



In partnership with  
Canada



# PODONG

## Indigenous Peoples Initiative

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# Indigenous Peoples in Conservation Programme Team



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# 01. The PODONG approach

PODONG aims to recognize and support Indigenous Peoples' contributions to the conservation of biodiversity through their Indigenous knowledge systems, while ensuring their full and effective leadership and access to adequate resources for the implementation and achievement of the KMGBF.

**PODONG** means *basket* in the indigenous Marma language, symbolizing abundance, care and indigenous women as guardians of life.



**PODONG is a global initiative co-designed, co-developed and led by Indigenous Peoples.**

**Recognizing Indigenous knowledge** in biodiversity conservation and promoting Indigenous leadership.

**Promoting access to financial resources** to achieve global commitments, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the IUCN Global Indigenous Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

# The four pillars of PODONG



1. Strengthening and building the capacities of Indigenous Peoples organisations & leaders

3. Supporting Indigenous leaders' participation & influencing environmental policy decisions at national, regional and international levels



2. Scaling-up direct access to finance for Indigenous-led & governed conservation and climate actions at territorial level.

4. Facilitating the design of an Indigenous Finance Mechanism

# THE FOUNDATIONS ARE



## IUCN IPOs Self-determined strategy



An IUCN Indigenous Peoples Self-Determined Strategy: Supporting effective participation of indigenous peoples in IUCN and conservation

### Summary

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2016, the IUCN Members Assembly adopted a landmark decision for indigenous peoples and conservation. Members voted to create a new category of IUCN membership for Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPO), strengthening the recognition of their rights, participation, voice and role in IUCN. The new category was the first time IUCN reformed its membership structure in its 70-year history and it did so specifically to recognize the specific situation and role of IPOs.

IUCN has a long history of working with indigenous peoples both to promote recognition of their rights at policy level and to engage and support indigenous peoples in conservation activities on the ground. However, this change in IUCN's governance structure now allows IUCN to play an important convening and facilitating role for indigenous participation in environmental decision-making.

As a distinct and mobilised constituency within IUCN, IPO Members met as a group for the first time in 2018. At this meeting, the IPO's developed a self-determined strategy identifying joint priorities for advancing indigenous rights and issues in conservation and within IUCN. These priorities focus particularly on leveraging IUCN's convening power, knowledge generation, standard setting and policy engagement in regard to indigenous issues.

The strategy provides IPOs, in partnership with other constituencies of IUCN, with a basis to support and advance indigenous rights, needs and priorities in conservation. Much of the programme of work proposed will be undertaken in alignment with existing policy processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

## IUCN IPOs Global Indigenous Agenda



### Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural Resources

#### Introduction

Indigenous Peoples across the globe manage significant areas of the Earth's most biodiverse regions. The profound relationships that we have with the whole of the natural world are a hallmark of our worldviews and values. Our holistic perspectives and centuries old sustainable development have contributed to the conservation of our lands, territories, waters, and natural resources and they also form the core of our distinct cultural identity and spiritual practices.

Significant international progress has been made to affirm the distinct status, rights, and role of Indigenous Peoples as reflected in the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, *International Labor Organization Convention No. 169*, the *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and other human rights instruments. Yet, due to lack of implementation, we persist in securing comprehensive recognition of and respect for our ways of life, our rights to lands, waters, coastal seas, territories and natural resources and our traditional knowledge, all of which underpin our substantial contributions to nature conservation. Although there is extraordinary cultural diversity among the 470 million Indigenous peoples across the globe, we are united by our intrinsic relationship with Mother Earth and the common challenges we face.

While the high rate of biodiversity in indigenous ancestral lands is well established, the contribution of Indigenous Peoples to conservation has yet to be fully recognized and supported. Conservation and indigenous organizations could be powerful allies in their shared goals to safeguard biodiversity and protect nature from threats such as unsustainable resource exploitation and climate change. Full recognition of indigenous land and resource rights, leadership and effective participation are key enabling conditions for conservation.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a significant platform for advancing recognition and support for the contributions of Indigenous

