos. 2018. “Endogenous Participation: Strengthening Prior Consultation in Extractive Economies.” *World Politics* 70 (1): 86–121. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S004388711700020X>. p.89.

49 Donaldson, Alex. “Enel Colombia Permanently Suspends Wind Farm Project.” Power Technology (blog), May 25, 2023. Accessed March 3, 2024. <https://www.power-technology.com/?p=262142>.

their traditional context, stating that “dialogues should be in our territory. We make decisions in our eramada (arbor). Decisions must be made in our territory.”<sup>50</sup>

Given this testimony, it is not surprising that the construction company indefinitely suspended construction of the project, due to conflicts with the communities causing delays in construction work. This outcome demonstrates that when not conducted constructively, consultations pose significant risks for both communities and project sponsors.

#### 4.1.2. Lack of Recognition or Violations of Land Tenure

IPs often govern their lands through customary tenure and other community agreements, albeit legal protection in the form of recognition of ownership does not exist in many contexts. This may be due to the prevalence of weak states, land acquisition for agriculture, developments in infrastructure or biodiversity conservation, non-appropriate tenure instruments, introduction of extractive industries or agrarian reforms, as well as increasing climate change mitigation efforts.<sup>51</sup> Estimates show that “at least one-third to one-half of the world’s land” is held informally by IPs and local communities, lacking effective legal recognition.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, even in places where land tenure of IPs is recognized, poor governance and rule of law mechanisms can lead to violations of their rights and unconsented exploitation of their land. In the Solomon Islands, for instance, the Customary Records Act helps preserve almost 85% of the landmass that is customarily owned and has previously been regulated by unwritten laws and oral tradition.<sup>53</sup> In islands like Isabel, such customary norms follow tenets of matrilineal societies where women are the rightful holders of land tenure. However, their legitimate leadership roles are often undermined during early engagement with climate and nature finance

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50 Interview with Indigenous Person Colombia 2, March 2024.

51 “Tenure and Indigenous Peoples,” LandLinks (blog), accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.land-links.org/issue-brief/tenure-and-indigenous-peoples/>.

52 Peter Veit and Katie Reytar, “By the Numbers: Indigenous and Community Land Rights,” March 20, 2017, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.wri.org/insights/numbers-indigenous-and-community-land-rights>.

53 “Enjoying Land Rights in Solomon Islands,” UNDP, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.undp.org/pacific/news/enjoying-land-rights-solomon-islands>.

projects, in line with scholarship that identifies changes fueled by market demand and large-scale developments, leading to men usurping decision-making roles that women historically held in land affairs.<sup>54</sup>

#### Box 4

### Matrilineal Land Tenure Erosion: Nickel Mining in Isabel Province

Isabel province in Solomon Islands is one of only five in the country that actively practices *matrilineal* land tenure.<sup>55</sup> However, this traditional institution has been damaged by the increased demand for mineral resources. In October 2023, mining operations started on the island of Isabel, where a foreign company invested \$21.3 million in the extraction of nickel, a critical mineral used for the development of rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles and energy storage systems.<sup>56</sup> An environmental and social impact assessment was conducted prior to the construction of the mine, and ownership of 20% of the mining license was given to customary landowners of the different IPs; however, the process failed to recognize and respect the matrilineal land tenure practices found in these communities.

As a female resident of Isabel explained in our interview, “men think they know everything; in consultations, women are not included in the process, and therefore, we have little awareness of what and how is going to happen.”<sup>57</sup> This sentiment is echoed by a female academic, who said, “when money gets involved, women are pushed out of the room because men would not allow women to administer resources and make decisions regarding the land.”<sup>58</sup>

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54 Kristina E. Stege, Ruth Maetala, Anna Naupa, and Joel Simo, *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor: The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, ed. Elise Huffer (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2008), p. 39-40.

55 Ibid.

56 Eddie Osifelo, “Mining Begins: Kolosori Nickel Project in Solomon Islands commences operations,” *Island Sun*, September 13, 2023. Accessed February 17, 2023. <https://theislandsun.com.sb/mining-begins/#:~:text=Construction%20began%20in%20August%202023,on%20open%2Dpit%20strip%20mining>.

57 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 12, January 2024.

58 Interview with Academia Representative Solomon Islands 1, December 2023.

This procedural risk is multidimensional, as it not only debilitates land tenure rights but also undermines traditional cultural institutions and practices in Solomon Islands. Matrilineal traditions in traditional societies promote women as equal decision-makers and land inheritors. The loss of this practice has undermined women’s authority as landowners, which was previously explicitly recognized, resulting in men taking over the role of decision-makers in the land.<sup>59</sup>

In the same context of mining discussions in Isabel, a study quotes a woman elder and land custodian who said that her involvement in the mining discussions was limited to “when I was called to go and create a bank account and make deposits.”<sup>60</sup>

In this sense, mineral extraction has undermined women’s land tenure rights. That said, even though the examples cited are circumscribed to mining, our research detected that the same dynamics are present in all land tenure decisions where matrilineal land tenure is practiced across Solomon Islands.

### 4.1.3. Vision and Capacity Misalignment

Well-intended goals and policies for meaningful consultation and inclusion of IPs in decision-making processes for climate and nature finance projects may still present the risk of unequal understanding between IPs and external actors involved in a given climate and nature finance project. Vision and capacity misalignment risks manifest in a one-size-fits-all solution to community problems. An essential component for empowering IPs is ensuring they can effectively leverage their roles in designing and delivering climate and nature finance projects. Without such dedicated effort for capacity-building, multilateral organizations and development actors risk poor management of expectations and misunderstandings of procedures.<sup>61</sup> Despite the many efforts to promote the inclusion of IPs in the early stages of a project design,

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59 Stege et al., *Land and Women*, 39-40.

60 Jillian, Ash. “Social impacts of critical mineral exploration on Indigenous peoples’ lands: A case study from Solomon Islands.” *The Extractive Industries and Society* 17 (2024): 101439. p.6.

