

GEF Small Grants Programme

Global Support Initiative for Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI)

PARAGUAY

Global Context

With the adoption of the 2010 CBD 2020 Aichi targets, attention has been focused on recognizing and supporting the vital role of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in conserving biodiversity outside the framework of formally-gazetted and managed government protected areas. To this end, the Global Support Initiative for Indigenous Peoples and Community-Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA-GSI) was formed in 2014 to broaden the diversity and quality of governance types and protected areas (PAs) and conserved areas (CAs) which contribute to the CBD Aichi Targets.

The ICCA-GSI is a multi-partnership initiative delivered by the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in 26 countries, with \$16.3m funding provided by the Government of Germany, through its Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) International Climate Initiative (IKI). Key partners include the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), Global ICCA Consortium, IUCN's Global Programme on Protected Areas (IUCN GPAP) and the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP WCMC).



San Rafael Reserve of Manageable Resources or "Tekoha Guasu" of the Mbya Guaraní Indigenous People

Goals

ICCA-GSI's central goal is to improve the recognition, support and overall effectiveness of ICCAs for biodiversity conservation through sustainable livelihoods and self-strengthening of ICCAs. Its work focuses on **Aichi Target 11** (increasing PA coverage), **Aichi Target 14** (safeguarding ecosystems and increasing the effectiveness of its services), and **Aichi Target 18** (Protecting traditional knowledge). ICCA-GSI support is provided at three levels thru:

- (i.) Direct financial and technical support to community-based action and demonstration for the self-strengthening of ICCAs leading to ecosystem protection, legal empowerment, sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction.
- (ii.) National legal, policy and other forms of support to enhance ICCA recognition and conservation, including governance assessments of protected and conserved areas; and
- (iii.) Global and regional networking, knowledge production and exchange support between national CSO initiatives.

Country Programme Strategy



Naranjito Indigenous Community meetings on forest conservation and traditional knowledge protection.

Paraguay is ecologically unique, being located at the confluence of six ecoregions: the Atlantic Forest, the Humid Chaco, the Chaco Woodland or Dry Chaco, the Pantanal, the Southern Grasslands, and the Cerrado. It has two main identified habitats: (i) the warm, temperate, humid forests and (ii) the warm, temperate dry forests. This gives the country a rich biodiversity in a relatively small territory (406,752 km²). However, the country's biodiversity loss is increasing and about 15% of national territory are under protection and management. Widespread deforestation, and its associated habitat loss, is one of the major threats to biodiversity. Other major threats to biodiversity stated in Paraguay's National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP, 2016)

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include “...changes in land use, exploitation of wood, urban expansion, illegal hunting and capture of wildlife, indiscriminate fishing practices, development of infrastructure and invasive alien species.

Despite the changes in Paraguay, indigenous peoples and local communities continue to live with a sacred relationship to nature. They believe that it is their duty to take care of the earth and abide by the law of nature that have been practiced by their ancestors for centuries, taking intra- and inter-generational equity into account. Some IPLCs such as the *Guarani*, migrate all the time in search of *yvymparae`y* or land without evil. The *yvymparae`y* is believed to be an accumulation of energy rather than a physical space. The *Guarani* culture has a very intense bond with the environment and their *tekoha* (space they live in each time) is governed by a system of social, political, spiritual organization and relationship with the environment.

In this context, the ICCA-GSI strategy in Paraguay aims to increase the recognition of and support to ICCAs geared towards biodiversity conservation, self-strengthening and sustainable livelihoods. This strategy is aligned to the NBSAP with its mission on supporting *the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the plans, programs and projects for the study, conservation and sustainable management of the country’s biodiversity, based on actions coordinated by the different actors (government, civil society, indigenous communities, private sector, educational institutions) and with consideration of gender and respect of traditional knowledge.*

The ICCA-GSI portfolio of projects contribute to 4 of the NBSAP’s 11 general strategic objectives. Namely, these are (i) ex situ conservation of natural resources; (ii) in situ conservation of natural resources, which includes the development of tourism services; (iii) democracy and environmental justice, which includes eco-civism, social values, education, training and circulation of biodiversity information; (iv) natural resources.

Strategic initiatives include (i) analysis of legal frameworks, policies and debates in relation to ICCAs with multi-level actors (indigenous organizations, peasant communities and government institutions; (ii) training and knowledge exchange among grassroots organizations on governance mechanisms and application of customary law; (iii) training on the UNEP’s ICCA Global Registry Global, IUCN’s World Database of Protected Areas and application of the ICCA Resilience and Security Index; (iv) creating an ICCA national network; (v) demonstration projects on ICCA strengthening and local support; (vi) visibility, positioning and recognition of the ICCAC at the national level.

Project Portfolio

Project Name	Implementation Period
Analysis and review at the national level of the legal framework and policies related to Territories and Conserved Areas by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (TICCA)	June 2018 – May 2020
Participatory development of a Pilot Plan for the demarcation, restructuring and regularization of indigenous lands titled in conservation territories of both regions of the country	March 2019 – February 2021
Safeguarding the Jasukavenda, Pai Tavytera Natural Cultural Heritage	March 2019 – February 2021
WE KNOW / Seeds, water, forest and organization for the rooting and sovereignty	March 2019 – February 2021
Territorial organizational management for the environmental and cultural protection of rural communities of the District of Horqueta de Concepción	April 2019 – March 2021

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