# What makes PODONG different?



**Co-designed  
Co-developed**

**Indigenous led  
& governed**

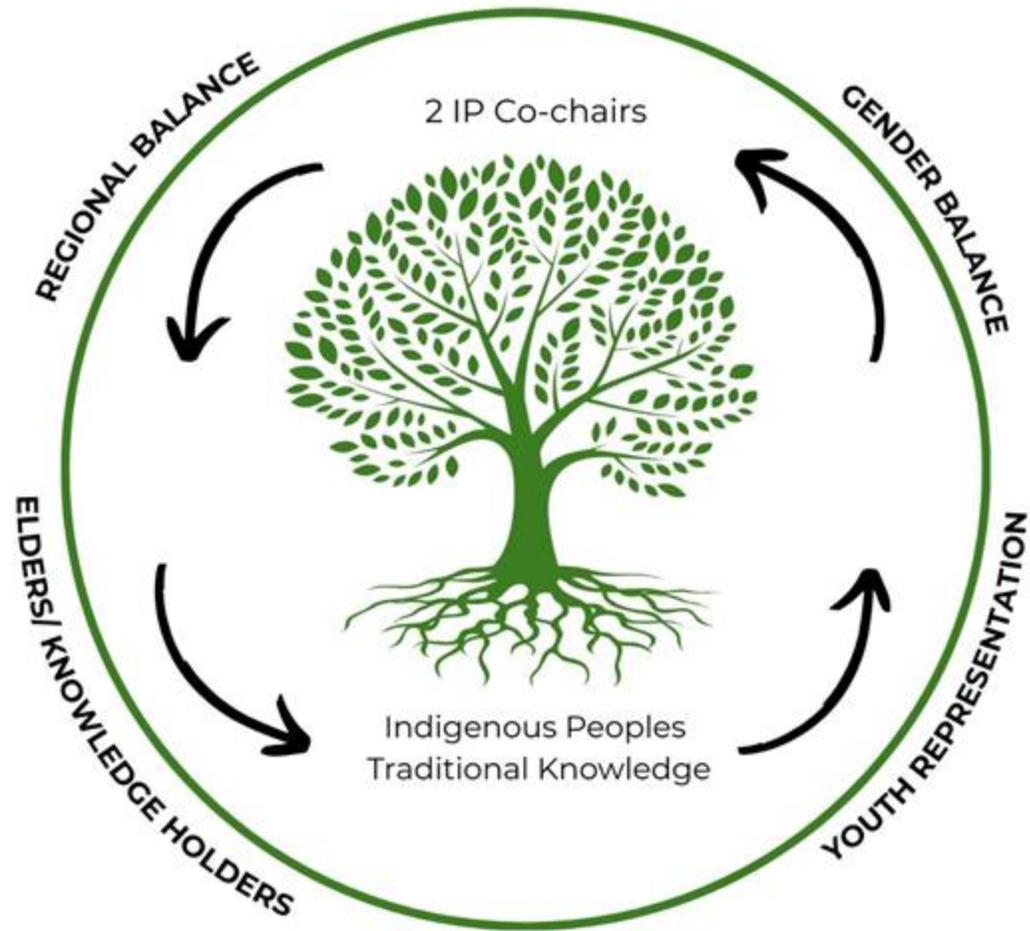


**PODONG**  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INITIATIVE  
ARUSHA | MAY 12, 2025  
OFFICIAL LAUNCH



## **02. The PODONG Governance**

# PODONG Governance structure



# PODONG partners



## Foundational



## Executing



**Sotz'il**  
Trabajando por el Desarrollo Indígena  
Qasamajij ri Utz K'aslema!



Arusha, Tanzania (2025)



## **03. PODONG Impacts**

# PODONG TANZANIA

- **147,982.37 ha** of lands under secured tenure (\*) & improved management in 13 communities
- **9,480** direct rightsholders
- **19 villages** benefit from VICOBA
- **13** boundary conflicts resolved

(\*) Communal Certificates Customary Right of Occupancy & Certificates of Village Land & Village Land Use Planning



# PODONG NEPAL

- **16,584** direct rightsholders  
**3 indigenous** recommendations incorporated in Nepals' NBSAPs
- **3,430 households** who learned and use energy- efficient cooking technology
- **89 indigenous lifeways & knowledge systems documented** through radio, video and case studies



# PODONG GUATEMALA

- **Biological and ecosystem characterization of the B'alam Juyu' Biocultural Complex**
- **Cultural Management Plan of the B'alam Juyu' Biocultural Complex**
- **26 Indigenous-led** conservation actions
- **6 good cultural practices** promoted in biodiversity management, integrating womens' vision