61 “Capacity Building of Indigenous Groups for Their Economic Empowerment,” *Capacity Building of Indigenous Groups For Their Economic Empowerment* | Joint SDG Fund, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://jointsdgfund.org/article/capacity-building-indigenous-groups-their-economic-empowerment>.

frequently, projects are thought of and presented to IPs as an “offer” that they need to accept in order to access climate funds, albeit only if they engage in the way multilateral organizations or development actors/counterparts expect them to.<sup>62</sup>

In short, the risk for climate and nature finance projects in this context is the failure to embody the vision of impacted IPs, as opposed to the vision planned and designed by foreign experts and funders. This risk carries the tangible potential of further alienating IPs and having unintended consequences on their well-being, given the lack of consideration for their vision and capacity. A collapse of trust on the part of IPs of climate and nature finance projects presents further risks that jeopardize the world’s efficient response to the climate crisis.

#### **Box 5**

### **The Tina River Hydropower Development Project: A Failure of Expectations?**

The Tina River Hydropower Development Project,<sup>63</sup> conducted on the Solomon Island of Guadalcanal, provides a good example of the procedural risk of vision and capacity misalignment. The GCF funded the project’s design phase, which included conducting an Environmental and Social Safeguards report and a Gender Assessment. Yet, through our interviews with members of the Tina community, we found significant misunderstandings regarding expectations.<sup>64</sup> These included an expectation that all 27 tribal groups in the community would benefit directly from cash payments regarding land rights as well as from increased access to clean water. However, only five groups were designated as direct beneficiaries for the project, with the remaining 22 groups benefiting from the implementation of related community projects. Despite the construction of a dam, an agreement was never made nor clearly communicated that this would lead to better clean water access in Tina. The result has been significant dissatisfaction by members of some of the Tina communities about the implementation of this GCF project and increased tensions

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62 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 12, January 2024.

63 GCF, “FP044.”

64 Interviews with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 12, 15 and 19, January 2024.

between the tribal groups benefiting from payment over their land rights and the rest of the communities in the area.

#### 4.1.4. Legal and Institutional Violations

Besides often being denied legal recognition of their rightful land tenure, IPs routinely experience human rights violations by state authorities and face high levels of marginalization and discrimination, restricted access to education, health care, and housing.<sup>65</sup> This is often a result of compounded legal and institutional violations starting from the lack of proper access to identity documents by IPs due to high costs and bureaucratic requirements.<sup>66</sup> Without legal identity, individuals are significantly less likely to access the formal economy and become more vulnerable during times of conflict or climate emergencies.<sup>67</sup> They would also find it harder to be able to engage meaningfully in FPIC processes during the design and delivery of climate and nature finance projects.

##### Box 6

#### The Ngäbe-Buglé People: At Risk of Being Stateless

In between North-Eastern Panama and Southern Costa Rica live the Ngäbe-Buglé, an IP community of around 250,000 members of which 15,000 cross the countries' borders regularly for informal job opportunities.<sup>68</sup> They work in very remote areas, mostly supporting rich coffee plantations. Since 2014, efforts co-led by both

65 "Indigenous Peoples Rights Are Human Rights," Amnesty International, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/indigenous-peoples/>.

66 "Identity Documents & Native Communities," Movement Advancement Project. accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.mapresearch.org/file/ID-info-Native-communities-2.pdf>.

67 "Proving Who You Are: Addressing the Plight of Those with No Legal Identity | UN News," January 14, 2023, accessed March 12, 2024. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/01/1132397>.

68 "Una campaña de registro saca a las familias indígenas de las sombras," ACNUR, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.acnur.org/noticias/stories/una-campana-de-registro-saca-las-familias-indigenas-de-las-sombras>.

countries' civil registry offices and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) have identified and assisted more than 3,600 Ngäbe-Buglé members who had no legal identification subscribed to any government, and thus are at risk of being stateless. This includes hundreds of children who had no formal access to healthcare or education as a result of their lack of the necessary identity documents and integration into their countries' institutional systems.<sup>69</sup>

#### 4.1.5. Lack of Inclusive Participation: Women, Youth, and Other Vulnerable Populations

The mobilization of climate and nature finance for project design and delivery inherently risks not including all relevant stakeholders for their success, particularly those most vulnerable. Just as climate change acts as a multiplier of existing vulnerabilities and risks, responses to the climate crises will have unintended impacts on those most vulnerable if their views and experiences are not integrated into the design and delivery of climate and nature finance projects.

The repercussions of overlooking the role of indigenous women, who are often the backbone of traditional societies, are significant and echo through climate and nature finance initiatives in our case studies. This is despite the fact that recognition of women's role in climate response is not a new concept, and in 2010, the Cancun Agreements<sup>70</sup> acknowledged the need for gender equality and the effective participation of women in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Still, integrating these commitments into actual practice remains a challenge that presents inherent risks to women and the success of a project's implementation. As traditional food providers and guardians of the environment, women are inherently climate experts, innovators, and problem-solvers in part thanks to their role in the generational transfer and preservation of traditional climate knowledge.<sup>71</sup> A failure to engage them meaningfully creates

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69 Ibid.

70 "Cancun Climate Agreements: Taking Great Strides for Women's Rights and Gender Equality," WEDO, December 13, 2010, Accessed February 14, 2024. <https://wedo.org/cancun-climate-agreements-taking-great-strides-for-womens-rights-and-gender-equality/>.

71 "Climate Stories | Indigenous Peoples," World Bank, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/08/08/indigenous-women-leaders-persevere-amid-a-changing-climate>.

risks for them and fails to capitalize on the maximized impact generated through their leadership participation in the design and delivery of climate projects.

As previously noted, in the Solomon Islands, where 85% of the land is customarily owned,<sup>72</sup> land tenure can be matrilineal. Despite facing challenges, women hold leadership roles as land inheritors, guardians, and livelihood providers thanks to community gardens that they nurture on their land.<sup>73</sup> Climate and nature finance projects that fail to acknowledge this leadership in customary traditions are unlikely to succeed. Yet, our field research shows cases that did not fully account for this fact, consequently increasing the risks faced by women.

