

**7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the  
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC7)**

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**INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE TO SUPPORT  
EFFECTIVE MIGRATORY SPECIES CONSERVATION**

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**Summary:**

Decision 14.9 requests the Scientific Council, subject to the availability of resources, to:

- a) assess the significance of multiple systems of knowledge and understanding, including traditional and Indigenous knowledge, for supporting effective migratory species conservation; and
- b) provide a report to COP15 with suggestions for ways in which CMS might facilitate inclusion of additional systems of knowledge and understanding for enhanced implementation of the Convention.

This document proposes a way forward to implement this Decision.

The revised document contains a draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group which is proposed to be established in support of implementation of this Decision.

## INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE MIGRATORY SPECIES CONSERVATION

### Background

1. The 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Samarkand, 12-17 February 2024) acknowledged the important role played in conservation of migratory species by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and requested that the Scientific Council assesses the significance of multiple systems of knowledge and understanding, including Indigenous and local knowledge, for supporting effective migratory species conservation; and identify ways in which CMS might facilitate inclusion of additional systems of knowledge and understanding for enhanced implementation of the Convention.
2. Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) provides a unique source of information on biodiversity and represents an important aspect of human cultural and behavioural diversity. In fact, the 2019 IPBES Global Assessment found that biodiversity was declining less rapidly on land that is owned or managed by Indigenous Peoples (Watson et al., 2019). The value of ILK is therefore recognised as an essential component for managing and conserving biodiversity. The impact of threatening processes on migratory species may be better understood by incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge into conservation actions. Indigenous and local knowledge is highly diverse and can help improve the information base for national and international decision-making and policy-making. Working with Indigenous and local knowledge is therefore a dynamic process that needs to adapt to each unique situation.
3. While the involvement and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities varies across different inter-governmental treaties, there are ongoing efforts to enhance participation, protect rights, and integrate essential knowledge into biodiversity and conservation initiatives. Community participation and livelihoods are also represented in several CMS agreements, action plans and programmes of work, recognising the contribution of communities to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. However, CMS has not specifically explored how ILK can be effectively integrated into the scientific processes of the Convention.
4. The aim of this paper is to understand the practices that could be used by CMS to effectively embed ILK in the Scientific Council's work. This document provides an overview of the methods used currently by other conventions to include ILK in their scientific and decision-making processes.
5. Indigenous Peoples include communities, tribal groups and nations who self-identify as Indigenous to the territories they occupy, and whose organisation is based fully or partially on their own customs, traditions and laws (Hill et al., 2020). Local communities are groups of people who maintain inter-generational connection to place and nature through livelihood, cultural identity, worldviews, institutions and ecological knowledge (Hill et al., 2020). For the purpose of this document, we will refer to *Indigenous Peoples and local communities* and to *Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK)*, acknowledging the differences between the two groups and using these terms as a placeholder to capture other terms.
6. [Resolution 11.10 \(Rev.COP14\) Synergies and Partnerships](#) reaffirmed the importance of engaging in relevant processes and cooperating with partners, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Engagement with sectoral groups was further detailed

in Decision 13.9 *NGO participation in CMS processes*. This Decision directed the Secretariat to identify and compile best practice case studies and ongoing initiatives related to community involvement in the conservation and management of CMS-listed species.

7. The 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP14, 2024) agreed that the Convention should examine ways to facilitate the participation and engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Decision 14.9 *Participation of Non-CMS Governmental Organizations and Other Groups in CMS Processes*, adopted at COP14 (2024), requested the Scientific Council, subject to the availability of resources, to:
  - a) assess the significance of multiple systems of knowledge and understanding, including traditional and Indigenous knowledge, for supporting effective migratory species conservation; and
  - b) provide a report to COP15 with suggestions for ways in which CMS might facilitate inclusion of additional systems of knowledge and understanding for enhanced implementation of the Convention.
8. Across the international community, participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in environmental governance has been facilitated through several coordination mechanisms and working groups that work towards integrating ILK in policy and decision-making processes. This paper provides a synthesized and non-exhaustive overview how other international forums have endeavoured to enhance engagement, the challenges faced, and lessons learnt.
9. The aim of this paper is to facilitate the Scientific Council to consider its task mandated through Dec.14.9(a) during the intersessional period by proposing a pathway for further consideration, specifically through the establishment of an intersessional working group.
10. Methods of incorporating ILK into international processes have been compiled from the following biodiversity-related conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna And Flora (CITES); Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); International Whaling Commission (IWC); United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA); United Nations Environment Program (UNEP); UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention).
11. Other bodies examined for the purpose of this review were the Global Environment Facility (GEF); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and overarching United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP).
12. Indigenous Peoples and local communities play varied roles and have different levels of involvement in global biodiversity conventions and their associated processes. Each convention has distinct mechanisms for the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and access to ILK. These mechanisms include establishing dedicated working groups, task forces or platforms, regularly inviting ILK holders to participate as observers, establishing distinct membership categories, and recognising subsistence use explicitly. These mechanisms are utilised by a range of international forums

including CBD, CITES, IPBES, UNFCCC, IWC, Convention on Wetlands and IUCN. The **Annex 1** provides a summary of the mechanisms instituted by these bodies.

13. Across these conventions and platforms, there is a concerted effort to enhance Indigenous Peoples and local communities' capacities through funding, capacity-building initiatives, and the establishment of support networks like the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group within the Global Environment Facility (GEF). These efforts aim to empower Indigenous Peoples and local communities in navigating sometimes complex international processes and effectively contributing to global environmental governance.
14. The overarching commitment to inclusive participation underscores recognising the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. While many of the challenges experienced and lessons learned shared in this document relate to experiences in policy and administrative realms, these can usefully be considered in the context of enhancing ILK inclusion in CMS scientific processes.

#### Challenges reported by other conventions

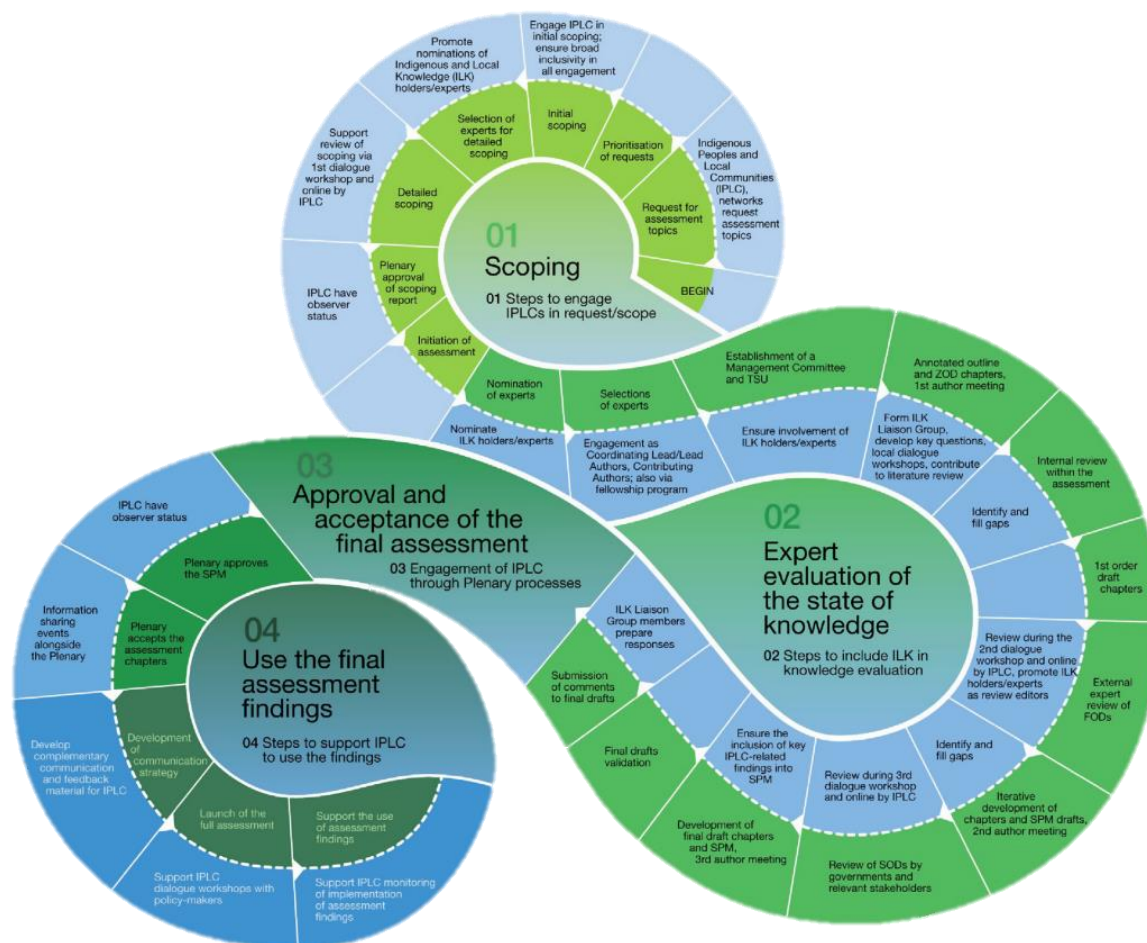
15. The Scientific Council, which is at the beginning of its journey to enhance incorporation of ILK into its processes, can learn from the lived experiences of other international forums. A variety of challenges have been experienced throughout the process of incorporating ILK in a number of international environmental frameworks. The challenges experienced reveal persistent engagement barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. A common theme is the need for capacity building among governments and Indigenous Peoples and local communities on environmental legal instruments, which is essential for effective implementation of each convention. This gap in knowledge and technical capabilities may hinder participation and contribution to both scientific and decision-making processes.
16. Other challenges experienced include identifying relevant ILK holders for specific topics, varying technical and legal capacities, and social insecurities. Accommodating diverse cultural traditions and practices further complicates engagement, requiring tailored approaches that respect and integrate ILK into conservation efforts. Further hurdles experienced include enhancing community tenure security and facilitating the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making processes. Limited capacity and financial resources can constrain efforts to apply ILK effectively in conservation practices. These challenges extend across the complete environment – terrestrial, marine and coastal areas.
17. At the UN level, despite existing mechanisms, Indigenous Peoples and local communities continue to face obstacles in gaining international recognition and participating effectively in UN processes. Accreditation practices often do not acknowledge governance structures and representative entities, limiting the influence over international agreements and climate solutions. Addressing these issues requires overcoming language barriers, shifting narratives from vulnerability to leadership in conservation action, and following holistic approaches that reflect the diverse practices and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
18. Challenges often persist in securing the effective participation of ILK holders in discussions. Misconceptions about the homogeneity and knowledge systems can hinder engagement, while logistical and resource constraints impede the influence of ILK in conservation strategies. Various conventions have reported the need for integrating diverse knowledge systems, such as rituals and oral traditions, into their respective

conventions' assessments. Issues of scale, representation, and participation have also been encountered, highlighting the ongoing need to develop inclusive methods and tools to bridge gaps between text-based assessments and ILK formats. Governance sharing and intellectual property rights protection often remain unresolved. Further information on some of the challenges experienced by various international frameworks is provided in the **Annex 1**.

19. Overall, addressing these multifaceted challenges requires concerted efforts to build capacity, enhance inclusivity, and strengthen partnerships between ILK holders, governments and international organisations.