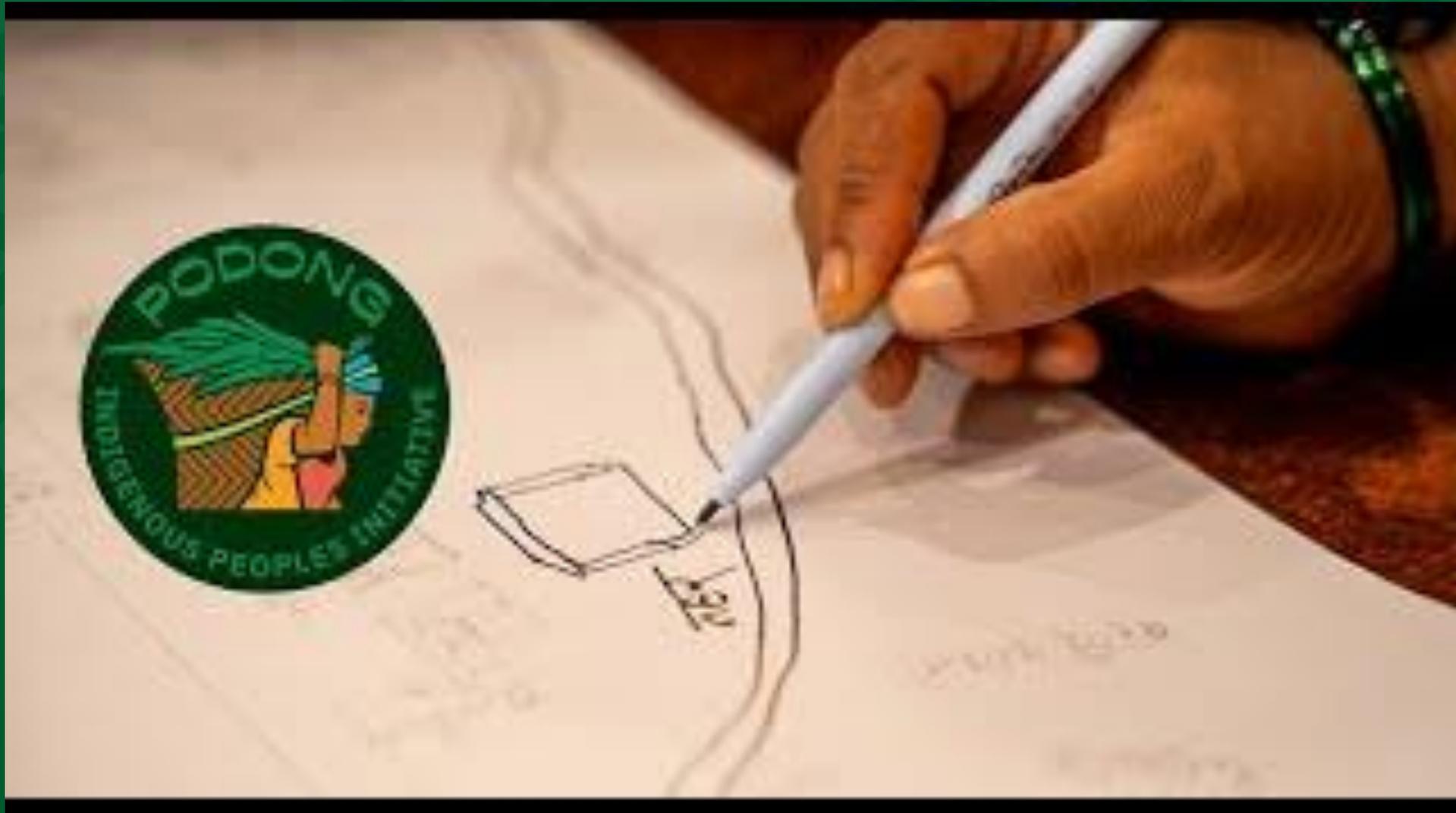


# PODONG PANAMA

- **Analysis of coral reefs and the ecological, social & economic impact of lionfish in the Guna Yala Comarca**
- **Systematization of ancestral knowledge and practices of the women & youth related to biological diversity and ecosystem services.**
- **14 good cultural practices promoted in biodiversity management that integrate womens' vision**

Comarca Guna Yala, Panama (2025)





# PODONG Impact | REGIONAL



Manaus, Brazil (2025)

- Regional indigenous consensus: ITTs recognized as a distinct conservation pathway.
- 60 experts from 21 countries shaped strategy and shared governance knowledge.
- Strategic alliances with Indigenous Peoples in Brazil.
- The IIFB prepared key recommendations for the first meeting of SB8J-1 and related CBD meetings, helping shape negotiations and advance Indigenous rights and governance.

# PODONG Impact | GLOBAL

IIFB influenced CBD negotiations, advancing indigenous rights and governance.

IIFB collectively prepared and presented statements at SBSTTA-27 and SB8J-1, and attended COP30 with the following contributions:

**SBSTTA-27: 11 recommendations**

**SB8J-1: 6 recommendations**

**COP30: 5 decisions**

Panama City, Panama (2025)



# PODONG presented at SB8J -1 plenary as an example of direct finance for Indigenous Peoples



Panama City, Panama (2025)



## Why Podong?

- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted in 2022, formally recognizes Indigenous Peoples as key actors in halting biodiversity loss and delivering climate solutions.
- Indigenous Peoples protect 80% of the planet's biodiversity, but existing funds are slow, inaccessible, and controlled externally, preventing communities from acting at the speed the crisis demands.
- 2022: Indigenous leaders formally requested a new, Indigenous-designed and Indigenous-governed mechanism, not another top-down programme.



COP16  
COLOMBIA  
Post-2020 Biodiversity

# PODONG Impact | GLOBAL



**1<sup>st</sup> ever in person World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature at IUCN's WCC**

**2 Indigenous leaders** elected to the IUCN Council

**5 Indigenous-supported motions** adopted as IUCN resolutions







**PODONG**  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
INITIATIVE



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