The ICCA Consortium

Annual Report 2025

A Year of Rights, Resilience, and Collective Care

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About the ICCA Consortium

The ICCA Consortium is an international association of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and supporting organizations rooted in the movement for territories of life; territories and areas governed, conserved, and sustained by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. The Consortium's work is centered around supporting self-determined priorities of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, securing appropriate recognition, and transforming systems to align with Indigenous and traditional rights and governance.

As of 2025, the Consortium comprises 271 Member organizations and 487 individual Honorary Members in 96 countries, united in the belief that solidarity, self-determination, and care for nature are essential for a just and biodiverse future.

Message from the President

Today, ICCAs–territories of life are living, tangible territorial spaces found in diverse regions of the world. Within them, we uphold traditional knowledge systems and legitimate forms of governance that are deeply embedded in our daily lives.

Our territories of life are places where diverse, millennia-old cultures and traditions endure. Here, we weave our worldviews into the unique expressions of nature, our mother and source of life.

In territories of life, we have developed complex systems that enable us to live sustainably and holistically while safeguarding the land and the natural elements that sustain it. We pursue our endeavors of life based on our traditions and practices, which guide the responsible use and stewardship of our territories and nature. In doing so, we reduce the risks and threats of extinction.

In this context, our movement plays a strategic role in building bridges and collaborative networks that foster mutual support, grounded in respect for the autonomy, self-determination, and consent of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Promoting and defending the rights of territories as living entities, along with the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, is central to our mission. In this 2025 Annual Report, we are pleased to share highlights of our initiatives from different parts of the world. Through our groups of colleagues—composed of members of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, as well as experts, scientists, and academics—we work together to protect, care for, and safeguard life in all its forms.

Luis Guillermo Izquierdo

Message from Global Coordinator

The ICCA Consortium's 15th anniversary in 2025 served as a vital moment to honor a journey shaped by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and the legacy of founders like Taghi Farvar. His vision remains the bedrock of our movement, providing the political clarity needed to defend community-governed territories as living expressions of culture and self-determination. Far more than a formal organization, the Consortium functioned this year as a robust solidarity network, where the year's achievements belonged to the elders, custodians, and peoples defending their ancestral lands and waters across the globe.

In a year marked by intensifying extractive pressures, climate impacts, and shrinking civic space, the Consortium navigated a path between global pressure and local possibility. Guided by our 2024–2028 Strategic Plan and the Manifesto for Territories of Life, we focused on supporting community governance, advancing appropriate recognition, and strengthening our internal capacity. This balance required addressing financial uncertainties and operational intensity with a renewed commitment to collective care, ensuring that our growing global influence was matched by a sustainable internal foundation.

Practical successes emerged across every region. In Asia, the Bayanbulag herder community in Mongolia secured collective management of their territory, while regional networks proved that traditional knowledge is a sophisticated form of ecological and political expertise. African members translated global conservation targets into concrete rights-based pathways for sacred forests and ancestral fishing grounds. Meanwhile, in the Americas, our national networks and Indigenous solidarity groups utilized legal tools to strengthen autonomous governance and territorial defense against external threats.

At the global level, the Consortium acted as a bridge, ensuring lived territorial realities informed high-level policy. By engaging in spaces like UNOC, IUCN, and UNFCCC COP30, we defended the political meaning of community-led conservation against top-down models. A key milestone was the advancement of IUCN Motion 138, which reinforced the legitimacy of territories of life within international frameworks. By prioritizing language justice and decentralized leadership, the Consortium ended 2025 not by speaking for communities, but by ensuring their voices, knowledge, and rights remain central to the global conservation agenda.

Ali RAZMKHAH

Ali Razmkhah

List of acronyms

ACIGAP: Asociación de Comunidades Indígenas Guaraní de Alto Paraguay

ANAPAC-RDC: Alliance Nationale d'Appui et de Promotion des Aires du Patrimoine Autochtone et Communautaire en RD Congo

APAC: Aires et Territoires du Patrimoine Autochtone et Communautaire

ASADEC: Asociación de Comunidades Indígenas

CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity

COP: Conference of the Parties

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

ExCo: Executive Committee of the ICCA Consortium Council

FAPI: Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas

FPIC: Free, Prior and Informed Consent

FPP: Forest Peoples Programme

GBF / KMGBF: Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

HRBA: Human Rights-Based Approach

ICCA: Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas / territories of life

IIFB: International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity

ILC: International Land Coalition

IPBSAP: Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

IYRP: International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists

JASIL: JASIL / Mongolian partner organization — confirm full name if used

LBO: Local Biodiversity Outlooks

OCC: Organizational Change Committee

OCTV: Observatory of Territories of Life

OECM: Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure

OPEN: Organización del Pueblo Enlhet Norte

OPIT: Organización del Pueblo Indígena Tomárãho

PMEL: Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

RPA: Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

RRI: Rights and Resources Initiative

SB8j: Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the CBD

SBSTTA: Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

UNCCD: United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNOC:United Nations Ocean Conference

WCC: World Conservation Congress

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Executive summary

In 2025, the ICCA Consortium moved from the first year of strategic implementation into a demanding phase of consolidation. The year marked the Consortium's 15th anniversary and offered a moment to honor the collective journey of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, members, honorary members, partners, and allies who have sustained the global movement for territories of life.

Across regions, communities and networks strengthened self-determined governance, territorial defense, documentation of territories of life, intergenerational learning, local economies, legal tools, and political recognition. These actions were not implemented through a single model. They were shaped by local actions, ecological realities, political conditions, security risks, administrative capacity, and the self-determined priorities of custodians themselves.

At the global level, the Consortium supported coordinated engagement in major international arenas, including the United Nations Ocean Conference, CBD COP16.2, SBSTTA-27, SB8j-1, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and UNFCCC COP30. Across these spaces, the Consortium advanced a consistent message: territories of life cannot be reduced to conservation metrics or implementation tools. Recognition must be grounded in rights, self-determination, FPIC, safeguards, accountability, tenure, customary governance, and the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Communications, and language justice remained central to this work. Reports, advocacy resources, registry-related coordination, newsletters, public statements, interpretation, translation, and storytelling helped connect territorial realities with policy asks. At the same time, the year revealed the need for stronger documentation systems, communications planning, language support, and internal coordination.

Organizationally, 2025 was a year of backbone-building. The Consortium strengthened coordination routines, governance follow-through, operational support for convenings and travel, team reflection, and collaboration on organizational strengthening. Growing expectations, financial uncertainty, and operational intensity also highlighted the need for clearer prioritization, stronger delegation, more transparent financial systems, and collective care.

This report is organized in three main sections. The first summarizes global performance and highlights. The second keeps the regional impacts and highlights. The third provides an analytical synthesis of how far the Consortium advanced the four goals of the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan during 2025.

2025 in numbers

Honorary members

487
Total by end of 2025

5
New accepted in 2025

Member organizations

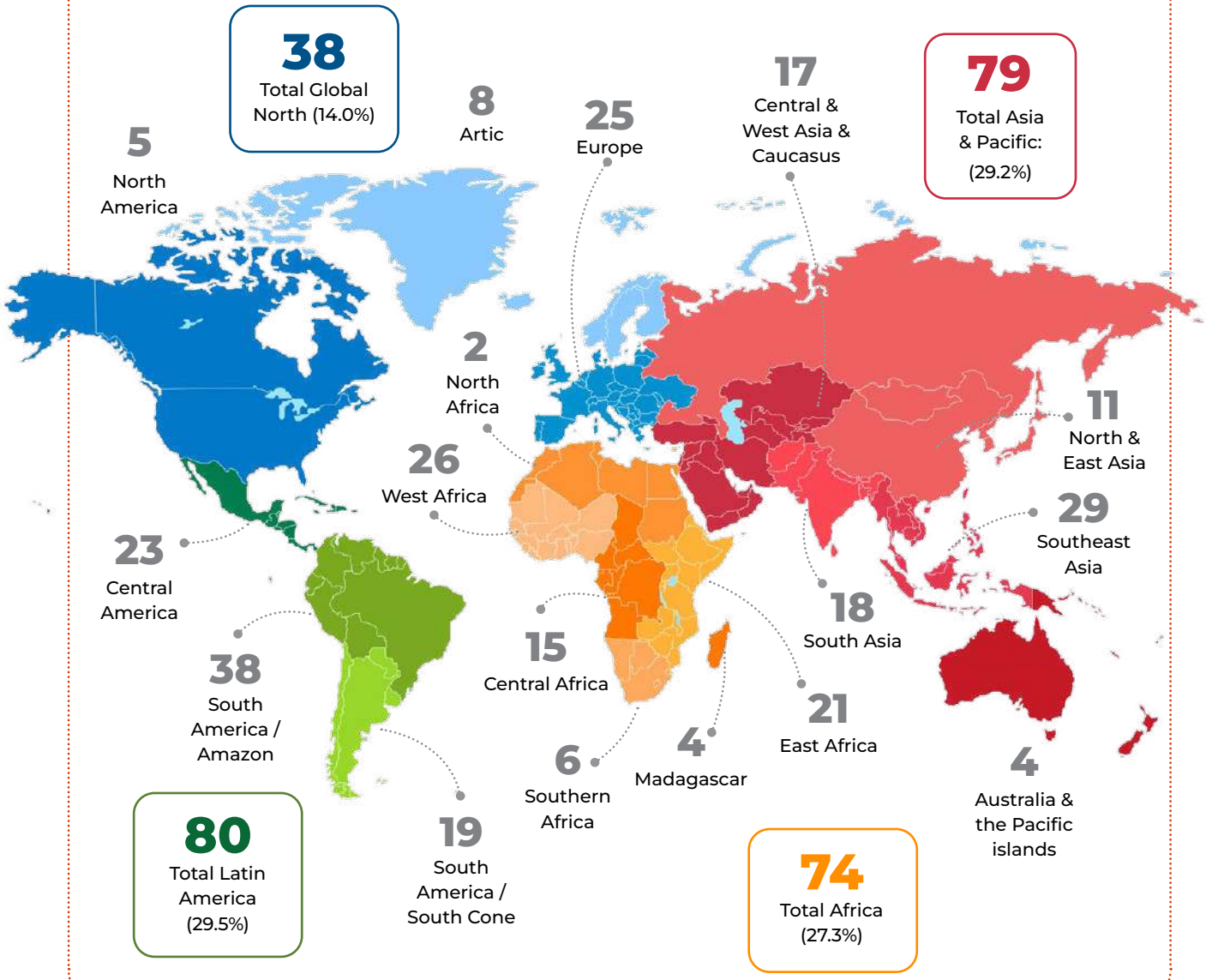
271
Total by end of 2025

27
New accepted in 2025

National focal points and networks

96
Total countries represented by members and honorary members

Breakdown by region/subregion:



Global policy spaces engaged

number of Indigenous Peoples/local community representatives supported, by region

More than 10 side events during SBSTTA-27/ SB8j-1;

12 Regional coordination hubs

7 Regional assemblies

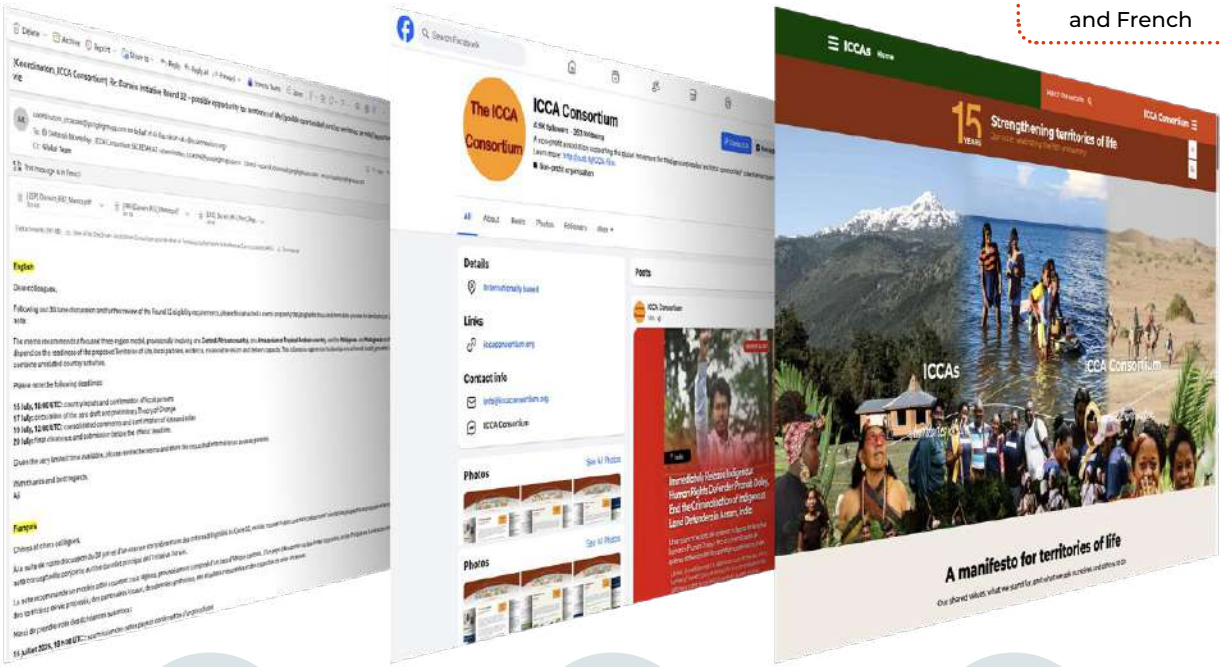
92
interpreted meetings/events

2
international events (UNOC and IUCN WCC)

1
regional assembly

123
Translated/proofread documents

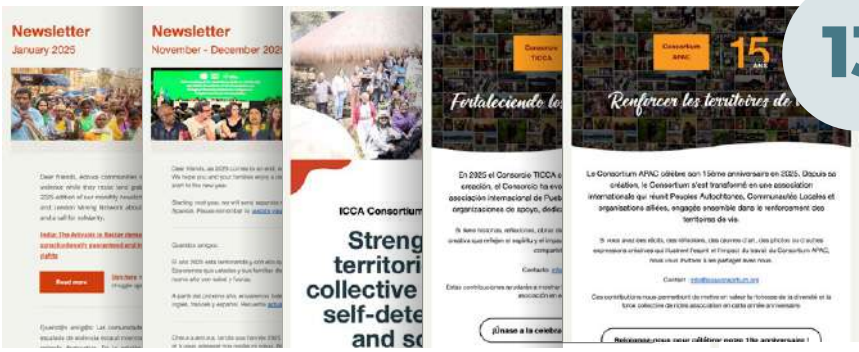
Languages: English, Spanish, and French



+16k
email campaigns distributed across our network.

+62k
people reached via our Facebook page.

126.8%
increase in sessions on the ICCA Consortium website.



13
newsletters distributed in English, with Spanish and French editions produced for major milestones (the 15th-anniversary special, the 2024 Annual Report, and the language-preferences survey).

Section 1

Global Performance and Highlights

From strategy to implementation

In 2025, guided by the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan and the Manifesto for territories of life, the Consortium focused on translating shared priorities into action across policy arenas, knowledge production, alliance-building, communications, and organizational strengthening.

This global section focuses on the Consortium's global-level contributions: how members, honorary members, Council representatives, Secretariat team members, partners, and allies worked together to bring the realities of territories of life into international debates and to strengthen the conditions for rights-based, community-led conservation.

International engagement

While the Consortium's roots remain grounded in territories and communities, 2025 required sustained engagement in the international arenas where decisions affecting those territories are shaped. Across global policy spaces, the Consortium worked to ensure that the realities, knowledge systems, and political priorities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities remained visible, grounded, and connected to lived experience.

Key global processes included the 2025 UNOC-3; CBD-related negotiations and meetings, including COP16.2, SBSTTA-27, and SB8j-1; the IUCN World Conservation Congress; and climate-related processes linked to UNFCCC COP30.

Our engagement in these spaces was not limited to attendance. The Consortium supported members, partners, allies, and territorial representatives to participate, speak, organize, interpret policy language, build alliances, and defend positions rooted in community governance. Across these arenas, the message remained consistent: territories of life cannot be reduced to areas that contribute to global targets, conservation metrics, or policy frameworks. They are living realities with their own histories, authorities, relationships, responsibilities, and governance systems.

At UNOC, the Consortium helped bring voices from marine territories of life into global ocean debates by supporting on-site participation, multilingual access, and strategic side events with members, allies, ocean organizations, academics, and government representatives.

UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE NICE, FRANCE 2025

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Convention on Biological Diversity

In CBD-related spaces, the Consortium focused on rights-based implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with particular attention to Target 3, Target 22, FPIC, safeguards, monitoring, and meaningful participation. Coordination across members and allies helped make possible more than 10 side events during SBSTTA-27 and the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

In IUCN spaces, the Consortium contributed to rights-based conservation debates, supported the participation of representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations and local communities, strengthened their presence in dedicated Indigenous Peoples' spaces, and cooperated with several partners and allies in the framework of the Reimagining Conservation exhibition pavilion as a platform for dialogue, visibility, and exchange.

IUCN World Conservation Congress
Abu Dhabi 2025

Photos: ICCA Consortium

In climate-related spaces, the Consortium helped connect biodiversity, climate, tenure, rights, and community governance by supporting a small delegation through logistical assistance and enabling participation in civil society and Indigenous Peoples' spaces during COP30.

COP30 BRASIL AMAZÔNIA
BELÉM 2025

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Global advocacy messages and policy influence

Across many international spaces, references to Indigenous Peoples and local communities are becoming more visible in conservation language. Yet visibility does not always lead to meaningful recognition of rights, self-determination, customary governance systems, territorial authority, accountability, or protection from harm. Throughout 2025, the Consortium worked to push discussions beyond inclusion toward deeper questions of power, responsibility, and justice.

This meant consistently asking whether communities are recognized as rights holders; whether their governance systems are respected; whether FPIC is applied meaningfully; whether safeguards are enforceable; whether environmental human rights defenders are protected; whether conservation actors are accountable when harm occurs; and whether global targets strengthen rather than weaken community governance.

A central reference point remained the Core Human Rights Principles for Private Conservation Organizations and Funders. The Consortium contributed directly during the development process by supporting exchanges, translated materials, webinars, events, outreach, and information-sharing with members and partners. Following the launch of the Principles, the Consortium promoted their dissemination and application in discussions on Target 3, OECMs, protected and conserved areas, Indigenous and Traditional Territories, and environmental human rights defenders.

The advancement of IUCN Motion 138, presented by member organization Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas (FAPI) and supported by the Consortium's Latin American team, marked another important outcome. The motion led to a formal IUCN resolution recognizing ICCAs—territories of life as essential contributions to biodiversity conservation and affirming their role as community-governed systems that support effective, equitable, and rights-based conservation.

Together, these processes show that the Consortium's advocacy is not only about influencing policy language. It is about defending the political foundations of rights-based conservation where they are constantly negotiated and contested.

Photo: ICCA Consortium

Strategic knowledge, communications, and language justice

In 2025, the Consortium continued to strengthen the knowledge base underpinning its global work through strategic publications, guidance materials, advocacy resources, and contributions to the ICCA Registry platform.

This work focused on issues shaping international conservation policy, including KMGBF Target 3 and rights-based implementation; ICCAs—territories of life; Indigenous and Traditional Territories; marine and coastal territories of life; and draft guidance related to Indigenous and Traditional Territories. These resources helped build more coherent positions across the Consortium and its networks, provided analytical and advocacy tools for members, partners, and allies, and supported conceptual clarity in debates around Target 3, OECMs, protected areas, and community-led conservation.

Communications and language justice were core enabling functions of the Consortium's global work in 2025. Through newsletters, website updates, social media, public statements, donor reports, and annual reporting, the Consortium shared updates, strengthened visibility, and supported information flows across members, partners, funders, and allies.

Language support remained essential throughout the year. Operating primarily across English, Spanish, and French, the Consortium provided interpretation and translation support for meetings, publications, communications, policy engagement, and internal coordination. This enabled more meaningful participation and more equitable access across linguistic contexts.

At the same time, the year made clear that language justice cannot rely on goodwill, last-minute arrangements, or overstretched colleagues. It requires intentional planning, adequate resourcing, strong coordination, and realistic timelines. Translation and interpretation should be treated as core infrastructure for participation, not as technical services added at the end of a process.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Partnerships and alliance-based advocacy

In 2025, the Consortium strengthened partnerships and alliance-based advocacy with Indigenous Peoples' organizations, civil society allies, technical institutions, conservation actors, and global networks, including IIFB, ILC, FPP, RRI, IUCN, UNDP, UNEP, and others.

These collaborations helped bridge territorial realities with international policy processes. They brought together complementary capacities, including community leadership and legitimacy, legal and technical expertise, policy analysis, communications, and convening support.

The year also reaffirmed the need for clarity and purpose in partnership work. The Consortium's role is to convene, accompany, translate, connect, and advocate in ways that keep Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the center of decision-making spaces, with their knowledge, governance systems, and priorities recognized and respected.

Organizational strengthening and internal consolidation

In 2025, the Consortium continued to reflect critically on its internal systems and organizational capacity in line with its growing global responsibilities. This included governance clarification, coordination, communications, reporting, learning systems, and resource mobilization.

Work during the year focused on strengthening internal processes and alignment across teams and governance bodies, including clearer roles and responsibilities, more consistent coordination practices, and improved follow-up on organizational decisions and commitments. The Consortium also continued its organizational strengthening work.

The year made visible several areas for consolidation: strategic prioritization and integrated planning; clearer delegation and coordination; stronger documentation and monitoring; communications planning connected to advocacy from the beginning; systematic multilingual planning; financial sustainability; and collective well-being.

These are not simply internal management issues. They are conditions for sustaining external impact. As the Consortium's influence grows, its systems must support clarity, accountability, learning, care, and realistic workloads.

Our Financial Health and Transparency

Resourcing solidarity and resilience for territories of life

In 2025, the ICCA Consortium continued efforts to diversify funding and strengthen longer-term financial resilience to support the territories, communities, and members we serve.

Income and Expenditure Overview

The Consortium's total expenditure in 2025 was broadly consistent with 2024 levels, both years reflecting a significant increase compared to prior years, driven by intensified efforts to advance the Strategic Plan and the regionalisation process. Major investments were made in:

Regionalisation and assemblies, including sub-regional and national gatherings.

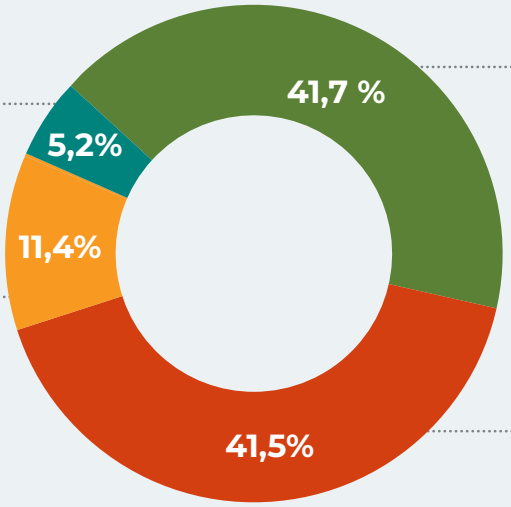
Flexible sub-grants to regional coordination hubs to carry out self-determined and catalytic initiatives.

Remuneration and core operations, particularly in standardising financial support for global team's members and regional coordination teams.

Travel and in-person convenings, including participation at UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3), CBD processes (SBSTTA-27, SB8j-1, COP16-2), IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) and UNFCCC COP30.

In 2025, the ICCA Consortium managed a **total income of USD 285,422** and a **total expenditure of USD 1,438,594.03**, with the majority of funds directed to programmatic work, regional support, and Secretariat operations.

Expenditure Highlights



USD 77,447.43 for communications, software, finance systems, and other core operations.

USD 600,336.53 for Secretariat salaries, contracts, interpreters and human resources.

USD 163,963.66 for international travel, accommodation, interpretation, and logistics.

USD 596,846.41 for programme implementation (core activities, regional coordination, support to members, events, and consultancy).

These numbers reflect our strong investment in regionalisation, multilingual coordination, and facilitation of global and local solidarity. Operational and support costs were kept lean and focused on enabling collective impact.

Major Grants and Donor Partnerships

We strengthened relationships with longstanding funders and welcomed new support, including:

Renewed or ongoing support from **Oak Foundation**, **Packard Foundation**, **Synchronicity Earth**, **Hans Wilsdorf Foundation** and **Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund**.

Continued support and collaboration with **SwedBio**, including co-funding for policy advocacy and communications work.

Additionally, the ICCA Consortium engaged in strategic dialogues with philanthropic networks to advocate for **flexible core support**, **direct funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities**, and **accountability in large-scale conservation funding**.

Financial Challenges and Strategic Adjustments

While progress has been significant, structural and logistical challenges remain:

Administrative burdens, particularly with travel reimbursements and regional contracts, strained team capacity and underlined the need for simplified, community-responsive financial systems.

The shift towards **trust-based funding** and **region-led prioritisation** proved vital for sustainability, but requires continued adaptation in internal systems.

Looking Ahead

As we look to 2026, the Consortium is working towards:

Strengthening financial resilience through diversified longer-term support aligned with the Consortium's values and governance to reduce reliance on a limited donor pool.

Securing multi-year grants that offer continuity for community-led and regional actions.

Investing in financial systems and capacity that are decentralised, timely, and aligned with the rhythms of territories of life.

This evolving financial landscape is not just about sustainability—it's about integrity. The funds we mobilise are not just operational—they are tools of solidarity and transformation, enabling the self-determined paths of communities we accompany.

Section 2

Territories of Life Across the Regions: Regional Stories of Self-Strengthening and Solidarity in 2025

Across the regions, 2025 showed the diversity, depth, and resilience of the global movement for territories of life. From forests, rangelands, coastal and marine territories, islands, mountains, wetlands, sacred sites, and community-conserved landscapes, Indigenous Peoples and local communities continued to sustain their territories through customary governance, collective care, intergenerational knowledge, and local systems of responsibility.

The regional stories that follow are not only a record of activities. They show how self-determination takes shape in different political, ecological, and cultural contexts. In some regions, communities advanced documentation, mapping, petitions, legal recognition, and territorial defense. In others, they strengthened regional assemblies, national networks, women's and youth leadership, pastoralist and marine initiatives, and solidarity responses to urgent threats. Together, these efforts demonstrate that territories of life are living systems of governance, culture, knowledge, livelihoods, and ecological stewardship.

The ICCA Consortium's regionalization process continued to be central to this work. Regional coordination teams, councils, members, honorary members, and allies played a vital role in connecting local priorities with national, regional, and global opportunities. Their work helped ensure that support remained grounded in the self-determined priorities of custodians, rather than imposed through a single centralized model.

This section keeps regional voices and stories visible in their own right. It complements the global performance of the Consortium by showing how the Consortium's strategic priorities were translated into practice across regions.

Africa

In 2025, the our movement across Africa focused on turning high-level environmental promises into practical rights for the people who live on the territories. Regional networks helped move conservation away from top-down, state-controlled models toward governance led by the communities themselves. This work resulted in legal gains, such as the return of national parks to Maasai custodianship in Kenya, the securing of collective land titles on Sakatia Island in Madagascar, and the formal recognition of ancestral fishing rules in West Africa. These shifts are helping to ensure that those guarding the continent's biodiversity are recognized as sovereign partners with the authority to manage their own territories.

On the ground, these coordination efforts have translated into more secure livelihoods and a stronger defense against external land pressures. Whether through restoring raffia and tapia forests for local economies in Central Africa and Madagascar or protecting sacred cedar groves for drought resilience in East Africa, communities are using their own knowledge to manage their resources. This focus on self-documentation and intergenerational learning—specifically involving women and youth—is building a more resilient connection between cultural identity and environmental protection. Across the continent, these initiatives are proving that community-led governance is a just way to sustain Africa's ecosystems while securing the future of its people.

Photos: ICCA Consortium West Africa Team, APCRM

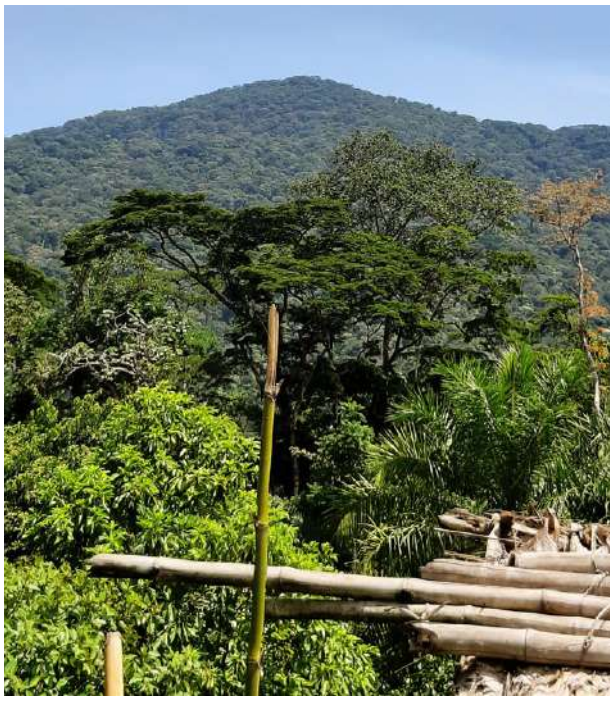
In **West Africa**, regional coordination has enabled communities to secure formal recognition for their own management systems, particularly in coastal areas. A primary example is the Kawawana ICCA in **Senegal**, where the community-led restoration of ancestral fishing rules has resulted in the return of several fish species and the recovery of the local food chain. This success is maintained by 24 community volunteer officers who are now qualified by the state to monitor and enforce these local rules, providing a more effective policing system than state-led alternatives.

This momentum has spread across the region, leading to more formal protections for sacred and ecological sites. In Benin, the Bamezoun, Orozoun, and Têdozoun ICCAs have been submitted to the global registry, ensuring their contributions to biodiversity are recognized internationally. Meanwhile, in Guinea-Bissau, the Rio Cacheu mangrove park has become a model for shared governance, where state managers have agreed to respect community-devised management rules. These examples show how strengthened networks allow women and youth to lead the defense of their territories through both traditional knowledge and modern legal tools

Photos: APCRM

In **Central Africa**, coordination efforts have established more formal links between customary governance and national legal frameworks. Technical inputs provided during the revision of forestry and wildlife laws in **Cameroon** and the **Republic of Congo** have ensured that the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are prioritized in upcoming regulatory decrees. By securing signed petitions and drafting legal statutes for local associations, these communities have shifted the regional conservation narrative from state-led exclusion to a model where traditional authorities are recognized as the primary decision-makers for their territories. At the local level, this work has translated into tangible gains in territorial security and livelihood stability.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the focus was on creating a scientific foundation for conservation through academic research and a new sub-regional network. The distribution of agricultural support in the **Central African Republic** and the ecological restoration of raffia palm landscapes in Cameroon have strengthened the capacity of communities to manage their resources without relying on extractive practices. This shift in self-identification—where communities define their own conservation priorities rather than reacting to external mandates—is fostering a more resilient connection between cultural identity and forest protection across the Congo Basin.



Photos: Christian Chatelain

In **North Africa**, the regional coordination has adopted a strategy that uses international environmental policy to challenge the state-led conservation models that have historically ignored local rights. Participation in global meetings like SBSTTA and COP30 is treated as a strategic necessity to ensure that national governments meet their obligations under Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. By advocating for the recognition of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), the movement is building a legal bridge for customary systems—like the Agdals in **Morocco**—to gain formal standing. This shift is designed to move Indigenous communities from the margins to the center of conservation governance, turning international commitments into enforceable national rights.

On the ground, these efforts have started to secure the livelihoods of women and youth through the preservation of biocultural heritage. The Academy of Biodiversity Professions in the High Atlas is turning ancestral agroecology into modern vocational skills, providing a path for younger generations to stay on their land and lead local cooperatives. Additionally, the development of the "Observatory of Territories of Life" allows communities to use data as a tool for territorial intelligence and defense against external pressures. These initiatives prove that when communities have the tools to manage their own resources, they can create local economies that are resilient to both climate change and territorial encroachment

In other countries of the region, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Libya, and Egypt, the regional team is still planing to connect with communities.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

The **Madagascar** regional team focused on strengthening community-led governance and securing legal recognition for ancestral territories throughout 2025. This work helped shift the national conservation approach toward one that respects the customary rights and self-determined priorities of the Fokonolona.

The team assisted the Fokonolona of Sakatia Island in securing collective land titles through a ministerial order, providing a legal way for them to protect their territory. They also worked with national authorities to include community governance in the National Biodiversity Strategy. This ensures that the country's work on Target 3 and OECMs is based on recognizing customary rights rather than state-led management.

Additionally, the team coordinated the identification and documentation of five new territories, including Ambohitrambo and Ivary. As a result, these communities now have five-year plans to manage their own resources, such as the tapia forests used for local silk production. This work has helped Fokonolona councils in 23 regions maintain their leadership over sacred sites and forests, keeping management decisions in the hands of the communities.

Photos: JRR

Throughout 2025, the **East Africa** regional team focused on addressing historical land grievances and securing legal titles for community-managed territories. In **Kenya**, this coordination supported the return of Amboseli National Park to Maasai custodianship and the recovery of previously seized community lands. In **Tanzania**, the team assisted traditional leaders in the legal demarcation of 100 acres of sacred sites, such as Endoinyo Ormorwak.

The team also used cultural festivals in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to bring together traditional leaders and youth to defend their territories and share ancestral knowledge. In the Kirtalo mountains, they helped communities protect cedar and olive tree forests that are essential for livestock survival during droughts. By applying the “Ujamaa Rangeland Model”, the team helped pastoralists secure communal titles to their grazing lands, keeping management decisions under local control and strengthening community resilience against external land pressures.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

SIERRA LEONE

Highlighting the Sugar Loaf ICCA and Strengthening a National Network

From the forests of Sugar Loaf to the development of a national network, this is the story of how ancestral knowledge and global solidarity are helping communities in Sierra Leone gain recognition for their territories of life

In 2025, communities across Sierra Leone, in West Africa, reached a major milestone by stepping more fully into the global movement for territories of life. This progress was made possible through strong collaboration between local community leaders, the Consortium's West Africa coordination team, and international ICCA practitioners and experts.

Field visits and on-the-ground engagement helped deepen partnerships between communities in the Freetown Peninsula and the Consortium, identify new potential ICCAs, and raise awareness of these areas among both public and private stakeholders. These efforts align closely with the ICCA Consortium's strategic priorities, which emphasize community leadership, knowledge sharing, and the development of strong national networks.

Sierra Leone is now in the process of designating a national focal point to connect local communities with the broader regional network. The team is working to strengthen governance systems, elevate local knowledge, and support the formal recognition of ICCAs across the country.

The Sugar Loaf community forest, an emblematic ICCA

Among the country's emerging ICCAs, the Sugar Loaf community forest stands out as a flagship site. Nestled in a mountainous landscape, it hosts rich biodiversity and plays a vital ecological, cultural, and social role for the 4,500–5,000 people living in nearby villages, primarily from the Krio, Temne, and Mende communities. Strong traditional governance, active participation from women and youth, and the protection of sacred areas all demonstrate the community's central role in caring for their land and sustaining their livelihoods.

Recognizing and highlighting Sugar Loaf is just the beginning: it opens the door for other territories of life to gain visibility in the country, and for Sierra Leone to play a stronger role in the Consortium's global efforts.

Sugar Loaf in a nutshell

Country: Sierra Leone

Region: Freetown Peninsula

Type: Community forest (identified ICCA)

Key functions: Water resources, biodiversity conservation, soil protection

Population: 4 500 – 5 000 inhabitants (Krio, Temne, Mende communities)

Governance: Community-led, based on customary practices

Main threats: Deforestation and urban expansion

Photos: ICCA Consortium

GUINEA

A field mission led by the national coordination team reveals the diversity of territories of life

From Dalaba to Koundara, discover how local communities weave together spirituality and conservation to protect biodiversity and sustain their livelihoods

Guinea stands out for the richness and diversity of its ICCAs-territories of life, managed by local communities through long-standing customary practices. A recent field mission, jointly carried out by members of the ICCA Consortium's West Africa coordination team and community leaders from Guinea in the prefectures of Dalaba, