

Self-strengthening ICCAs – Territories of Life



Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend & Jessica Campese
www.iccaconsortium.org

**The ICCA
Consortium**

ICCAs is an abbreviation for:
territories and areas governed,
managed and conserved by
custodian indigenous peoples and
local communities



“seeds”



of bio-cultural
diversity around
the world...

ICCAs— territories of life



3 defining characteristics



1. Strong bond between a community and its territory (terrestrial or marine)
2. The community is able to take and enforce decisions & rules about its territory
3. The decisions & rules maintain the territory in good conditions for nature and the community

Status of ICCAs—territories of life

- **Defined** – currently exhibit **all three characteristics** - i.e., strong community-territory connection, well-functioning governance institution and positive results for nature and community
- **Disrupted** – had **all three** characteristics in the past, but do **not today** (though they may still have one or two) because of disturbances that the community believes it can still reverse or counteract
- **Desired** – have never had all three characteristics (though they may have one or two today) but have **the potential of developing the three characteristics** through new, or newly effective, community engagement



"emblematic" ICCAs— territories of life

- ... intrinsic charisma and great **potential to inspire** others...
- ...an **example** for other communities & allies...



in recent history many territories of life have been destroyed or damaged, and many others are under threat today ...

- expropriation of “the commons” (nationalisation, privatisation, land and water grabbing...)
- extractive industries and forced evictions for large scale development— mining and fossil fuel extraction, industrial logging and plantations, industrial fishing, sea dredging, large-scale grazing, agriculture, water diversions and drainage, urbanisation, major infrastructure (roads, ports, airports, mass tourism...)
- land encroachment (illegal settlers, poaching, stealing, ...)



- War, violent conflicts,
(military land uses, contamination and destruction, settlements of refugees, guerrilla violence, drug-related problems..)



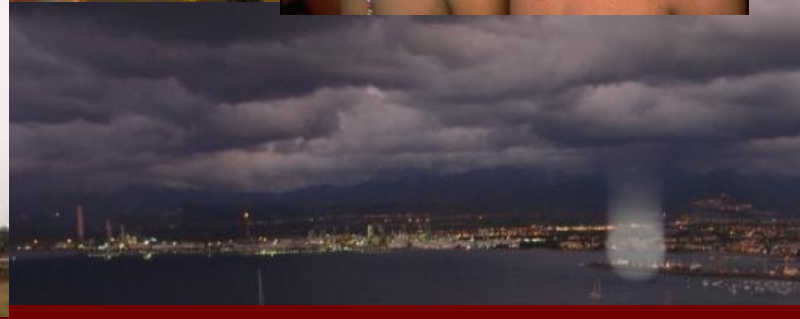
- Active acculturation of ICCA communities into the consumerist culture (monetary culture, formal education, evangelisation, advertisements)... And consequent loss of traditional knowledge, languages, practices, institutions...



- Inappropriate recognition by governments – including forced incorporation into protected areas... or the imposition of “modern” governance structures....



- Climate change (natural disasters, etc.)





... with the exception of overpowering phenomena...

Territories of life are as strong as:

- their custodian communities are strong and demonstrate integrity and determination...
- and exemplify the three defining characteristics



If a community wishes to strengthen its ICCA—
territory of life, how can it do it?