#### Lessons learnt

20. The extensive body of work done through a variety of mechanisms on incorporating ILK into international processes and mechanisms has highlighted several strategies for successfully engaging ILK holders.
21. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, calls on states to obtain free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous people before adopting legislative or administrative measures that would affect them. States are also strongly encouraged to follow the CARE and FAIR Principles. The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (i.e. Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility and Ethics) detail that the use of Indigenous data should result in benefits for Indigenous collectives, improved governance and equitable outcomes (Carroll et al., 2021). The FAIR Data Principles (i.e. Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) complement the CARE Principles and promote equitable participation and outcomes from data access, use, reuse and attribution (Carroll et al., 2021).
22. IPBES developed a guide on the production and integration of assessments (IPBES, 2018) which was usefully adapted by Hill et al. (2020) to integrate additional steps to ensure engagement with ILK systems and Indigenous Peoples and local communities (**Figure 1** - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877343519301447>).



**Figure 1.** Steps to ensure inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) in assessments. 2018. Figure based on The IPBES Guide on the Production of Assessments Core Version. Online: Bonn, Germany: Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Source: Hill R et al. (2020). Working with Indigenous, local and scientific knowledge in assessments of nature and nature’s linkages with people. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 43: 8-20.

23. Experiences in other forums to date has highlighted four main practices for enhancing ILK holder involvement in decision-making: (1) respecting rights, (2) supporting care and mutuality, (3) strengthening Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their knowledge systems, and (4) supporting knowledge exchange laws. **Figure 1** further illustrates the steps required to ensure Indigenous Peoples and local communities and ILK engagement throughout all four phases of the process and could serve as a useful framework for incorporating ILK into CMS scientific processes and assessments. Working with existing organisations and networks of ILK holders should therefore be considered a priority.

24. Common practices for working with ILK holders include:

- seek FPIC and follow CARE and FAIR Principles;
- promote engagement and collaboration of relevant ILK holders in various initiatives and projects, including project development, implementation and reporting;
- build mutual trust; and
- develop a framework that seeks to enhance collaboration and integration of different knowledge systems.

25. Other tips for successful engagement of ILK holders include:
- seek international input from ILK holders to be implemented at national and local levels;
  - follow a rights-based approach to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples and local communities' stewardship in local-level decision implementation;
  - develop dedicated Resolutions and Decisions to promote the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making processes and to adequately integrate ILK;
  - create an enabling environment for engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including strong community governance, traditional leadership and use of ILK, and trust-building;
  - ensure that legal instruments and measures support Indigenous Peoples and local communities' participation in decision-making processes;
  - promote capacity-building, government support, fair benefit sharing and formal or informal interactions during intersessional periods for ensuring meaningful engagement;
  - provide financial support to representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for participating in international processes;
  - strengthen governance for participatory management, recognising customary governances and enhancing livelihood benefits;
  - enable activities such as updating guidelines and reporting procedures and facilitate technical discussions;
  - collaborate with international processes and raise the profile of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the convention's COPs and other meetings;
  - enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at least at the level of NGOs and establish bodies to accredit representative institutions;
  - use appropriate language and follow protocols on engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and
  - make use of support tools such as the *Indigenous Navigator* and *Legal-Hub* (Food and Agriculture Organization); see the **Annex 1** for details.
26. While many of these successful strategies relate to the involvement of ILK holders and Indigenous Peoples and local communities in broader convention/platform processes, the broad principles associated with the lessons learnt may usefully be applied by the Scientific Council to enhance utilisation of ILK in its scientific processes and assessments. Successful incorporation of ILK in CMS scientific processes will depend on a supportive and respectful environment that encourages knowledge exchange, ensures procedural justice and prevents power asymmetries. The implementation of ILK in scientific assessments will be invaluable for assessing and improving the effectiveness of conservation actions and facilitating long-term projections.

### General conclusions

27. The contribution of ILK is essential for effective management and conservation of transboundary species. CMS continues to acknowledge the importance of ILK and has included community participation and livelihoods in various CMS agreements, action plans and programmes of work. [Resolution 11.10 \(Rev.COP14\)](#) further highlights the need for strengthening the engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to support Parties in implementing the Convention. This is particularly important for developing scientific assessments within the remit of the CMS Scientific Council.

28. Since ILK is highly diverse, there is no “one size fits all” approach, and practices for ensuring the recognition and incorporation of ILK in CMS scientific processes should include ILK holders, Indigenous Peoples and local communities who have knowledge about the use of ILK in conservation, and non-Indigenous Peoples and local experts who have knowledge about ILK.
29. Embedding Indigenous and local knowledge in CMS scientific processes and assessments may give space for different worldviews about the protection of migratory species and their linkages with people, thereby enhancing current and future scientific assessments and conservation actions.

### Recommendations

30. Enhancing the inclusion of ILK in Scientific Council activities and assessments requires comprehensive consideration. As a first step, it is recommended that a working group be established to develop recommendations designed to enhance the inclusion of ILK in Scientific Council activities and assessments. Specific items that could be considered by the working group include, but are not limited to:
  - amendments to the species listing proposal guidelines that would highlight and encourage the inclusion of ILK in listing proposals;
  - development of a questionnaire for Parties to collect case studies, which can be used to extract best practices and lessons learnt;
  - the establishment of a register of Indigenous and local knowledge holders for various migratory species taxa groups to facilitate exchange of Indigenous and local knowledge on species-specific activities or assessments;
  - a separate membership category for Indigenous Peoples and local communities on the Sessional Committee to provide a distinct intellectual and political space for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to influence scientific standards and decision-making;
  - methods to promote the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local community representatives in working groups and task forces; and
  - engagement with other platforms, such as the UNESCO and the Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, to seek advice on operationalising principles and guidelines for Indigenous Peoples and local communities’ engagement.
31. The information on existing mechanisms, challenges faced, and lessons learnt in other forums contained in the **Annex 1** can be used by a working group, if established, as a succinct source of information on which to base further considerations.
32. If established, an invitation to participate in the working group should be extended to Standing Committee members to allow for appropriate consideration of any broader policy considerations that may potentially arise when exploring mechanisms to enhance the incorporation of ILK into Scientific Council processes and assessments.
33. The Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council is recommended to:
  - a) take note of the information provided in relation to mechanisms and processes used by other international forums to enhance the utilisation of ILK; and
  - b) agree to establish an intersessional working group with Terms of Reference as per Annex 2 to formulate recommendations to present to the 8<sup>th</sup> Sessional Committee meeting.

