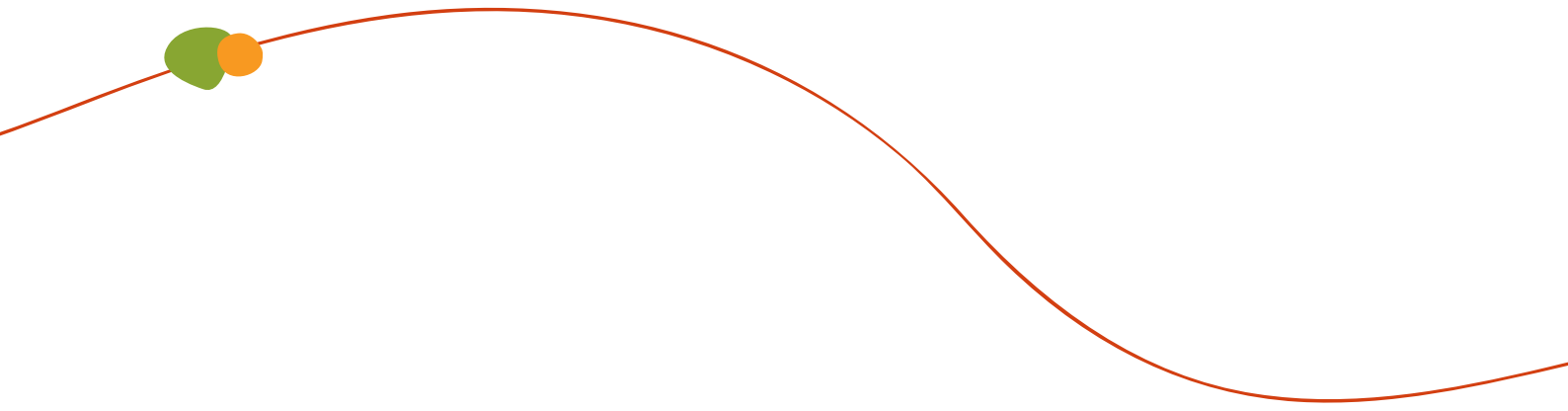


The ICCA
Consortium

ICCA Consortium 2023 report:

a year of transformation and growth





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Cover image: in person meeting in Kenya, 2023, ICCA Consortium

Note: The submission of the 2023 annual report has been delayed due to a leadership transition in the association's management body and a comprehensive organizational change process. We have made every effort to ensure that the report accurately reflects the data and provides a clear and accurate description. Still, we recognize that the delay may affect the relevance of certain information. We encourage readers to consider any developments from the reporting period.





ICCA Consortium 2023 report: A year of transformation and growth

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Indigenous village in the Amazon. Photo: luoman

Introduction

A living tapestry of territories of life

Across landscapes shaped by ancestral wisdom and collective stewardship, Indigenous Peoples and local communities continue safeguarding their lands, waters, and ways of life. From the vast steppes, where pastoralist communities move with the rhythms of the seasons, to the dense forests, where steward communities protect the sacred trees, these communities hold the knowledge, governance systems, and deep-rooted relationships necessary to sustain the **territories of life**.

The ICCA Consortium is a **movement and a grounding space** for these custodians; a deeply rooted global alliance dedicated to upholding their self-determined priorities, ensuring their rights are recognized, and reinforcing their governance of territories of life. More than just

areas of conservation, territories of life are places of belonging, where human and non-human lives are intricately connected, and where nature and culture exist in harmony.

Since its inception, the ICCA Consortium has stood in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, amplifying not only their voices and struggles but also their achievements and successes. It does not speak or act on their behalf but walks alongside them, strengthening their efforts to gain appropriate recognition and support for their collective lands and waters. At its core, the Consortium exists to serve and sustain the global movement for territories of life, standing against the forces that threaten them and working to ensure their endurance for generations to come.

A vision rooted in justice and resilience

The Consortium's vision is a world where territories of life and their custodians thrive through self-determination, the conservation of nature and cultural diversity, and the well-being of all beings. It is a vision built on respect for Indigenous governance systems, community resilience, and the wisdom embedded in relationships with the land that has nurtured their flourishing to this day.