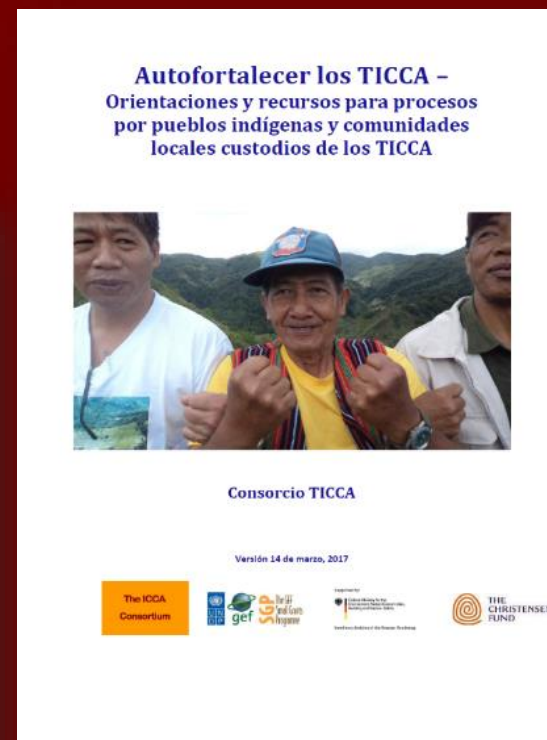
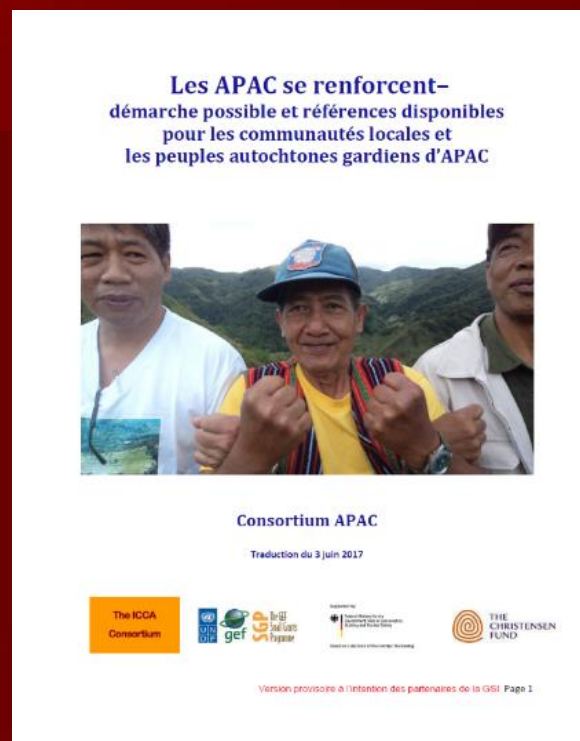
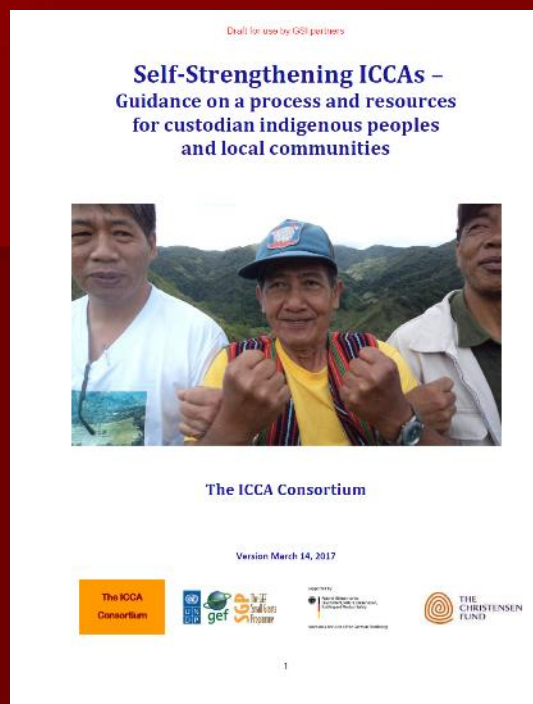


ICCA Consortium has
distilled experience into:

**Self-strengthening
process guidance**

(available in three languages):

Self-Strengthening ICCAs –
Guidance on a process and
resources for custodian indigenous
peoples and local communities



- Updated versions forthcoming– printed guide and simplified web pages for hand-held device

Main method:

grassroots discussions

based on customary situations and locations &
meaningful questions posed by a facilitator team
(can be internal, external, mixed...)





**ACT WITH
OTHERS.**



BEGIN



DOCUMENT



REFLECT



COMMUNICATE



GO FOR IT!



**VISION
&
CELEBRATE**

*Seven
interrelated
ELEMENTS*



BEGIN



1. Become fully aware of the territory of life, its status (defined? disrupted? desired?) and values...
2. Decide if it needs strengthening. If yes, plan steps to do so...
3. Take time to discuss, decide on and design the process...



1. Become fully aware of territory of life and status

- ‘Occasion’ to start, generally with a **local discussion**...
- ...that should be **convivial and frank**, do not disrupt community life...

👉 Discussion questions:

- Link between community and its territory (history, specific boundaries, cultural, spiritual, economic relations...)
- Community governance (rules, system for making and enforcing decisions...)
- Situation (status of the natural environment? welfare of the community?...)
- Is territory of life defined, disrupted or desired? (a question of fact, not merit!)

- *Collective* awareness
- The right questions and the right attitudes are key!



2. Interested in self-strengthening?

- Community must be informed, agree and lead (FPIC and more)...
- Planning is important...
- Plans must be flexible and controlled by the community (process, activities, documentation, results, etc.)



👉 Discussion questions:

- What are the community's main hopes and concerns regarding its territory of life?
- Does the territory of life need strengthening?
- According to whom?
- Is the community ready to engage?
- Who will specifically do what? When?



3. Take time to discuss and decide

- Local team (small informal group, spontaneous, diverse, enthusiastic, caring...) is in charge
- Elders, custodians, different groups in the community— **true leaders**— are engaged...
- If the full community agrees, the **local team** organizes the process...
- Autonomous empowerment is NOT a "project"!

True community leaders- individuals capable of bringing the community to give the best it can give... to be the strongest and best community it can be!



BEGIN:
your examples and lessons?





DOCUMENT

1. Describe the **characteristics and values** of the territory of life
2. Gather, generate & organise **information** necessary to properly document the territory of life





1. Describe the territory of life as it is now

community's own understanding of what 'describes' / illustrates its territory of life

Discussion questions

- **Territory**, boundaries, animal and plant species, natural resources, seasonal variability...
- Who is part of the **community**?
- **Governance** and **management** system

participatory maps!











'Description' becomes 'documentation' when information is compiled, conserved and made easily available for future use

Why document?



- documentation remains through time, can be shared, can demonstrate community knowledge, capacities, rights & freely assumed responsibilities...
- is used to communicate, reveal changes through time, sustain and defend the territory
- 'Good documentation' is reasonably complete and describes the main values of the territory

2. Document the territory of life... by gathering and organising 'complete' information sets

Discussion questions

- What information is needed/ still unknown/ missing?
- Systematised, purposeful information → documentation
- information: maps, videos, images, inventories, measurements, lists, stories, songs, observations, experimental results, visioning exercises, plans for the desired future, etc.



Discussion

questions

- What information can best demonstrate the values of the territory of life?
- What is known? What else is needed?
- Under what form do we need it?
- Shall we share our information? Why? How? With whom? Under what circumstances?
- What risks are presented by sharing information?
- What opportunities are presented by sharing information?



- all information is property of the community
- no information dissemination without community FPIC