The intersectionality relationship between climate and nature finance and youth is widely recognized in multilateral and development settings, and the consequences of failing to engage future generations are linked to project failure and rising tensions within communities.<sup>74</sup> Climate and nature finance projects also have a poor record of integrating the views of people living with disabilities, with one indigenous woman representing a people with disabilities NGO noting how their needs tend to be forgotten as soon as a project's implementation starts.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the lack of basic rights recognition for members of the LGBTQ+ community in many countries most impacted by climate change often leads to their invisibility in climate and nature finance processes, hindering the capacity of the latter to cater to their specific needs.<sup>76</sup>

Women, youth, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and other vulnerable groups may ultimately be adversely affected by responses to climate change without having access to influence the design and delivery of these policies.

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72 "Enjoying Land Rights in Solomon Islands," UNDP, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://www.undp.org/pacific/news/enjoying-land-rights-solomon-islands>.

73 "Being a Woman Land Recorder in Solomon Islands: Realities, Challenges and Successes," UNDP, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://www.undp.org/pacific/news/being-woman-land-recorder-solomon-islands-realities-challenges-and-successes>.

74 Charlotte Owen-Burge, "Charting a Fair Future: Youth and the Dynamics of Climate Finance," Climate Champions, December 7, 2023, Accessed March 2, 2024. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/charting-a-fair-future-youth-and-the-dynamics-of-climate-finance/>.

75 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 11, January 2024.

76 "How Environmental and Climate Injustice Affects the LGBTQI+ Community," Center for American Progress (blog), June 16, 2022, Accessed March 4, 2024 <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-environmental-and-climate-injustice-affects-the-lgbtqi-community/>.

### Box 7

## Preventative Resettlement Without Inclusive Input in Vunisavisavi

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Home to one of the three paramount IP chiefs in Fiji, the Tui Cakau, the village of Vunisavisavi holds a critical role in the keeping of ancestral grounds. Climate models projecting significant sea level rise point to devastating impacts for communities in Vunisavisavi, which is already located below sea level.<sup>77</sup> Our research explored the building of preventative resettlement housing for the village's inhabitants, with IP leaders denouncing the lack of inclusive consultations that failed to integrate views of particularly vulnerable members of the community, such as women and youth.<sup>78</sup> As a consequence, four homes were built with climate and nature financing aimed at supporting beneficiary families. Yet, these were built with entrance doors facing the mountains instead of the ocean, which IP leaders labeled as a serious violation of the traditional composition of bure or vale (i.e., family homes). This was a result of the lack of key voices within the community in the consultation, in particular that of women who consequently, once resettled, were reluctant to leave their houses due to the sacred violation that the facing of their doors meant for the village.<sup>79</sup>

### 4.1.6. Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

M&E efforts are essential for any development and assistance program. They help determine whether the program is achieving its goals, what is working well, and what needs improvement. However, our field research revealed risks associated with M&E, particularly when programs do not incorporate lessons or community perspectives and pursue a one-size-fits-all approach to project design. One interviewee in Colombia explained the problem: "The issue is the excessive focus on best practices that promote a model, ignoring the nuances of the field. While more

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77 "Fallen Kingdom: Rising Tides for One of Fiji's Most Sacred Communities," World Bank, accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/11/07/fallen-kingdom-rising-tides-for-one-of-fiji-most-sacred-communities>.

78 Interview with Indigenous Person, Fiji 1, January 2024.

79 Interviews with Indigenous Person Fiji 1, 2, and 5, January 2024.

complex and time-consuming, a “best fit” approach provides the necessary tools to achieve program goals.”<sup>80</sup>

From our perspective, the “complexity gap,” understood in the business context as “the difference between the complexity of the challenges faced in business and the tools and capability available to deal with them,”<sup>81</sup> is particularly relevant for climate and nature finance projects interacting with IPs. We found a lack of flexibility and contextual understanding in the one-size-fits-all approach to climate projects. Interview participants almost unanimously highlighted approaches to project design and implementation that do not consider the unique needs and context of the target population. Therefore, the primary risk of not incorporating lessons learned in M&E is that the program may not serve its intended beneficiaries.

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80 Interview with Indigenous Person Colombia 2, March 2024.

81 Ramalingam, Ben, Miguel Laric, and John Primrose. “From best practice to best fit: Understanding and navigating wicked problems in international development.” London: *Overseas Development Institute* (2014): 1-44. p.4 Accessed February 14, 2024. [https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/BestPracticetoBestFitWorkingPaper\\_DraftforComments\\_May2014.docx.pdf](https://www.edulinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/BestPracticetoBestFitWorkingPaper_DraftforComments_May2014.docx.pdf).

**Box 8**  
**M&E Challenges in Solomon Islands'**  
**Voluntary Carbon Markets**

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M&E mechanisms are essential for the success of development and assistance programs and community-based initiatives, particularly for ones currently in vogue, such as voluntary carbon market projects. Our field research in the Solomon Islands revealed significant M&E risks in this nascent sector.

Concerns about so-called “carbon cowboys,” i.e., firms driving the development of carbon projects without regard for the rights of IPs and local landowners<sup>82</sup>, are prevalent in the South Pacific, and the term was almost unanimously brought up in our interviews. An indigenous leader and conservation specialist from Choiseul Province explained that “because communities need resources, they are susceptible to very one-sided deals by carbon cowboys.”<sup>83</sup>

A government official validated these concerns and brought up the example of Papua New Guinea, where limited government capacity has been unable to clamp down on the practice. He further explained:

“When people hear about the carbon market, they ask about their money, their share, how soon, and what amount per ton, leading to many questions. We (at the ministry) still cannot discuss carbon prices with them (communities), as we cannot give them the true story because we don't have control over that. If it's a government-to-government relationship for a carbon price, then yes, but for voluntary markets, there is no guarantee.”<sup>84</sup>

## 4.2. Impact risks

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82 Nature4Climate. “Beyond Beneficiaries: Fairer Carbon Market Frameworks.” Accessed March 25, 2024. <https://nature4climate.org/natures-solutions/latest-scientific-papers/beyond-beneficiaries/>.

83 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Island 1, January 2024.

