



WWF POLICY STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CONSERVATION

Introduction

Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources are often insecure for lack of formal tenure and recognition, and/or are contested by governments, dominant societies, private sector actors, and other groups like migrant settlers. Some Indigenous Peoples live in remote and ecologically rich areas, and in situations of high insecurity and internal displacement due to regional and national armed conflicts.

Indigenous Peoples as individuals are entitled to all human rights recognized in international law, in addition to the ones specified in [UNDRIP](#). Key United Nations bodies addressing Indigenous Peoples' issues include the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFI), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples; and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues. This Policy is aligned with WWF's commitments and key requirements on [human rights](#) and the associated policies on [Child Safeguarding](#) as well as [WWF's Environmental & Social Safeguards Framework \(ESSF\)](#) – it forms part of our network's core standards.

WWF fully endorses the following international instruments and considers their implementation critical for effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable development:

- Agenda 21, 1992
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- ILO Convention 169 (Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries)
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- IUCN motions, including IUCN RESWCC3.056

Requirements

WWF will implement activities and engage with the right holders, duty bearers and stakeholders based on the following considerations:

1. WWF recognizes Indigenous Peoples as rightful custodians, collective owners and caretakers with the right to exert control over their territories, lands, waters, and resources therein, that they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used;
2. WWF recognizes and advocates for the right of Indigenous Peoples to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands, waters, territories and resources;
3. WWF recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and to define and pursue their own social, economic, and cultural development priorities for their well-being and for protection of their territories and resources;
4. WWF respects and promotes the right of Indigenous Peoples to uphold their food, water and energy security and sovereignty in ways that are culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable;

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5. WWF respects and recognizes the intellectual property rights of Indigenous Peoples and promotes their right to practice, educate and transmit their traditional knowledge, cultural heritage and expressions, languages, spiritual values as well as their technologies and sciences to the younger generations;
6. WWF respects and recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to maintain control over their genetic and biological resources and enjoy equitably and fairly from any economic or other benefits realized from the use of such resources and associated traditional knowledge in line with the [Nagoya Protocol](#).
7. WWF recognises and commits to upholding the right of Indigenous Peoples to a process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any activities that could impact them, their rights, lands, waters and territories, resources or livelihoods, including in all issues of resettlement, relocation, and restriction of access to resources.
8. WWF recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation to freely decide to remain in isolation, maintain their cultural values, and freely decide if, when and how they wish to contact and/or integrate with the outside world in accordance with the [IUCN Congress Resolution - RESWCC3.056](#)
9. WWF recognizes the importance of partnering with Indigenous Peoples and promotes equitable and inclusive partnerships with them. WWF commits to respectfully engaging and exchanging with Indigenous partners, and to mutual learning regarding, among other issues, conservation practices, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity in their territories.
10. WWF commits, within the scope of our activities, to addressing the threats to Indigenous Peoples, their territories, lands and resources.
11. WWF recognizes and promotes the right of Indigenous Peoples to access information, inclusion and effective participation, non-discrimination and justice in decision-making on issues affecting or potentially affecting them and the conservation of their territories and resources.

Operationalizing of the Policy Statement

Application of this policy is supported by the allocation of financial, human, and organizational resources and the guidance document, that provides stepwise approaches and best practices in place-based programs/projects, policy advocacy interventions and all other spheres of WWF's work.