ICCA Consortium's template to document a territory of life

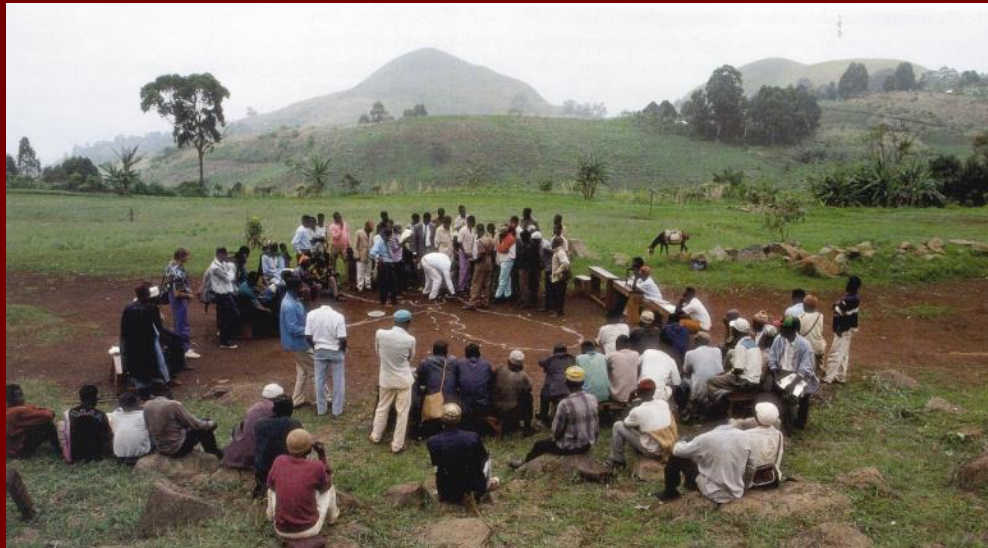
The ICCA
Consortium

- Place to **store** key information for community
- Can be used as **questionnaire** to guide grassroots discussions
- Many other potential purposes, including gathering documentation for national or international **registries** of territories of life



DOCUMENT:

your examples and lessons?





REFLECT



1. Assessing strengths and weaknesses, resilience and security of the territory of life
2. Identifying opportunities & threats, and indicators of desired change

1. Assess strengths & weaknesses, resilience and security



Discussion questions

The Consortium proposes a simplified tool, based on 5 "building blocks" of resilience and security for territories of life:

- the integrity and strength of its custodian community
- the link between the community and its territory
- the functioning of the governance institution
- the health and integrity of the territory
- the wellbeing of the community

R&S tool used in
Senegal, Niger,
Burkina Faso, Nepal,
Ecuador, Colombia...



2. Identify opportunities & threats, and indicators of desired change



Discussion questions

- How to build upon key elements of strength and opportunities?
- How to address key weaknesses and threats, possibly in alliance with others?
- What indicators would inform us on the desired change?

REFLECT:
your examples & lessons?





**VISION &
CELEBRATE**



1. Asserting the community's 'self-recognition' of the territory of life, and its vision for it
2. Making and celebrating a community commitment to realizing this vision



1. Self-recognizing the territory of life, and visioning it in the future...

Discussion questions

- Has the community **collectively asserted** ('self-recognized') its territory of life? How?
- Has the community a clear **vision of** its desired future? (*plan de vida*)?
- Is the territory of life part of its vision? How so?
- How will it build upon opportunities and respond to challenges?



2. Making commitments & celebrating together

Highlighting community achievements, generating pride, new energy and commitment...

Discussion questions



- Is the community **committed** to governing, managing and conserving its territory of life?
- If so, should the occasion be marked by a **ceremony**? What kind?
- Who should be involved in the community? Other communities and allies?
- Ceremony 'related to' or 'in' the territory of life?
- Who will organise the ceremony? Who will support it?

VISION & CELEBRATE:
your examples and lessons?





GO FOR IT!

1. Take **concrete action** to strengthen the territory of life

2. While acting, monitor the **indicators** of desired change



1. Take concrete actions to strengthen the territory of life

- Identify **priorities** on the basis of a good understanding of the situation (situation analysis) / FPIC / engage the entire community...
- think about issues of governance/ **security of tenure** / access / autonomy / management / restoration / coping with threats, responding to opportunities...
- do not just think about “financial resources” and projects, rather ask:

Discussion questions

- Can the community implement what it needs and wants **WITHOUT** external help?
- Can outside help come from neighbouring communities, or from other allies?
- What is the minimum we can ask for in terms of external help?



Discussion questions



- Enhance internal **governance**?
- **Restore** the territory? Generate desired habitats? Sustain species?
- Enhance the desired **products** from the territory of life, support livelihoods?
- Enhance the '**bond**' of community ownership and pride?
- Gain better external recognition, e.g. **legal recognition & security of tenure**?
- Gain better external **support**, e.g. social, juridical, economic support?
- **Defend the territory** from specific attacks or impending threats?

2. While acting, monitor the indicators of desired change



Discussion questions

- Are we implementing the planned and agreed activities?
- Are we obtaining the desired results?
- Is there **effective governance** by the community custodian?
 - **Quality** of governance (legitimacy and voice, vision, performance, responsibility, equity, respect for rights)
 - **Vitality** of governance (effectiveness, dynamism, wisdom, appropriate response and ability to adapt, learn, create, innovate, etc.)
- Is there **effective management** (protecting values, achieving goals and objectives)

GO FOR IT!:

your examples and lessons?





COMMUNICATE

1. Communicate at internal, external, local, national, regional and international level... as appropriate

– Many reasons to communicate:

- enhance self-awareness of ICCA and its governance
- inform others, convince and inspire them...
- hear from others, learn from & collaborate with them



Discussion questions

- What to share?
- Which audiences?
- What (and whose) aims?
- What risks & benefits?
- Two-way communication?

- Engage people with will and capacities
- Use collected documentation
- Use various and appropriate means (celebrations, markets, radio, videos, social media, meetings...)



COMMUNICATE:
your examples and lessons?





**ACT
WITH
OTHERS**

1. **Network** with other custodian communities and partners
2. Learn about ICCA **national & international options** to have the territory of life appropriately recognised and supported
3. Engage the network in national **situation analysis** and planning
4. **Consider registration** in national and/or international registry following a peer support and review process
5. **Advocate** together for appropriate recognition and support



1. Develop or join a **network** of other custodian communities and partners

- create **links and alliances** for mutual strengthening
- start locally with neighbouring communities or other indigenous peoples
- expand to allies and peers in the country and beyond (e.g. ICCA Consortium)



Types of network:

- **working group**: flexible, informal
- **coalition or platform**: one key aim
- **association or federation**: formal, carry representation power, can receive/ use \$

- Network to emerge from shared, experienced need
- Network is custodian-defined; partners, facilitators can support set-up if community wishes
- A meeting among several custodian communities can prompt the network
- Needed for **peer support and review** for international Registry

2. Learn about **national & international options** for appropriate recognition & support

Various forms of national legal and political recognition are possible:

- Recognition of **collective land rights** of indigenous or tribal peoples and **rights of use** of bio-cultural diversity (examples: Colombia, Philippines, India, Ecuador ...)
- Recognition of communities as **governance institutions** for conserved areas, sometimes integrated into system of protected areas (e.g. Australia, Mexico, Italy, Fiji...)
- Some countries discussing whether communities could declare territories as “ICCAs” to prevent underground exploitation (examples: Philippines, Colombia)



- **ICCAs in international conservation policy**
- **Rights to Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples**
- **Bio-cultural rights and collective responsibilities**

3. Engage the network in national **situation analysis** and planning

Discussion questions

- In the given context, what are the **key options** for appropriate recognition and support of territories of life?
- How can we build upon their **strengths** ?
- How do we address their **weaknesses** and **threats**, possibly in alliance with others?



4. Register the ICCA in a national or international registry

- World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) offers opportunity to register ICCAs in:
 - World Database on Protected Areas **WDPA** = all types of protected areas governance and now also OECMs
 - **ICCA Registry** = ICCA-specific information
- Community completes FPIC form, questionnaire
- **National peer support and review process** to ensure authentic ICCA and appropriate registration
- ICCA registries also at national level (e.g. Spain, the Philippines, Iran, China, Ecuador, Colombia...)



Discussion

- Do we want more **visibility** for the territory of life?
Why?
 - For **internal appreciation**?
 - For **security** and **protection** through wider recognition of values?
 - To gain **international relations**?
 - To obtain technical and financial **support**?
- Would it be better to remain **invisible** to the large public ?
- Are our aims better served by **ICCA Registry** or **WDPA**?



5. Advocate together for appropriate recognition & support



- Need for **legal, social and practical recognition** and **appropriate support**
- Well-informed and transparent exploration of benefits and risks
- **Advocate together**, as **ICCA network**, for passage or implementation of convenient laws and policies
 - Possibly with **CSOs** working on human and IP rights?
- Consider advice from relevant sources of **legal expertise**



Discussion questions

- What do we really want? Collective property? Governance? Management? Use? Support to own rules? Technical or financial support?
- Anything else...

ACT WITH OTHERS: your examples and lessons?





Many thanks!



Questions for the small groups:

- From your experience on the element assigned to your group, what **recommendations** would you share with others for making the self-strengthening experience as meaningful and effective as possible?
- What kind of **tool** (peer-support, guidance, templates, self-assessment questions...) would be helpful for the community custodians to strengthen their territories of life?