References used in the text (see Annex 1 for full reference list)

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- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. (2023). Information document on engaging indigenous peoples and local communities in international policy- and decision-making: Lessons for CITES from multilateral environmental and human rights processes (CoP19 Inf.29).
- Hill, R., Adem, Ç., Alangui, W. V., Molnár, Z., Aumeeruddy-Thomas, Y., Bridgewater, P., Tengö, M., Thaman, R., Adou Yao, C. Y., Berkes, F., Carino, J., Carneiro da Cunha, M., Diaw, M. C., Díaz, S., Figueroa, V. E., Fisher, J., Hardison, P., Ichikawa, K., Kariuki, P., . . . Xue, D. (2020). Working with Indigenous, local and scientific knowledge in assessments of nature and nature's linkages with people. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 43, 8-20. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2019.12.006>
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## SUMMARY OF MECHANISMS INSTITUTED BY THE EXAMINED BODIES

### *Incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge to support effective migratory species conservation*

#### 1 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the few international agreements that recognises the unique relationship Indigenous Peoples and local communities have with biodiversity. This recognition is enshrined in the preamble of the CBD and its provisions. Several articles of the CBD directly refer to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, for example Article 8(j) on traditional knowledge.

The Conference of the Parties has established a working group specifically to address the implementation of Article 8(j) (traditional knowledge, innovations and practices) and related provisions of the convention. This working group is open to all Parties and, Indigenous Peoples and local communities' representatives play full and active roles in its work including in the group's decision-making. Traditional knowledge is considered a "cross-cutting" issue that affects many aspects of biological diversity, so it will continue to be addressed by the Conference of the Parties and by other working groups as well.

The Article 8(j) working group was established in 1998 by COP4 and in COP5 adopted a programme of work to implement the commitment of Article 8(j) to encourage Parties to adopt the conservation and sustainable practices of indigenous and local communities whilst at the same time engaging with these communities to promote their knowledge.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities have an observer status in the CBD. As observers, they do not have any voting rights but can participate (unless Parties decide otherwise) in all negotiating sessions, speak during sessions, hold side events and press conferences. The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and the Indigenous Women Biodiversity Network (established in 1996 and 1998, respectively) have served as a caucus of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the CBD.

At COP16 in October 2024, Parties to the CBD will give consideration to the establishment of a subsidiary body, or a similar arrangement, on Article 8(j) to replace the ad-hoc Working Group on Article 8(j), noting that the working group has been continuing for over 20 years.

#### Useful resources:

- Convention on Biological Diversity. Article 8(j) - Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices. Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles.shtml?a=cbd-08>
- Convention on Biological Diversity. Traditional Knowledge Information Portal. Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/tk/default.shtml>
- Convention on Biological Diversity. International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB). Retrieved from <https://www.cbd.int/traditional/iifb.shtml>
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## 2 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES engages Indigenous Peoples and local communities through meetings of the intersessional working group on livelihoods, and involvement in the development of non-binding guidelines for the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (in preparation).

CITES does not formally include Indigenous Peoples and local communities as decision-makers but allows them to join national delegations or register as observers, subject to Party approval. Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as observers, can engage in committees, working groups, and advocacy activities but cannot vote and have limited speaking rights. In 2023, the CITES Secretariat surveyed Parties on their engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, revealing both the valuable contributions and significant constraints Indigenous Peoples and local communities face in participating in CITES. While Indigenous Peoples and local communities possess legal rights and crucial knowledge for effective biodiversity management, the survey highlighted a need for greater engagement with the convention and its processes. Participation at the national level varies, with countries like Canada, Namibia and Mexico involving Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decision-making processes related to wildlife management and trade. Some countries, like Zimbabwe or Cameroon, reinvest trade proceeds from CITES-listed species back into conservation and community development, benefiting Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The CITES Working Group on the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities focuses on evaluating and recommending ways for effective engagement in CITES processes. This includes considering previous discussions and experiences, developing non-binding guidance that Parties may use to consult with Indigenous Peoples and local communities on proposals to amend the CITES Appendices, and offering recommendations to the Standing Committee on enhancing their engagement. In addition, the mandate of the CITES livelihoods working group is to review case studies to extract best practices and lessons for CITES and livelihoods; evaluate draft guidance on maximising benefits to Indigenous peoples and local communities from trade in CITES-listed species; and review reports on certification and traceability mechanisms to enhance conservation and livelihood outcomes.

CITES reports facing challenges such as the identification of relevant Indigenous Peoples and local communities, differing technical and legal capacities, social insecurity among Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and lack of knowledge about CITES. Issues such as coordinating with various institutions at the national level, providing Indigenous Peoples and local communities with opportunities to contribute to proposal development and in meetings, and addressing specific and varied cultural traditions (e.g. Māori and Oceania practices) further complicate Indigenous Peoples and local communities' engagement.

With regards to lessons learnt, CITES emphasises the need for an enabling environment for Indigenous Peoples and local communities' engagement, including strong community governance, traditional leadership and use of ILK, and trust-building. Legal instruments and measures should support Indigenous Peoples and local communities' participation in decision-making processes. Capacity-building, government support, fair benefit sharing, and formal or informal interactions during CITES COP cycles are crucial to meaningful engagement. Potential proposed solutions include creating mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples and local communities' engagement similar to other MEAs, establishing advisory committees, waiving meeting registration costs for IPLC organizations, and enhancing their representation on national delegations.

Useful resources:

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Recognition of the benefits of trade in wildlife (Res. Conf. 8.3, Rev. CoP13). Retrieved from <https://cites.org/eng/node/134765>
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. (2016). CITES and livelihoods (Res. Conf. 16.6, Rev. CoP18). Retrieved from <https://cites.org/eng/prog/livelihoods>
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### **3 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**

The CMS is similar to CITES, in that there are no formal channels enabling Indigenous Peoples and local communities to contribute to decision-making processes. CMS allows Indigenous Peoples and local communities to register as observers, which does not require state pre-approval unlike CITES. Indigenous Peoples and local communities may also join working groups by invitation of the Chair, as well as national delegations, although historically this has been infrequent. The CMS Gorilla Agreement, supported by Norwegian funding, has facilitated community-based conservation efforts for the critically endangered Cross-River gorilla in Nigeria and Cameroon. This project has improved local livelihoods through beekeeping training, education, and gorilla monitoring activities, fostering partnerships between local communities and the government. Similarly, the AEWA African Initiative aims to maximize local community involvement by building on the progress made under the UNEP-GEF African-Eurasian Wings over Wetlands Flyway Project (WOW).

Useful resources:

- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. (2024). CMS COP14 Decisions. Retrieved from [https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms\\_cop14\\_decisions\\_e.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms_cop14_decisions_e.pdf)
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**4 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Legal Services has developed the Legal-Hub, an online platform providing access to legal information, including customary law. This tool supports participatory law reform processes at the national level by making legal texts and analyses accessible to stakeholders, thus strengthening the science-policy interface and promoting national discussions on policy and law reforms.

Useful resources:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2024, 26 January). The Development Law Service. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/legal-services/resources/detail/en/c/1656398/>
- Legal-Hub, Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme (2022). Retrieved from: <https://www.swm-programme.info/legal-hub> The Legal-Hub, which was developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Legal Services, is an online platform that provides access to legal information, including customary law. This tool supports participatory law reform processes at the national level by making legal texts and analyses accessible to stakeholders, thus strengthening the science-policy interface and promoting national discussions on policy and law reforms.

**5 Global Environment Facility (GEF)**

The GEF, which is guided by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), serves as a financial mechanism for environmental treaties such as CBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD. The Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group within the GEF provides advice on operationalising principles and guidelines for IPLC engagement, enhancing dialogue among stakeholders, and offering guidance on financing and evaluation metrics.

GEF includes Indigenous Peoples and local communities in their conservation efforts by involving them in planning and designing the Inclusive Conservation Initiative, which aims to empower them in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. Indigenous Peoples and local communities contribute significantly to GEF policies, particularly the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards. Furthermore, GEF promotes the interests of Indigenous Peoples and local

communities at international conventions and fora by organising side events and workshops. Other activities consist in raising awareness among Indigenous Peoples and local communities about engagement opportunities with GEF, and in providing guidance on financing options, monitoring, and evaluation metrics for Indigenous-led projects.

Useful resources:

- Global Environment Facility. GEF-7 Inclusive Conservation Initiative. Retrieved from <https://inclusiveconservationinitiative.org/>
- Global Environment Facility. Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from <https://www.thegef.org/what-we-do/topics/indigenous-peoples>
- Global Environment Facility. (2012). Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples (GEF/C.42/Inf.03/Rev.1). Retrieved from <https://www.thegef.org/documents/indigenous-peoples>
- Global Environment Facility. (2019). Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (SP/PL/03). Retrieved from <https://www.thegef.org/documents/environmental-and-social-safeguard-standards>

## **6 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**

IPBES engages Indigenous Peoples and local communities through the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IIFBES) and a Task Force on ILK.

Supported by the Secretariat and the technical support unit “UNESCO Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network” (BES-Net), the IPBES Task Force is responsible for enhancing the recognition and integration of ILK systems in biodiversity assessments. The Task Force guides the IPBES Secretariat and supports the implementation of approaches to work with ILK and conducts work through face-to-face and virtual meetings and other electronic interactions. Resulting products are reviewed by the Panel and the Bureau before being considered by the Plenary.

The IPBES Task Force is co-chaired by members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel and Bureau and consists of 14 members, with 6 of them identifying as Indigenous. The Task Force is composed by members from five UN regions, including up to 4 members from the Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, members of expert groups and relevant task forces, representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and representatives from scientific organisations and institutions with expertise in ILK. Recognized individual experts may also participate. Additional experts and representatives from Indigenous and local organizations may be invited to participate as resource persons.

IPBES also facilitates ILK dialogue workshops for the assessment of monitoring, biodiversity, business or ecosystem services. IPBES holds annual meetings of the task force on Indigenous and local knowledge and hosts webinars and debates on Indigenous Peoples and local communities’ involvement in IPBES assessments. IPBES regularly reviews task force workplans and program deliverables to ensure they account for ILK, and maintains a dedicated webpage for Indigenous Peoples and local communities and manages the IIFBES, where Indigenous Peoples and local communities can join to receive updates on IPBES. Other activities include facilitating literature reviews and case study collections. Indigenous Peoples and local communities may participate in IPBES assessments in the scoping phase, by becoming authors or reviewers of certain chapters, participating in dialogue workshops or in capacity building fora, as well as in other outreach

activities. IPBES is also establishing procedures for non-State Indigenous Peoples and local communities' actors to participate as observers.

IPBES encounters several specific challenges when working across knowledge systems, including issues related to scale, participation, representation, and the mismatch between text-based assessments and diverse ILK formats such as rituals and oral traditions. Developing methods and tools to work with ILK is still in progress. Additional gaps include sharing governance with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, addressing ILK transformation, protecting intellectual property rights, and overcoming power asymmetries.

#### Useful resources:

- Methodological guidance for recognising and working with indigenous and local knowledge in IPBES (2022). Retrieved from: [https://files.ipbes.net/ipbes-web-prod-public-files/inline-files/IPBES\\_ILK\\_MethGuide\\_MEP-Approved\\_5MAY2022.pdf](https://files.ipbes.net/ipbes-web-prod-public-files/inline-files/IPBES_ILK_MethGuide_MEP-Approved_5MAY2022.pdf)
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. (2017). Report of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on the work of its fifth session (IPBES/5/15). Retrieved from <https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/ipbes515>
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Decision IPBES-7/1: Rolling work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services up to 2030. Retrieved from: <https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/decision-ipbes-71>
- IPBES/MEP-Bureau/22/6 (2022). Strengthening the knowledge foundations: Indigenous and local knowledge systems. Retrieved from: <https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/ipbesmep-bureau226>
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Messages of particular relevance to IPLCs from IPBES assessments. Retrieved from <https://www.ipbes.net/ilk-messages-from-assessments>
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Indigenous and local knowledge: How to participate. Retrieved from <https://www.ipbes.net/indigenous-local-knowledge/how-to-participate>
- Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Publications and resources from other organizations. Retrieved from <https://www.ipbes.net/ilk-other-org-publications>
- Hill, R., et al. (2020). "Working with Indigenous, local and scientific knowledge in assessments of nature and nature's linkages with people." *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 43: 8-20.
- McElwee, P., et al. (2020). "Working with Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) in large-scale ecological assessments: Reviewing the experience of the IPBES Global Assessment." *Journal of Applied Ecology* 57(9): 1666-1676.

## **7 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

IUCN is the only intergovernmental membership organisation that includes a distinct membership category for Indigenous Peoples Organisations (IPO), as of July 2024. The Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) guides IUCN's policies with a normative framework consisting of several principles and standards, including a standard on Indigenous Peoples and local communities that recognises UNDRIP as a key reference. The standard requires projects to obtain FPIC for interventions affecting Indigenous Peoples and local communities' lands, resources, or knowledge, and defines specific steps to align with FPIC principles.

Within the IUCN, the IPO status provides a distinct intellectual and political space for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to influence standards and decision-making. For example, IPO members can elect representatives to the IUCN Council and participate in commissions focused on Indigenous issues. IUCN's thematic and regional work regularly incorporates Indigenous Peoples and local communities' perspectives, with initiatives like the Green List Standard for Protected and Conserved Areas promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. IUCN further supports Indigenous Peoples and local communities land and resource rights, promotes advances in improving formal World Heritage instruments to include FPIC processes, and facilitates multi-stakeholder dialogues. The IUCN Regional Office for Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean (ORMACC), for example, convenes and supports dialogues among Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organisations, government actors and other stakeholders in the context of development and conservation interventions that may impact on the lands, territories and resources of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Major activities of the IUCN include organising the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature, and implement the Inclusive Conservation Initiative, a GEF project implemented by IUCN in partnership with Conservation International, which provides significant direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The IUCN reports challenges with enhancing community tenure security in protected areas, building partnerships to address tenure rights, and facilitating IPLC participation in environmental decision-making at the national level. Limited capacity and financial resources restrict the IUCN's ability to resolve conflicts related to Indigenous rights. Further challenges involve protecting Indigenous lands, ensuring FPIC, applying ILK in conservation, building capacities within conservation organizations, and strengthening work on Indigenous issues in marine and coastal areas.

With regards to lessons learnt, the IUCN supports Indigenous Peoples and local communities through various initiatives, including the Inclusive Conservation Initiative, which provides significant funding and focuses on integrating ILK into conservation efforts.

#### Useful resources:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature. Res. 4.052 Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from [https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC\\_2008\\_RES\\_52\\_EN.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2008_RES_52_EN.pdf)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/our-work/topic/indigenous-peoples>
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. Indigenous knowledge. Retrieved from <https://www.iucnredlist.org/resources/ilk>
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. Environmental and Social Management System. Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/resources/project-management-tools/environmental-and-social-management-system>
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. Governance, Law and Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/our-work/governance-law-and-rights>
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. IUCN Indigenous Peoples Self-Determined Strategy. Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/resources/other-brief/iucn-indigenous-peoples-self-determined-strategy-supporting-effective>
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2022). Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural

Resources. Retrieved from <https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/global-indigenous-agenda-english.pdf>

- International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2022). An IUCN Indigenous Peoples Self-Determined Strategy. Retrieved from [https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/iucn\\_ipo\\_strategy-english\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/iucn_ipo_strategy-english_-_final.pdf)
- United Nations. (2019). Advancing indigenous peoples' rights in IUCN's conservation programme. Retrieved from [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2019/01/IUCN\\_EGM-Jan-2019.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2019/01/IUCN_EGM-Jan-2019.pdf)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2021). Proposed amendments to the IUCN Statutes, Rules of Procedure of the World Conservation Congress and the IUCN Regulations. Retrieved from [https://iucn.s3.eu-west-3.amazonaws.com/en/CGR-2021-8.1-1.1\\_3\\_Motion\\_C\\_Establishment\\_of\\_an\\_elected\\_Indigenous\\_Councillor\\_position\\_AD\\_OPTED.pdf](https://iucn.s3.eu-west-3.amazonaws.com/en/CGR-2021-8.1-1.1_3_Motion_C_Establishment_of_an_elected_Indigenous_Councillor_position_AD_OPTED.pdf)

## 8 International Whaling Commission (IWC)

IWC engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities is still in its early stages. However, the IWC distinguishes Indigenous subsistence whaling from commercial whaling, acknowledging its cultural significance and ensuring regulations do not adversely impact traditional practices. IWC accounts for the needs and customs of Indigenous Peoples and local communities through the national governments where Indigenous hunting of whales still occurs. As such, the IWC Scientific Committee advises on sustainable hunting practices. The Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) Working Group is in charge of developing frameworks for information sharing, establishing catch limits, and strengthening ties with organizations focusing on Indigenous rights. The IWC also established the Voluntary Fund for Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) to assist subsistence hunts in complying with IWC measures, which span a range of issues such as enhancing hunter safety, reporting processes, and weapons improvement programs to reduce animal suffering.