To realize this vision, the ICCA Consortium works at multiple levels: supporting local action, weaving networks of solidarity across regions, and influencing national and international policies. Through advocacy, knowledge sharing, and direct support, the Consortium strives to ensure that Indigenous Peoples and

local communities are not only seen and heard, but also that their governance systems are recognized as fundamental to the health of our planet.

This role is more critical than ever. While the ongoing crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and human rights violations threaten territories of life and the people who protect them, the world is awakening to the reality that true solutions lie in Indigenous knowledge, collective governance, and the protection of these lands and waters. Now is the moment to push forward, not just to resist threats but to advance transformative changes that secure justice and recognition for the custodians of territories of life.

Our core values: foundations for collective action

The ICCA Consortium is grounded in values that reflect the shared principles of its membership and allies:



Reverence, respect, and care for Nature—honoring the deep relationships between human and non-human life.



Solidarity, respect, equity, peace, and justice—ensuring that all actions uphold fairness and dignity.



Mutual and collective responsibility—recognizing that the future of *territories of life* depends on shared commitments.



Our shared humanity—valuing diversity, intercultural dialogue, and intergenerational learning.



Decolonization and the rejection of assimilation, violence, and discrimination—challenging the systems that have long oppressed Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



Celebration of *territories of life*—not only as places of resilience but as sources of creativity, spirituality, and joy.

These values are not merely aspirational; they guide every decision, action, and partnership within the Consortium. They are embedded in our **Membership Policy** and reflected in our **Manifesto for territories of life**.

A movement growing in strength

Since its formal establishment in 2010, the ICCA Consortium has grown from a small network of dedicated allies into a dynamic, regionally rooted association with Members and Honorary members spanning the globe. The past years have been marked by increasing regionalization, with national networks, regional councils and coordination teams taking greater leadership in shaping the Consortium's work. This shift has allowed us to remain flexible, locally driven, and deeply responsive to the diverse needs of our membership.

At the same time, what weaves together this movement is its global nature, the shared struggles and aspirations of communities defending their territories of life in different contexts across the world yet standing together in solidarity. Through advocacy at the international level, strategic partnerships, and collective action, the Consortium continues to strengthen the recognition of territories of life as essential solutions to challenges of planetary scale.



Post-WPC 2014 meeting. Photo Christian Chatelain



A year of transformation and foresight

Looking back, 2023 was not just a year of activities and achievements, it was a year of deep reflection and renewal. The Consortium didn't just keep up with global shifts; it adapted, forged stronger alliances, and expanded its reach across regions. This movement, fueled by the unwavering strength of its membership, the resilience of its custodians, and the relentless power of the territories of life, not only survives—it thrives. In the same way, as we move forward, we do so with renewed commitment, knowing that the road ahead is one of both challenge and possibility.

In this report, we reflect on the defining moments and milestones of 2023; celebrating the expansion of our membership, the strengthening of our regional presence, and the meaningful spaces of connection and learning that have shaped our collective journey.



Latin American Regional Assembly in Costa Rica Photo Consorcio TICCA

Key highlights of 2023: the stronger the roots, the greater the heights

In 2023, our association embraced a renewed **organizational change process**. The process is a comprehensive examination of the ICCA Consortium's identity and purpose. It is helping us reflect on where we have been, where we are, and where we aspire to go while upholding our core commitment: supporting the custodians of territories of life in securing their rights and governance.

Parallel to this process, we embarked on an ambitious, collective journey of reflection, revision, and planning this year, culminating in the adoption of the Consortium's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. It was an exercise in collective governance, embodying the very principles we stand for, as the process engaged the membership, the Council, the Secretariat, and the Council of Elders in a dynamic exchange of hopes, ideas, and critical reflections.

Rooting our regional and global presence

Across regions, our movement grew stronger, more connected, and more intentional in its path forward, with progress in governance, coordination, membership engagement and global advocacy.

At the heart of this transformation was our **regionalization process**, which continues to shape the way the Consortium operates, ensuring that decision-making, engagement, and actions are rooted in national and regional realities. From the

Latin American Regional Assembly in Costa Rica to the Central African Regional Assembly in Cameroon, regions provided spaces for its members to discuss priorities, strengthen networks, and reinforce solidarity across regions. Each assembly was unique, reflecting the diverse ways in which territories of life are governed, nurtured, and defended.

With the same vision, the evolution of our policy and advocacy work also became evident. In 2023,

we shifted our focus toward translating progress in international policy into tangible national and sub-national policies. While global frameworks provide recognition, it is at the national level where legal and policy changes become reality for custodians of territories of life. This shift is a crucial step in making global advocacy more actionable and impactful for our communities and territories.

The Consortium also strengthened its global advocacy efforts, with active participation in international

legal and policy arenas. Several representatives from our Members and the Secretariat participated in key global forums, including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Global Environment Facility Assembly, and negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We amplified the voices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from territories of life in spaces where decisions are made, ensuring that they contributed to shaping policies and frameworks that affect them.

Expanding our branches through membership enrichment

A movement thrives on its people, the communities, organizations, and individuals who come together for a shared purpose. 2023 was also a year of pause and introspection, and in recognition of our ongoing organizational change process, the General Assembly made a deliberate decision to hold only one membership intake round instead of two. This allowed time to reflect on how membership processes could better align with the Consortium's evolving governance and priorities. Membership is not just about numbers but about relationships, trust, and shared commitments.

Therefore, in 2023, the ICCA Consortium welcomed **16 additions to its membership:** eight new Member organizations from Myanmar, Cameroon (2), India, Mexico (2), Pakistan, and Vietnam, and eight new Honorary members (including four women) working globally (3), in Zimbabwe, South Africa (2), Italy and India.

With these additions, the Consortium's membership grew to **225 Member organizations and 485 Honorary members across more than 80 countries;** a testament to the relevance and necessity of this movement. Every new Member and Honorary member brings a unique story, a new dimension of knowledge, and an additional voice to our collective struggle for recognition, justice, and self-determined governance.

In a cohesive effort, the Consortium invested in improving these connections: supporting national, sub-regional, and regional assemblies, deepening inter-regional collaboration, and expanding linguistic support to ensure accessibility for a wider audience. Simultaneous interpretation in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Russian during key gatherings and online events made it possible for more voices to be heard.



225

Member organizations



485

Honorary members



80

countries

Watering our connections to stand tall: Kenya in-person gathering

While much of the Consortium's work takes place across regional and national networks, and global events and coordination occur via virtual spaces, 2023 offered an invaluable opportunity for in-person interaction on a global level. From October 9 to 13, fifty members of the Council, Secretariat, and Council of Elders, along with interpreters and facilitators, gathered in the heart of East Africa for an intensive meeting that would shape the Consortium's path forward.

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of Nanyuki's landscapes, the gathering provided a refuge for deep dialogue, trust-building, and strategic decision-making. It was here that the working

version of the **2024-2028 Strategic Plan** was formally shaped, marking a pivotal moment in the Consortium's evolution. Far from a conventional strategy session, it was a meaningful exchange of wisdom across generations, a shared visioning process, and a reaffirmation of the core values that unite the Consortium.

The gathering also reinforced the value of in-person meetings in an inherently relational movement. While online spaces facilitate broader participation and inclusivity, there are moments when face-to-face interactions become essential, particularly for complex deliberations, shared learning, and fostering relationships across cultures and languages.



Photos: ICCA Consortium

Beyond policies and strategies, this movement is about people; about the bonds, wisdom, and collective strength that drive the struggle for territories of life.

This balance between digital accessibility and in-person connection remains an important consideration as the Consortium moves forward. The lessons from Kenya reaffirm the need for strategic, well-planned in-person gatherings that bring together key decision-makers while ensuring that the broader membership remains engaged through hybrid and online approaches.



Photos: ICCA Consortium





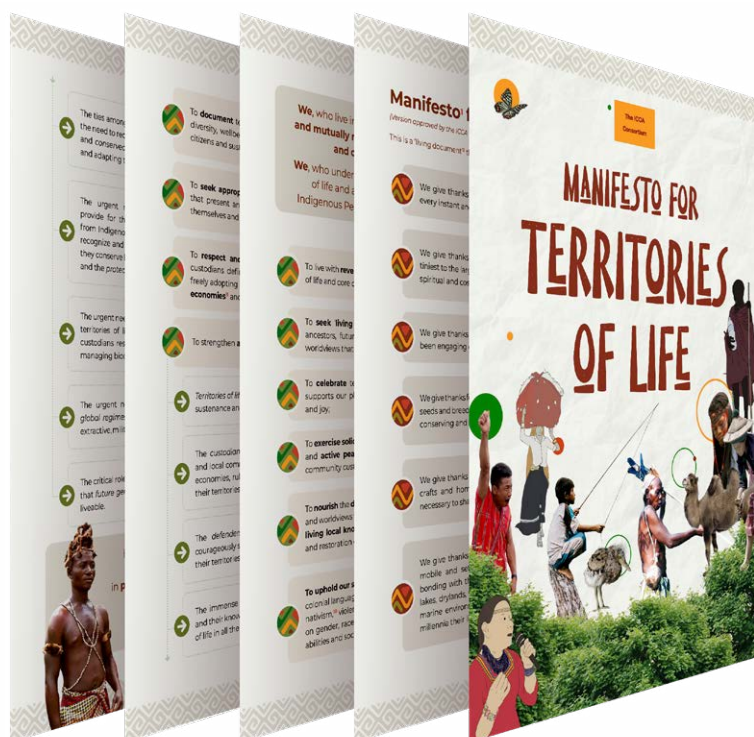
Photo: Darren Baker

Key actions: organizational change for a resilient future

The Manifesto: principles guiding our transformation

The profound journey of reflection and transformation that the ICCA Consortium embarked on in 2023 also culminated in the development of our **Manifesto for territories of life**. This Manifesto serves as a guiding statement of our collective vision, principles, and commitment to advancing the rights and self-determined governance of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Spearheaded by the Council of Elders and the Council, **this initiative revived a long-standing discussion within the Consortium about our shared values and core purpose.** Through an extensive consultative process, involving Members and Honorary members across all regions, the Manifesto was shaped, refined, and ultimately adopted as a living document during the final session of our General Assembly in June 2023. It stands as a political and ethical declaration, offering inspiration for our present and future actions.



Strategic Plan 2024–2028: key pillars and the roadmap ahead

Building on the momentum of the Manifesto, **the ICCA Consortium undertook its most inclusive and participatory strategic planning process to date.** Recognizing the need for a dynamic and responsive strategy, we thoroughly assessed our past achievements, organizational strengths and weaknesses, and the evolving global context.

Between April and July, Members, Honorary members, the Council, the Secretariat, and allied organizations engaged in an iterative process of reflection and co-creation. This included regional discussions, interactive online engagement, direct consultations, and synthesis of past learnings. **The resulting five-year strategic plan (2024–2028) encapsulates the ICCA Consortium's refined goals, objectives, and priority actions**, ensuring alignment with the needs and aspirations of territories of life. Key milestones in the development of the strategic plan included:

The ICCA Consortium's **2024–2028** **STRATEGIC PLAN**



[Download here](#)

July–September

Deep dives into governance and management challenges, drawing insights from comparable organizations and internal discussions.

September

Circulation of the working draft to the full membership for feedback, with dedicated global and regional discussions.

October

Finalization of the strategic plan at a landmark gathering in Kenya, where 50 representatives from the Council, Secretariat, and Council of Elders convened for an intensive review and endorsement of the plan as a “working version.”

November–December

Proofreading, translation, and public dissemination of the approved strategy, alongside the development of the **2024 Action Plan**, marking the first steps in its implementation.

This strategy serves as a blueprint for our collective aspirations and as a commitment to adapt and respond to emerging challenges, ensuring the resilience of the ICCA Consortium in a rapidly changing world.

Strengthening internal structures: governance and operational improvements

An essential component of the organizational change process in 2023 was strengthening internal structures to enhance governance and operational effectiveness. Through sustained engagement and collective reflection, key decisions were made to restructure leadership roles, improve coordination mechanisms, and refine decision-making processes.

From July to September, the Council, Secretariat, and Council of Elders engaged in a series of focused discussions addressing governance complexities, regional coordination, and management efficiency. Drawing from past experiences and external insights, the Consortium explored innovative ways to reinforce internal cohesion while maintaining horizontal governance and participatory decision-making.

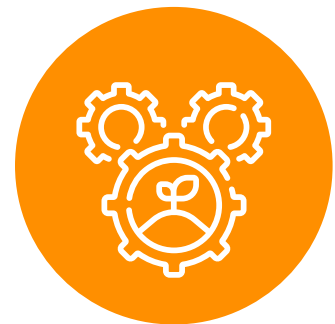
One of the most significant steps in this restructuring process was the decision to clarify Secretariat roles and responsibilities in alignment with the new strategy. This entails:



Planning leadership and management transitions to usher in a new phase of organizational development.



Strengthening regional coordination teams to better support our membership and territories of life.



Ensuring Secretariat operations are structured to balance continuity and renewal.

As part of this evolution, the **Committee on Organizational Change**, first convened in early 2022, was reactivated to guide ongoing adjustments and improvements. This process will continue beyond 2023, ensuring that internal structures remain agile, effective, and supportive of the Consortium's long-term vision.

In a nutshell

The progress made in 2023 set a strong foundation for the ICCA Consortium's next phase of strengthening and expansion. Adopting the **Manifesto for territories of life**, the **Strategic Plan 2024–2028**, and the **organizational restructuring efforts** collectively mark a defining moment in the Consortium's history.

With renewed clarity on our purpose, strengthened governance mechanisms, and a collective vision

guiding our path forward, the Consortium is well-positioned to navigate future challenges and opportunities in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and local communities worldwide. However, this journey of organizational change does not end here; instead, it remains an evolving and participatory process that will continue to shape our work, values, and impact in the years ahead.



Regional highlights: challenges, perseverance and progress

The following section presents impactful stories that showcase resilience, innovation, and community-led conservation efforts across various megaregions of the world. These narratives highlight the challenges faced, the unwavering perseverance, and the progress made by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in safeguarding their territories of life.



Africa: strength in diversity

- **West Africa:** In Senegal, Guinea, and The Gambia, our membership pursued their efforts to reinforce customary governance, led reforestation efforts, and empowered youth to sustain traditional knowledge. Legal reforms in Guinea secured traditional land rights, while coastal restoration in The Gambia protected marine ecosystems and local livelihoods.
- **Central Africa:** Indigenous leadership gained greater recognition through the 2nd ICCAs Regional Assembly, amplifying voices from the Congo Basin and shaping policies that support community governance. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), advocacy efforts led to the advancement of legal recognition for Indigenous conservation areas, ensuring that cultural traditions continued to sustain ecological knowledge and preserve cultural heritage.
- **East Africa:** Indigenous Peoples and pastoral communities in Tanzania and Kenya defended their territories against challenges such as land grabs, evictions and environmental threats. In Zanzibar, local fishing communities demonstrated the strength of community-led conservation through sustainable management initiatives.



Asia: innovation rooted in tradition

- **Southeast Asia:** International advocacy, regional workshops, and national support amplified the ICCA Consortium's visibility and strengthened Indigenous voices. Key initiatives included capacity-building activities and the publication "Celebrating Territories of Life in Southeast Asia," which showcased traditional knowledge, governance, and sustainable livelihoods.
- **South Asia:** A dedicated subregional web portal documented over 700 community-conserved areas in India and added new advocacy tools. Self-governance initiatives were strengthened through fellowships and ongoing engagement in the states of Uttarakhand and Nagaland in India. Regional dialogues, including an ICCA workshop, united stakeholders to advance governance, policy, and financing strategies.
- **East and North Asia:** New collaborations broadened the recognition of the territories of life in the region and on a transregional scale. Mongolia added three new sites to the ICCA Registry, while an international seminar on decolonization in Japan brought together researchers worldwide and deepened the global understanding of Indigenous governance systems.
- **West and Central Asia and the Caucasus:** Regional networks and members engaged in discussions on rangelands and pastoralist communities, contributing to the Global Initiative for Rangelands and Pastoralism. Community leaders took their advocacy to major regional and global platforms, ensuring that pastoralist and community-led conservation remained at the center of policy discussions.



Latin America and the Caribbean: grassroots action and policy shifts

- **Mesoamerica:** Communities in Panama, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Mexico enhanced marine ICCA governance through self-determined governance and collective learning. In Guatemala, governance advances were made in northern Petén, while the Yucatán Peninsula fostered exchange networks among ICCA custodians. Legal research in Mexico enhanced protections for coastal and marine ICCAs, benefiting small-scale fishers.
- **The Amazon:** Bolivia finalized commitments under the SGP-UNDP ICCA Support Initiative, while Brazil published an ICCA Registry Guide to support communities in documenting their territories. Indigenous governance was reinforced in Peru along the Madre de Dios River, and ICCA networks in Colombia and Ecuador strengthened conservation efforts.
- **Southern Cone:** Chile's Biodiversity and Protected Areas Law formally recognized Indigenous Conservation Areas, a significant milestone for ICCA advocates. Argentina and Chile launched protections for the Futa Mawiza biocultural territory. Paraguay secured a historic land transfer of 548 hectares to the Mbya Guaraní People, advancing Indigenous land rights and conservation.



Photo: Arthon Meekodong

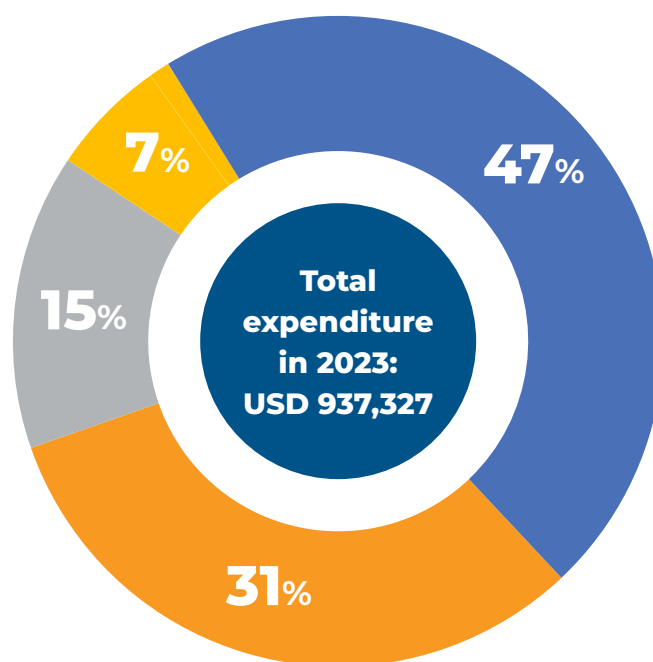
Financial overview: accountability and sustainability

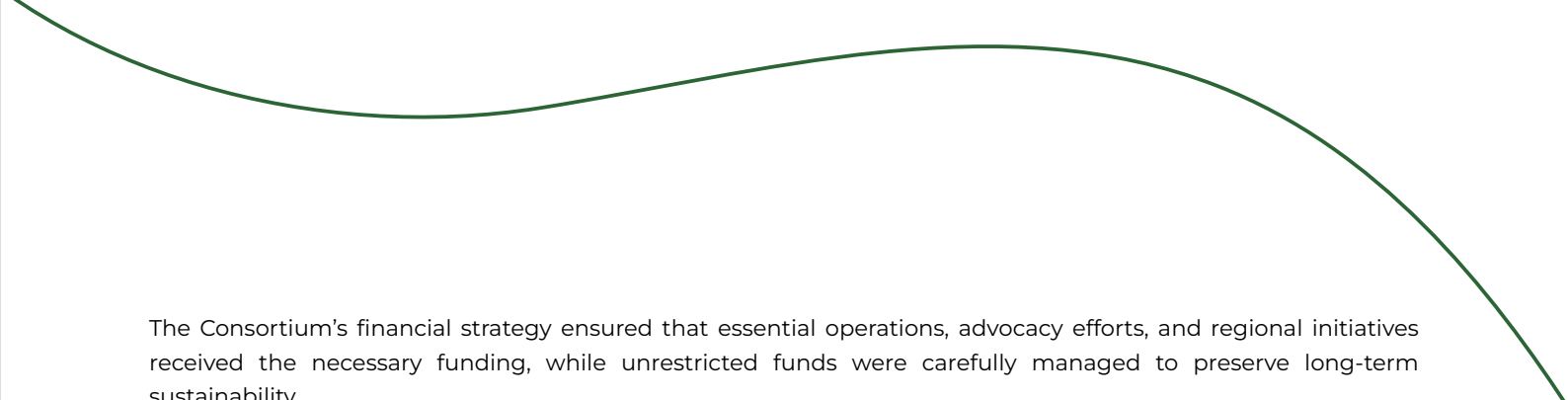
Income and expenditure

In 2023, the ICCA Consortium remained committed to financial sustainability and accountability, effectively managing resources to advance its mission. The organization's funding primarily came from grants provided by multiple donors.

Total expenditure reached **USD 937,327**, with spending allocated as follows:

- **47%** on consultancy fees
- **31%** on sub-grants to member organizations
- **15%** on travel and meetings
- **7%** on administrative and grant assessment costs





The Consortium's financial strategy ensured that essential operations, advocacy efforts, and regional initiatives received the necessary funding, while unrestricted funds were carefully managed to preserve long-term sustainability.

Although 2023 showed a **planned deficit**, this reflects the strategic use of prior-year funds, particularly significant upfront grants secured in 2022. These funds were distributed over multiple years to sustain activities without disruption. The rollover of funds into 2024 highlights the Consortium's **prudent fiscal management and commitment to sustainability**.

Transparent funding aligned with values

The ICCA Consortium upholds high standards of transparency and accountability in financial management. All funding sources align with the organization's core values, ensuring that financial support does not compromise its mission or the autonomy of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Funding was received from diverse donors, including **the Packard Foundation, UNDP GEF SGP GSI Phase I, and SwedBio at Stockholm Resilience Centre, the Oak Foundation, Synchronicity Earth, the Sall Family Foundation, and anonymous contributors**. These funds were allocated to various initiatives, including community-based conservation efforts, regional coordination, and policy advocacy.

Sub-grants played a crucial role in strengthening local governance and self-determined priorities. In 2023, funding supported regional and local initiatives across more than 20 countries, including West and Central Asia, as well as Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, the Philippines, and Tanzania.

Additionally, the Consortium facilitated critical convenings, such as a significant meeting in Kenya for the Council, Secretariat, and Council of Elders, with associated costs of approximately **USD 176,000**.

Strong financial oversight and future stability

The organization's financial management remains under the fiduciary oversight of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA), which applies a 7-10% administration fee on grants to cover necessary operational expenses. The 2023 financial statements, including the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account, underwent an external audit as part of RPA's overall audit process, ensuring full compliance with financial regulations and best practices.

With a strong commitment to responsible financial stewardship, the ICCA Consortium enters 2024 with a well-managed budget, ongoing donor engagement, and a clear financial strategy prepared to sustain and expand its long-term vision for territories of life.



Photo: ICCA Consortium

Challenges and lessons learned: reflections for the future

Like every organization, the ICCA Consortium has undergone numerous changes over the years, but 2023 was a particularly notable year. While we embarked on a journey to reflect on and recalibrate our vision and strategic direction, we encountered various challenges that tested our cohesion, resilience, and adaptability. Navigating these challenges taught us hard-won lessons that will shape our future strategies and commitments.

Financial growth

Since 2018-2019, the Consortium has significantly expanded its fundraising efforts, broadening its donor base and overall financial resources. Annual expenditure increased from USD 5,000 in 2011 to about USD 1 million in 2023, enabling greater programmatic support. However, managing and allocating this considerable sum effectively across our previously presented structure presented new challenges.

In 2022, our fiscal operations had to be transferred from Switzerland, our country of registration, to the US-based fiscal sponsor, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA). While this move enhanced financial management, including control and monitoring of income and expenses, tax compliance, auditing, transparency, and risk management, to ensure sustainability and the fulfillment of our mission, it introduced administrative complexities due to new regulatory requirements in the United States, which are unfamiliar to us. Adapting to this new framework necessitated continuous adjustments in our financial management, compliance, reporting systems, and procedures to ensure effective governance and accountability.

The Consortium's expanded financial resources enabled the exploration of diverse sub-granting mechanisms, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives directly supported members' local, national, and regional efforts. Still, they highlighted the need to strengthen internal administrative systems and ensure that financial support remains closely aligned with the Consortium's core values. Ensuring that re-granting mechanisms enhance rather than overshadow other forms of core support remains a key priority.

Organizational Evolution: embracing change, deepening commitment

Adopting revised Statutes, Governance Procedures, and Membership Policy and Procedures in 2021 paved the way for major structural changes. In 2023, the Secretariat expanded, incorporating new regional coordination teams and specialized functions to enhance our global and regional focus. This expansion involved greater efforts to foster shared leadership, mutual accountability, and equitable remuneration. For this reason, strengthening governance and improving communication among members, the Council, and the Secretariat remain essential to maintaining a

strong and sustainable organizational structure. As a key milestone, the ICCA Consortium developed its new five-year Strategic Plan (2024-2028), succeeding the previous plan adopted in 2017. This revision reflects evolving global and regional contexts, shifts within our membership, and the imperative to enhance our internal capacity to support territories of life effectively. The new Strategic Plan reaffirms our commitment to self-determined governance by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, ensuring that our approaches and actions remain relevant and impactful.

Key lessons learned



The shift to a more complex, regionally focused structure requires ongoing alignment with the Consortium's values, ensuring that financial and operational changes strengthen—rather than compromise—our mission.



The expansion of fundraising and partnerships presents opportunities and challenges, underscoring the need for careful stewardship of relationships and resources to uphold the Consortium's integrity and effectiveness.



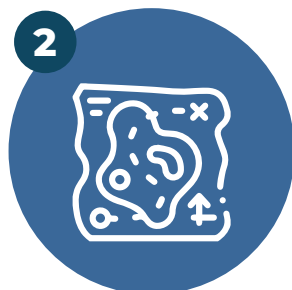
As the Consortium grows, well-defined governance structures and robust internal communication systems are critical for maintaining efficient operations and effective decision-making.

Looking ahead

There are four key goals outlined in the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan that resulted from the organizational change process the ICCA Consortium embarked on, aimed at refining our purpose, values, roles, and priorities:



Supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



Promoting recognition of territories of life.



Influencing external actors.



Strengthening internal organizational capacity.

While this plan and its goals, objectives, and priority actions represent significant progress, continued investment is essential for its successful implementation. As our membership expands and our work becomes increasingly complex, we must further strengthen our internal structures and systems to sustain our mission effectively.

Only by investing in our organizational capacity and building a stronger, more resilient organization will the ICCA Consortium be better positioned to:



Provide more effective and targeted support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



Advocate for the recognition and protection of territories of life.



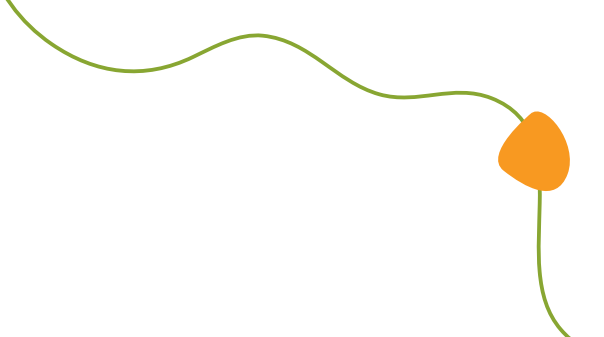

Engage external actors to foster supportive policies and practices.




Improve governance and operational structures to serve our expanding membership effectively.

As we move forward, we remain committed to embracing and carrying forward the wisdom, practices, and guiding values that have been cultivated over generations by diverse Indigenous Peoples and local communities across the globe. We remain committed to learning from our experiences, overcoming and adapting to emerging challenges, and working collectively to document, sustain, and defend territories of life.

This pursuit of our mission demands ongoing reflection, collaboration, and dedication from our membership, partners, and allies worldwide. We, the ICCA Consortium, both a movement and a grounding space for custodians, recognize our empowerment as a responsibility. Only by strengthening our collective capacity, we can uphold our commitments, honor the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and drive meaningful, lasting change.



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