84 Interview with Government Representative Solomon Island 1, January 2024.

### 4.2.1. Cultural and/ or Spiritual Transgressions

IPs faced significant cultural and spiritual risks from their interactions and participation in climate and nature finance initiatives. IPs are particularly susceptible to these risks because of the disruption of their intimate relationship with nature and their ancient philosophies and unique worldviews far removed from the Western canon. Indeed, interview participants expressed deep frustration with the typical disregard for their cultural and spiritual practices from development institutions.

The concept of *Vanua*, for instance, holds significant importance among many indigenous Fijians, embodying the interconnectedness of all environmental elements and emphasizing a harmony critical to their cultural and spiritual welfare.<sup>85</sup> Its philosophical foundations are so far removed from the Western intellectual tradition that it is challenging for outsiders to grasp fully. Climate and nature finance projects in mitigation and adaptation that fail to capture and respect the *Vanua*, as a result of procedural risks previously highlighted or other limitations, would do significant cultural and spiritual harm to the communities they are trying to serve.

The imposition of external solutions that seem perfectly rational from a development or financial perspective may inadvertently undermine traditional knowledge and practices, disrupting a delicate balance that IPs have historically maintained with their ecosystems for generations. Fundamentally, the risk lies in potentially eroding cultural practices deeply rooted in sustainable coexistence with nature. Spiritual connections to the land, considered sacred by many indigenous groups in SIDS and other geographies, are jeopardized when climate and nature finance initiative projects alter landscapes or exploit natural resources without sufficient consideration for their cultural significance. Moreover, we found that standard mitigation measures to deal with these risks are woefully insufficient to fully account for the cultural and spiritual values of the communities they impact and can provoke irreparable harm, such as the loss of sacred sites that are vital components of spiritual practices and communal identity. The erosion of these connections may result in spiritual dislocation for indigenous societies that carry the risk of extinction of particular cultural and spiritual practices.

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<sup>85</sup> Ilaitia S. Tuwere, *Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place* (Suva, Fiji, [Auckland, N.Z.]: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific; College of St John the Evangelist, 2002).

## Box 9

### Cultural Neglect: Failures in Observing iTaukei Cultural Practices

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A peacebuilding and conflict resolution specialist shared with us an insightful example highlighting the shortcomings of external actors respecting cultural practices when engaging with indigenous iTaukei Fijian people.<sup>86</sup> In our interview, he recounted how leaders in the village of Vunisavisavi expressed frustration over the disregard for their cultural practices, notably the failure of international organizations and NGOs to observe the *Sevusevu*. This traditional practice, “a request to the Vanua to build rapport and be considered part of the community,”<sup>87</sup> is crucial for building rapport and being accepted as part of the community. However, leaders in Vunisavisavi stressed that external actors often fail to perform the *Sevusevu* and instead come with many questions, sometimes coming back many times with the same questions and never providing follow-up on the discussions. This leaves the community feeling exhausted and disconnected, as they are left unaware of the outcomes of these interactions.<sup>88</sup>

It is essential to recognize that failing to observe cultural practices is not simply an oversight; it reflects a lack of understanding and respect for the culture from outsiders. This emphasizes the need for a more sensitive approach to engagement that values and tries to understand cultural traditions, incorporating indigenous knowledge into climate discussions, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution efforts. Recognizing the interdependence of these issues in Fiji and beyond is still a pending task for international actors.

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86 *A JustPeace: Vanua Engagement Peace Building Approaches to Climate Change in Fijian Communities*, 1st ed., prepared by Transcend Oceania and Conciliation Resources.

87 Interview with Indigenous Person Fiji 1, January 2024.

88 Interviews with Indigenous Person Fiji 1, 3, and 4, January 2024.

## 4.2.2. Social and Community Tensions: Intra- or Inter-Tribal Disputes and Conflict

As external actors engage IPs to work on climate and nature finance projects, a risk appears that could lead to social and community tensions, resulting in intra-tribal or inter-tribal disputes and conflict. This risk is enhanced in cases where IPs are not adequately consulted and involved in the early stages of a climate and nature finance project design, sometimes due to a lack of thorough research and understanding of local context on the part of climate and nature finance experts and funders. A well-intended effort to integrate IPs may result in the prioritization of the wrong leaders or representatives. It could also inadvertently incite intra-tribal leadership disputes when members may perceive an opportunity for economic gain if they challenge their leaders. Likewise, processes that require the mapping of Indigenous territory, such as carbon markets or renewable energy initiatives, for benefit-sharing purposes arising from a climate and nature finance project may also result in inter-tribal conflict in the form of border disputes with a non-negligible risk of violence.

### Box 10

#### **Mistrust and Divisions: Challenges in Choiseul and La Guajira**

Disputes have arisen following the establishment of voluntary carbon markets on the island of Choiseul in the Solomon Islands. Leaders and members of the Padezaka and the Nukulobere tribes shared examples of irregular practices by climate and nature finance actors that have led to community disputes, including leadership challenges for economic gains as well as tensions and resistance to the mapping of Indigenous territory to block a community from benefiting from the establishment of these markets.<sup>89</sup> As the promise for economic gains becomes more tangible, with some of these carbon markets already starting to bring monetary gains to certain tribes, including the Sirebe, leaders are worried that the processes for the creation of new Protected Areas that could qualify for carbon sequestration status can be

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<sup>89</sup> Interviews with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 1, 2, 3, and 4, January 2024.

sabotaged by these intra- and inter-tribal disputes, which could even lead to broader social collapse and community disintegration.

During an interview with a Wayuu leader from Flor de la Guajira, he recounted the turbulent journey of consultations for the 100 MW Florguajira wind farm, a path that left “many deep divisions and even violence within the community.”<sup>90</sup> He described how the consultation process was corrupted by attempts to undermine traditional Wayuu authority, such as bypassing clan leaders and trying to “buy the leadership” of select community members. To our surprise, he attributed much of the blame to the indigenous affairs office at Uribia Municipality, criticizing their lack of support throughout the process. He lamented, “The office is the weak link in the process, and because of that, the Wayuu people are divided; we are very divided.” When asked for clarification or specific examples of violence, he declined to comment, saying only “you can ask whoever you want. Anybody that knows La Guajira will tell you what I just told you now.”

#### 4.2.3. Economic, Financial, and/ or Livelihood Harm

Interest in nature-based solutions (NBSs) to combat climate change has gained momentum, leading to the implementation of programs such as REDD+ (i.e., Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) aimed at mitigating deforestation and land-based emissions through market mechanisms and payment schemes.<sup>91</sup> Many tribal communities across the Solomon Islands are actively engaged in these initiatives, collaborating with external partners to establish voluntary carbon markets on their lands.

However, as the implementation of these types of projects unfolds, a set of risks rooted in project design emerges. One fundamental aspect is the prevalence of subsistence agriculture in tribal communities in the Solomon Islands, where approximately 80% of the population relies on

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Indigenous Person Colombia 6, January 2024.

<sup>91</sup> Anna Knox, Cynthia Caron, Jonathan Miner, and Allyson Goldstein, “Land Tenure and Payment For Environmental Services: Challenges and opportunities for REDD+,” *Land Tenure Journal*, November 2011, 15-56 <https://www.fao.org/3/i2412t/i2412t.pdf>.

it for household food consumption and income from selling surplus crops.<sup>92</sup> We identified a lack of awareness and understanding of these community dynamics and how this poses a substantial impact risk, as it may result in project designs that inadequately consider the importance of subsistence agriculture.

One consequence of neglecting subsistence agriculture in project planning is the potential impact on the land available for community gardens, the mechanism by which many tribal communities grow food. This potential oversight poses existential threats to food security. Crucially, if these are not adequately integrated into the initial stages of planning designated protected areas—typically the starting point for establishing a voluntary carbon market scheme, the risk to the integrity of the conservation project and food security is high.

Participants expressed additional concerns regarding the legal design of voluntary carbon market compensation schemes. A particular and recurring theme involved the long duration of the agreements. Interview participants voiced concern about committing to extended periods (usually 30 years) at a fixed price for the credits generated from the project. One male participant articulated this concern by stating, “We are locked into a price, and even if the market value of credits rises, we will not partake in the windfall profit.”<sup>93</sup>

These factors underscore the need to consider the contractual terms more holistically to ensure agreements align with the long-term interests and well-being of the indigenous tribes involved. As more projects get off the ground and demand for offsets rises, NBSs must account for the economic risk that communities face in not being appropriately compensated and the risk of agreements that fail to account for food security in project design.

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92 “Solomon Islands.”

93 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Island 3, January 2024.

## Box 11

### Emerging Tensions: Tribal Lands and Carbon Markets in Solomon Islands

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As more tribes embraced voluntary carbon market projects on their land, hoping it would bring economic benefits while preserving their biodiversity and environment, economic expectations do not always match reality. Moreover, second-order consequences are sometimes not considered appropriately because of the novelty of the mechanism in Solomon Islands, leaving tribes to face unforeseen challenges.

The most obvious relates to the designation of tribal land as a protected area. To qualify for a voluntary carbon market project, tribes must, at their own expense, undertake this 12 steps yearslong process; however, “if everything falls apart (in the carbon project) and the area remains protected, the community will not benefit and be unable to use their land, creating a challenging situation.”<sup>94</sup>

When tribes lose control of their land, they also lose decision-making power and may experience unequal benefit-sharing. In an interview in Honiara, a botanist and tribal leader expressed confidence in the implementing partners for the Babatana project in Choiseul province, the Natural Resources Development Foundation (NRDF) and Nakau, regional NGOs. However, he highlighted a key concern: the price of carbon of ~USD \$10. He explained, “what we have now is the price that is imposed, and we don’t have anything to compare it with. It would be good to be able to compare with different carbon markets so people can decide for themselves what is best.”<sup>95</sup>

He further commented that the ratio for benefits sharing for the Babatana project is 60% for the landowners, 20% to NRDF, and 20% to Nakau and compared it to logging, where tribal landowners “are lucky if they get 17% or 18%” with the rests going to the government and the company.

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94 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 4, January 2024.

95 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 3, January 2024.

A government official validated these concerns. He explained that the government has a determined value schedule for timber products, the main export of Solomon Islands, and different bodies collaborate to set the price for each species within the forest. “If a logging company operates in Solomon Islands and wants to export timber, the price must be above the determined value set by the government. However, a similar framework for determining carbon prices does not yet exist, and the process is unclear.”<sup>96</sup>

Above all, because a protected area, by definition, limits the traditional land use practices of the tribes, such as hunting, fishing, or collecting medicinal plants. Food security and traditional practices are affected when precautionary steps are not taken in the planning process for carbon markets. Managing expectations and greater transparency in these processes requires attention.

#### 4.2.4. Forced Displacement

IPs have long grappled with the looming threat of eviction from their ancestral lands, despite the safeguard provided by international law, which stipulates that states cannot relocate IPs without their FPIC and without offering adequate compensation.<sup>97</sup> Government and private entities routinely appropriate, sell, lease, or exploit indigenous land for economic gain, leading to widespread pollution and plundering. The proliferation of climate adaptation and mitigation efforts within indigenous territories further exacerbates the risk of forced displacement for IPs globally, as their lands may be targeted for incorporation into national parks. Amnesty International has extensively documented such violations in countries such as Kenya, Nepal, and Cambodia, denouncing the phenomenon as a manifestation of “green colonialism.” This approach not only disregards the invaluable centuries-old scientific knowledge of nature and conservation held by displaced IPs but also fails to effectively address biodiversity loss.

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<sup>96</sup> Interview with Government Representative Solomon Islands 2, January 2024.

<sup>97</sup> *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous*, Article 10.

Furthermore, the emergence of carbon credits presents yet another financial incentive for governments worldwide to perpetuate these practices.<sup>98</sup>

#### Box 12

### Losing One's Land in Colombia

Colombia is currently experiencing the second largest crisis of internal displacement in the world, impacting more than three million people and prompted by a variety of drivers, including conflict and armed violence, insecurity, landmines, and exploitation of resources. IPs are disproportionately affected by forced internal displacement in the country, and their vulnerability is linked to them inhabiting large collective territories rich in natural resources or of strategic value close to national borders. Due to the close interconnectedness between land and identity, losing one's land has been compared to losing oneself and UNHCR has collected testimonies that speak to how being forced to go triggers feelings of being “one step closer towards death” among IPs.<sup>99</sup>

#### 4.2.5. Health-Related Harm

Climate and nature finance projects may also unintendedly pose new health risks or enhance existing health vulnerabilities around impacted communities, including IPs. This is particularly the case in mining minerals used for the green and blue transition, as such effort can be incredibly harmful to human health if not treated appropriately. Nickel, for instance, a mineral used for the development of rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles and energy storage systems, can harm the lungs, stomach, and kidneys of an exposed person, and it could even

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98 “Indigenous Peoples Rights Are Human Rights.”

99 “To lose our land is to lose ourselves: Indigenous people and forced displacement in Colombia,” UNHCR. Accessed March 3, 2024. [https://acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Colombia/EN/Indigenous\\_people\\_and\\_forced\\_displacement\\_in\\_Colombia.pdf?view](https://acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Colombia/EN/Indigenous_people_and_forced_displacement_in_Colombia.pdf?view).

lead to cancer.<sup>100</sup> Mining has also been linked to an increase in water and air pollution in surrounding areas, which poses further public health risks to its inhabitants.<sup>101</sup>

### Box 13

## Mining and Health in the Solomon Islands

As previously noted, nickel mining activities have significantly increased in the past year following the beginning of operations conducted by a foreign company in the Isabel Province of the Solomon Islands.<sup>102</sup> In conversation with youth leaders in involved communities, we found a correlation between the beginning of mining operations with increased pollution levels posing health risks.<sup>103</sup> Similar concerns have been raised regarding the mining and extraction of bauxite in the Rennell Atoll.<sup>104</sup> This is despite the conduction of environmental impact assessments and the securing of the relevant government permits, partly due to the existing manipulation of official documents that can take place as a result of the previously mentioned risk of undermined legal frameworks.<sup>105</sup>

### 4.2.6. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The introduction of climate and nature finance projects into communities of IPs may also exacerbate existing dynamics or introduce new risks for VAWG. According to the United Nations, VAWG is the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation worldwide,

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100 "Nickel | NIOSH | CDC," December 3, 2020, accessed Marh 4, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/nickel/default.html>.

101 Noor Hisham Abdullah et al., "Potential Health Impacts of Bauxite Mining in Kuantan," *The Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences: MJMS* 23, no. 3 (May 2016): 1–8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4934713/>.

102 "Mining Begins."

103 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 5 and 6, January 2024.

104 "The Unsustainable Exploitation of Solomon Islands' Natural Resources," United States Institute of Peace, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/11/unsustainable-exploitation-solomon-islands-natural-resources>. and "They Failed Us': How Mining and Logging Devastated a Pacific Island in a Decade," *The Guardian*, May 30, 2021, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/31/they-failed-us-how-mining-and-logging-devastated-a-pacific-island-in-a-decade>.

105 "The Unsustainable Exploitation of Solomon Islands' Natural Resources."

affecting more than an estimated one in three women throughout their lifetime.<sup>106</sup> In this context, indigenous women are at greater risk of violence and extortion as a means to enforce land and property grabbing for large-scale use due to greater land rights insecurity and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence.<sup>107</sup> This risk is particularly acute in instances where climate and nature finance projects fail to identify and respect local dynamics and processes that pertain to livelihoods and security guarantees for women and girls.<sup>108</sup>

#### Box 14

### VAWG Across Climate and Nature Finance Projects

We found instances of VAWG being particularly prominent across climate and nature finance projects explored through our field research. In the Isabel Province of the Solomon Islands, the start of nickel mining activities has also been linked with indigenous women in villages surrounding the mining site experiencing a surge in VAWG, as noted by both youth leaders and local women that we interviewed.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, in the voluntary carbon markets being established on the island of Choiseul, we found that efforts to support household income management through the creation of “women’s saving clubs” have inadvertently led to a surge in VAWG by husbands and family members who may want to access newly saved funds.<sup>110</sup>

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106 “Tackling Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of Climate Change,” UN Women – Headquarters, September 17, 2023, Accessed March 17, 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-context-of-climate-change>.

107 Ibid.

108 Interview with Indigenous Person Fiji 4, January 2024.

109 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 5, 6, and 7, January 2024.

110 Interview with Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 3 and 4, January 2024.

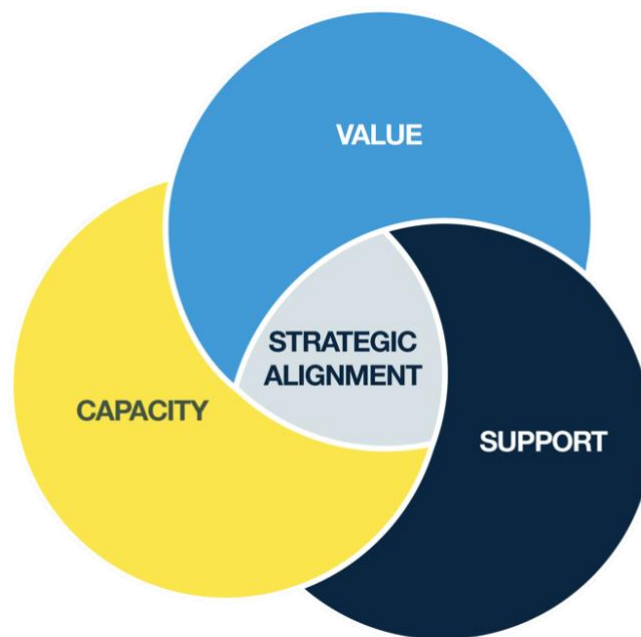
5

Policy Recommendations

**Value, Capacity, and  
Support**

## 5. Policy Recommendations

Identifying policy recommendations that can address the challenges presented by our risk typology, we prioritize actions that meet three characteristics: 1) value, 2) capacity, and 3) support. On value, our recommendations hold a promise of net public worth. On capacity, our recommendations involve resources (financial, legal, technical, personnel, managerial) that are operationally feasible. On support, our recommendations can count on key stakeholders believing their value and capacity. Policy recommendations that feature three characteristics provide a property of strategic alignment.<sup>111</sup> A summary of our policy recommendations and how they provide strategic alignment to the IPEM Global Coordination can be found in the Appendix (see table 3).



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<sup>111</sup> John D. Donahue, "Strategic Alignment for Policy Analysis and Design," case no. 2090.0. John F. Kennedy Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

## 5.1. Empowered Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

As presented by our research, even in contexts where climate and nature finance standards are put into place there is a possibility that IPs can become vulnerable to impact risks. This points at how the implementation of FPIC processes must be accompanied by efforts to ensure that IPs are engaging with development donors as equals or with equal negotiating and collaboration capabilities. Due to the existence of capacity alignment gaps as well as the persistent search for best practices that ‘fit all’ versus best fits that are context-specific, processes that aim to protect and empower IPs routinely fail in their mission. This study recommends the delivery of preemptive support with capacity-building initiatives that provide the relevant tools and skills for IPs to be the best place to access and navigate the consequent FPIC process. Such capacity-building initiatives must, whenever, possible, be led by indigenous leaders themselves and be designed in context-specific manners.

The IPEM Global Coordination at the SSI Global Unit of the World Bank is currently undertaking a mapping exercise of civil society organizations led by IPs. This presents a unique opportunity to identify relevant indigenous leaders and actors to be supported and empowered through capacity-building measures. A logic of “training the trainers” efforts could then lead to further empowering of IPs through workshops and training that are context-specific and IP-led.

## 5.2. Sensitizing the Risk Typology

The presented risk typology must inform the efforts of all World Bank teams working with IPs in their implementing projects. This requires more than just the addition of the risk typology as a checklist to the ongoing processes of analysis and preparatory work. An effort to sensitize these relevant teams to the typology can be achieved through joint workshops directed by the IPEM Global Coordination together with country teams that meet a requirement for Ips’ prevalence. These workshops would be co-led by both teams and enable the staff at the country level to go through the risks included in the typology as they apply them to their countries’ contexts. This would provide a policy outcome (in the form of a risk typology report for the related country) as well as a procedural outcome (in the form of internal capacity building of World Bank staff that participate in the workshop). This study recommends that the IPEM Global Coordination identifies two country cases that could benefit from this risk sensitization joint workshop,

potentially building on efforts already in place through its multi-donor trust fund Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (EnABLE).<sup>112</sup>

### 5.3. Institutionalizing Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples

The risk typology presented is informed by a call from IPs that development actors fail to fully understand and acknowledge the challenges and risks they face both because of the climate crisis and due to climate and nature finance actions. A proper understanding of these risks cannot be achieved if contact with IPs is only made on a needs-based case, particularly during non-implementation processes such as ESS 7. The IPEM Global Coordination offers an excellent solution to this issue as they engage in biannual global dialogue through the Inclusive Forum for Indigenous Peoples. This study recommends the establishment of similar National Dialogue Platforms operating at country levels to ensure institutionalized communication and exchange between IPs and country teams. Whereas some avenues for regular communication between IPs, the World Bank, and national governments exist in certain countries, they do so at the discretion of the latter. The IPEM Global Coordination could expand existing efforts to build National Dialogue Platforms in relevant countries.

### 5.4. Legal Aid Recommendation

Existing safeguard policies for IPs emphasize the importance of access to justice. This includes legal protection, awareness, aid, counsel, adjudication, enforcement, and oversight. However, conventional legal aid may not adequately address the plural legal systems prevalent in many countries or align with the desired solutions of those involved. To address these challenges, this study recommends the incorporation of legal aid programs into the SSI Global Unit toolkit, particularly for addressing issues such as land tenure, benefit sharing, carbon rights, and the streamlining of direct benefits. The power imbalance and differences in capacity between Indigenous communities and external entities necessitate the provision of external legal aid, which is to operate within the sphere of customary Indigenous legal systems.

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<sup>112</sup> "EnABLE," World Bank, accessed March 28, 2024. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/brief/enable-enhancing-access-to-benefits-while-lowering-emission>.

## 5.5. Enhancing Monitoring and Evaluation for ESS 7

In light of the critical importance of ensuring the effectiveness and cultural appropriateness of development programs, particularly those affecting IPs, we propose an evaluation of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices for the ESS 7 Policy. This policy recommendation underscores the necessity of periodically assessing the policy's performance in the field. We suggest the following specific measures:

- **Incorporation of Indigenous Perspectives:** Ensure that the ESS 7 Policy aligns with the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities.
- **Culturally Relevant Metrics:** Develop metrics that reflect the values and priorities of Indigenous communities. This may involve adapting existing indicators or creating new ones to accurately assess the ESS 7 Policy's effectiveness in protecting Indigenous populations.
- **Capacity Building:** Increase the capacity of Indigenous communities to participate meaningfully in the M&E process.
- **Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms:** Ensure that findings are used to inform decision-making and improve the implementation of the ESS 7 Policy.

We advocate for the reprioritization of M&E practices concerning the ESS 7 Policy to uphold its effectiveness and cultural appropriateness. These recommendations are designed to refine the assessment of the policy's impact and enhance its service to Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

# 6 Conclusion

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## 6. Conclusion

The climate crisis and the energy transition present challenges that demand a comprehensive approach that balances sustainability, energy security, and economic development. However, as our research shows, this narrative often overlooks the fundamental importance of respecting the rights and interests of IPs on whose lands many projects associated with the transition unfold.

Frameworks like the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards and the efforts of the IPEM Global Coordination team provide steps in the right direction, but more action is needed from a larger set of stakeholders. Our analysis shows that if IPs are to become genuine partners in the energy transition, their voices and views must reach the boardrooms and executive offices where decisions are made.

The current challenges to authentic consultation in some settings and failure to recognize traditional knowledge and culture reflect persistent colonial attitudes of "might makes right." The same goes for the inequitable sharing of benefits, which remains a significant obstacle to collaboration that cannot be ignored any longer.

Our research and experience in the field lead us to passionately advocate for a fundamental shift in climate and nature finance project conception and implementation. One that, over time and with investments in capacity building and dialogue platforms, works towards mitigating risks and maximizes the opportunities presented by IP engagement, fostering more harmonious relationships that fully respect and enables IPs to be true partners in responding to the climate crisis. Until these changes occur, some nature and climate finance projects will continue to do more harm than good, perpetuating historical harms done to IPs.

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## **List of Anonymized Interviewees in the Field**

Academia Representative Solomon Islands 1, Woman, December 2024.

Government Representative Solomon Islands 1, Man, January 2024.

Government Representative Solomon Islands 2, Man, January 2024.

Government Representative Solomon Islands 3, Man, January 2024.

Private Sector Representative Solomon Islands 1, Woman, January 2024.

Private Sector Representative Solomon Islands 2, Man, January 2024.

Private Sector Representative Solomon Islands 3, Man, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 1, Man, Choiseul, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 2, Man, Choiseul, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 3, Man, Choiseul, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 4, Man, Choiseul, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 5, Woman, Isabel, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 6, Man, Isabel, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 7, Man, Isabel, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 8, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 9, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 10, Man, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 11, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 12, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 13, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Solomon Islands 14, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Fiji 1, Man, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Fiji 2, Man, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Fiji 3, Man, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Fiji 4, Woman, Civil Society, January 2024.

Indigenous Person Fiji 5, Woman, Vanumbua, January 2024.

Government Representative Colombia 1, Woman, March 2024.

Indigenous Person Colombia 1, Woman, March 2024.

Indigenous Person Colombia 2, Man, March 2024.

Indigenous Person Colombia 3, Woman, March 2024.

Indigenous Person Colombia 4, Woman, March 2024.

Indigenous Person Colombia 5, Woman, March 2024.

Indigenous Person Colombia 6, Man, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 1, Woman, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 2, Woman, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 3, Woman, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 4, Woman, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 5, Man, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 6, Woman, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 7, Woman, March 2024.

World Bank Affiliate 8, Man, January 2024.

## 8. Appendix

**Table 1: Standard Practices for Climate and Nature Finance and Indigenous Peoples**

<b>World Bank Environmental and Social Framework</b>	<p><i>ESS 7: Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities.</i></p> <p><i>Further relevant guidance included in ESS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, ESS 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement, ESS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources, and ESS 8: Cultural Heritage.</i></p>
<b>Green Climate Fund</b>	<p>Their Indigenous Peoples Policy emphasizes FPIC as well as values of cultural sensitivity, community engagement, and overall protection of indigenous rights throughout project implementation.</p>
<b>Global Environmental Facility</b>	<p>Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples; Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards; and Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group.</p>
<b>Other Relevant Documents</b>	<p>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>113</sup> recognizing indigenous rights to the conservation and protection of the environment and to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation.</p> <p>Paris Agreement Article 9, whereby “Developed country Parties shall provide financial resources to assist developing country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation”.<sup>114</sup></p>

113 United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Resolution A/RES/61/295 (Sept. 13, 2007).

114 “Paris Agreement.”

**Table 2: Indigenous Peoples in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Colombia**

**Fiji**

- *Most Fijians are of indigenous iTaukei heritage, with rich cultural diversity that informs their adaptation strategies.*
- *Confronts the harsh impacts of climate change, including heightened risks of natural disasters like tropical cyclones and rising sea levels.*
- *The economy, reliant on agriculture, fishing, and tourism, faces increasing vulnerabilities to climate impacts.*

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**Solomon Islands**

- Predominantly inhabited by Indigenous Melanesian people, faces severe climate risks due to its vulnerable geography and rising sea levels.
- 65% of the population lives near the sea; climate change threatens land, water supplies, and the livelihoods of 47% of households dependent on fishing.<sup>115</sup>
- As a Least Developed Country, it is highly susceptible to economic losses, requiring urgent policy intervention and increased climate and nature finance investments.

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**Colombia**

- Situated along the north-Caribbean coast of Colombia, the Province of La Guajira holds the ancestral sacred lands of the Wayuu IPs. The Wayuu community spans across La Guajira province in Colombia and the state of Zulia in Venezuela, representing the largest indigenous population in both nations.

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<sup>115</sup> Anouk Ride, "Climate Change and Conflict in Solomon Islands," United States Institute of Peace, accessed December 23, 2023. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/11/climate-change-and-conflict-solomon-islands>.

**Table 3: Strategic Alignment of Policy Recommendations**

Policy Recommendation	Net Public Value: Addressing Risks (Value)	Operational Feasibility (Capacity)	Political Feasibility (Support)
<b>Empowering FPIC</b>	Supporting the prevention of procedural risks through IP-led capacity-building.	Building on ongoing mapping efforts by IPEM Global Coordination.	In line with the World Bank’s Social Sustainability and Inclusion Commitments.
<b>Sensitizing Risk Typology</b>	Enhancing the ability of World Bank staff to understand and integrate risks faced by IPs in a systematic manner.	Identifying pilot cases with country teams that are already working on related efforts.	To be secured in the identification of pilot cases.
<b>Institutionalizing Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples</b>	Creating space for regular interactions between IPs, the World Bank, and national governments.	Building on existing national efforts and leveraging country teams.	To be secured in coordination with country teams and national governments.
<b>Legal Aid Provision</b>	Providing tools for addressing procedural risks through existing mechanisms.	To be developed with the recruitment of legal expertise into the SSI Global Unit.	To be secured with the incorporation of legal aid programs into the SSI Global Unit.
<b>Enhancing M&amp;E</b>	Identifying procedural and impact risks of projects promptly and effectively.	Enhanced mechanisms are to be developed in collaboration with IPs with experience with the existing ESS7 policy.	In line with the World Bank’s Social Sustainability and Inclusion Commitments.