### Useful resources:

- International Whaling Commission. (2018). Res.2018-5. Retrieved from <https://crm.iwc.int/data/node/8640>
- International Whaling Commission. Aboriginal subsistence whaling. Retrieved from <https://iwc.int/management-and-conservation/whaling/aboriginal>
- International Whaling Commission. Scientific advice on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling. Retrieved from [https://iwc.int/index.php?cID=html\\_498](https://iwc.int/index.php?cID=html_498)
- International Whaling Commission. Voluntary Fund for Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling. Retrieved from <https://iwc.int/voluntary-fund-for-aboriginal-subsistence-whaling>
- International Whaling Commission. Descriptions of aboriginal subsistence whaling hunts relevant to catch/strike limit requests. Retrieved from <https://iwc.int/information-on-hunts>
- International Whaling Commission. Types of whaling. Retrieved from <https://iwc.int/management-and-conservation/whaling>

## 9 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Ramsar Convention's engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities is nascent. The convention mandates the inclusion of an Indigenous person in the Oversight Panel for the convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness

(CEPA) work. Indigenous Peoples and local communities are engaged in the domestic implementation of the convention under the current and future draft Strategic Plan.

The convention has developed a series of reports and questionnaires to assess ILK and Indigenous Peoples and local communities' participation in wetland management, drawing data from national reports and the Ramsar Sites Information System. The convention has also developed a proposal to mandate inclusion of an Indigenous person in the Oversight Panel for the convention's Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) work. There is also a strong encouragement to engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the domestic implementation of the convention under the current and future draft Strategic Plan.

The Ramsar Convention Zero Draft of the Fifth Strategic Plan, Target 1.2 (SC63 Doc.11), emphasises inclusive participation in wetland decision-making, recognising the cultural connections and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Proposed activities include ensuring inclusive legislation, participation in site management, recording community-based initiatives and integrating Indigenous science and knowledge, which are in line with FPIC.

With regards to lessons learnt, the convention emphasises a rights-based approach to further advance its inclusive, participatory policy framework. Recommendations include strengthening governance for participatory management, recognising customary governances, enhancing livelihood benefits, and enabling activities such as updating guidelines and reporting procedures, and facilitating technical discussions. Collaboration with international processes and raising the profile of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the convention's COPs are also highlighted.

#### Useful resources:

- Ramsar Convention Secretariat. (2018). Report on the relationship of indigenous peoples and local communities with wetlands. Retrieved from <https://www.ramsar.org/document/relationship-indigenous-peoples-local-communities-wetlands>
- Ramsar Convention Secretariat. (2024). Report of the Strategic Plan Working Group and Draft 5th Strategic Plan (SC63 Doc.11). Retrieved from [https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/sc63\\_11\\_spwg\\_report\\_e.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/sc63_11_spwg_report_e.pdf)
- Ramsar Convention Secretariat. Learning experience: How indigenous peoples and local communities contribute to wetland conservation in Asia. Retrieved from <https://www.ramsar.org/learning-experience-how-indigenous-peoples-local-communities-contribute-wetland-conservation-asia>
- Ramsar Convention Secretariat. Culture and wetlands. Retrieved from <https://www.ramsar.org/culture-wetlands>

## **10 United Nations overarching bodies**

The United Nations has established various bodies dealing with ILK, namely the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP).

Established in 2002, the UNPFII provides expert advice to the UN on Indigenous issues, promotes integration of Indigenous concerns within the UN system, and monitors the implementation of UNDRIP. The UNPFII is a central forum for discussing Indigenous issues related to development, culture, environment, health, and human rights. The UNPFII is further supported by the IASG, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and

the Environment, and EMRIP. The IASG supports the UNPFII by facilitating information exchange, promoting human rights, and strengthening inter-agency cooperation. It advises on mainstreaming Indigenous issues within the UN system and interacts with the Forum to provide and seek information, advice, and substantive inputs. The Special Rapporteur promotes best practices and agreements to implement international standards for Indigenous rights, makes recommendations to prevent and remedy violations, and enhances engagement with Indigenous mechanisms like the UNPFII and EMRIP. EMRIP is responsible for providing expertise and advice to the UN Human Rights Council on Indigenous rights, conducts studies to advance these rights, and suggests measures for States to adopt at the level of laws, policies and programmes. EMRIP consists of 7 independent experts appointed by the Human Rights Council, due consideration for experts of Indigenous origin and gender balance. These experts are selected on the basis of competence and experience in the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In addition, several UN programs, including UNEP, provide Indigenous Peoples and local communities roles in policy-making through the Indigenous Peoples Major Group and other mechanisms, with UNEP's focal point for Indigenous issues coordinating Indigenous Peoples and local communities participation. Initiatives like the Global Environment Outlook seventh assessment (GEO-7), to be published in 2026, will incorporate ILK gathered through several Indigenous Peoples and local communities' dialogues and the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities representatives. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 also includes Indigenous Peoples and local communities' representatives in the Advisory Board and emphasises Indigenous Peoples and local communities' rights and leadership in restoration efforts. Indigenous Peoples and local communities engage in national ecosystem assessments through a process that involves conducting scoping workshops and establishing ILK task forces, selecting Indigenous Peoples and local communities' authors and authors with ILK experience and evaluating the information provided. Key stages include mobilising knowledge, translating the shared knowledge, validating the ILK by assessing the knowledge contributions, and synthesising information while maintaining the integrity of each knowledge system. The findings are then applied through co-developed policies and actions, which ensures Indigenous Peoples and local communities' involvement in the implementation and communication stages of the assessment.

## 11 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The UNCCD participates in the implementation of CoP decisions and further facilitates coordination among civil society organizations (CSOs). For example, the UNCCD promotes the CSOs' active involvement in implementing the convention, encourages their accreditation, and increases knowledge exchange among them. The CSO Panel consists of 5 members, one from each of five UN regions, which are democratically elected by the observer organisations. The UNCCD Secretariat is responsible for informing the CSO Panel about the meetings and processes of the convention.

### Useful resources:

- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Indigenous peoples dialogue on climate change, biodiversity, and desertification. Retrieved from <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/statements/indigenous-peoples-dialog-climate-change-biodiversity-and-desertification>
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Land rights key to sustainable prosperity. Retrieved from <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/land-rights-key-sustainable-prosperity>
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. (2022). COP 15. Retrieved from [https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-10/27\\_cop15.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-10/27_cop15.pdf)

## **12 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

The BES-Net ILK Support Unit, led by UNESCO-LINKS, integrates ILK into biodiversity conservation initiatives, organises dissemination events, and works closely with BES-Net consortium partners (UNDP and UNEP-WCMC) and Indigenous Peoples and local communities' organizations and networks to create awareness on the contributions of ILK to biodiversity conservation. The IPBES Task Force on Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems, for example, is also assisted by the BES-Net ILK Support Unit.

### Useful resources:

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. BES-Net. Retrieved from <https://www.unesco.org/en/>

## **13 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

Within the UNFCCC, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) promotes the exchange of experience and best practices with a view to applying, strengthening, protecting and preserving knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems. The platform also promotes technologies, practices and efforts of Indigenous Peoples and local communities that are related to addressing and responding to climate change.

The UNFCCC supports Indigenous Peoples' participation in the LCIPP and Facilitative Working Group through the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, which provides financial support to representatives of Indigenous Peoples for participating in international processes. The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) further discusses and agrees on common positions for Indigenous organizations to advocate in UNFCCC processes. The UNFCCC also emphasises FPIC for knowledge holders addressing climate change, ensuring that their rights and contributions are respected when integrated into climate action plans.

The UNFCCC further supports Indigenous Peoples and local communities through annual gatherings of knowledge holders during COPs, training workshops, working group meetings, (youth) round table dialogues, and by developing Indigenous curricula and materials. The UNFCCC also facilitates regional gatherings and multi-stakeholder dialogues and maintains a comprehensive website with resources, news, events and engagement opportunities.

UNFCCC's challenges include ensuring Indigenous Peoples and local communities' effective participation in UNFCCC discussions, as well as addressing misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples and local communities' homogeneity, realities and knowledge systems, and overcoming significant barriers to accessing climate finance. Logistical and resource constraints, and lack of access to climate finance further hinder their effective participation. For example, the new Loss and Damage fund is limited to developing countries, excluding many Indigenous Peoples and local communities in developed countries. In both developed and developing countries, resources often fail to reach Indigenous Peoples and local communities, where the impacts are most severe, reflecting a broader issue of inadequate support and recognition within international environmental frameworks.

The UNFCCC recognises Indigenous Peoples and local communities as distinct rights holders and promotes ethical and equitable knowledge exchange on climate solutions. Building capacity for meaningful engagement in the UNFCCC process, integrating diverse perspectives into climate policy, and adopting a rights-based approach are emphasized.

The membership process of the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) is recommended to be staggered for continuity, with adequate resources allocated to address language challenges. Ethical and participatory research and investment in Indigenous-led research and education have also been flagged to assess and address loss and damage, focusing on prevention rather than monetary compensation.

Useful resources:

- Report of the Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (2024). Retrieved from <https://unfccc.int/documents/637480>

#### **14 Other resources**

- The Indigenous Navigator, 2014-2024. Retrieved from: <https://indigenousnavigator.org/>
- The Indigenous Navigator is a framework and set of tools made for and by Indigenous Peoples to systematically monitor the level of recognition and implementation of their rights. This tool includes training material, how-to articles including guides for advocacy purposes and lessons learnt.
- 61/295. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (2007). Retrieved from <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Retrieved from <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/unpfii>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. Retrieved from <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/inter-agency-support-group-iasg>

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CMS SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON THE INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IN CMS PROCESSES

The Seventh Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC7) held from 17 to 20 September 2024, decided to establish a Working Group on the above subject.

### 1. Purpose

The Working Group shall have the mandate to:

- a) Support the Scientific Council in implementation of Decision 14.9;
- b) Develop recommendations designed to enhance the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in Scientific Council activities and assessments.
- c) Provide a platform to discuss and exchange information and scientific findings on incorporating Indigenous and Local Knowledge in MEAs through, including but not limited to, considering the following:
  - Examine and collate case studies on best practice and lessons learned;
  - Examine methods to promote the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge holders in working groups and task forces;
  - Consider the amendment of the species listing proposal guidelines to highlight and encourage the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in CMS listing proposals;
  - Consider the benefits of establishing a register of Indigenous and Local Knowledge holders for various migratory species taxa groups to facilitate exchange of Indigenous and local knowledge on species-specific activities or assessments;
  - Consider the possibility of creating a separate membership category for Indigenous Peoples and local communities on the Sessional Committee to provide a distinct intellectual and political space for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to influence scientific standards and decision-making;
  - Consider advice and practices from other platforms, such as the UNESCO and the Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, on operationalising principles and guidelines for Indigenous and Local Knowledge holders.

### 2. Membership

- A. The Working Group shall consist of the following members:
  - a) Sessional Committee members;
  - b) Standing Committee members;
  - c) Indigenous and Local Knowledge experts from Parties and other Observers;
  - d) Representatives from other MEAs, such as IPBES, as appropriate.
- B. The Working Group strives to maintain a balance of gender and regional representation.

- C. If and when needed, experts external to the Working Group and interested in contributing to the objectives of the Working Group may be invited to join meetings or to support specific tasks.

### **3. Organization of work**

- A. The Chair of the Working Group will be appointed from among the Sessional Committee / Scientific Council members of the Working Group.
- B. The Working Group will mainly operate electronically by communicating via email and possibly making use of a dedicated workspace or virtual meetings. In-person meetings may be held in the margins of Sessional Committee meetings.
- C. The Chair of the Working Group will report on progress to the Sessional Committee.
- D. The CMS Secretariat will call for members of the Working Group, keep the membership list, and will support and facilitate the coordination of the activities and the organization of meetings of the Working Group.

### **4. Duration**

The Working Group is established for the intersessional period until COP15.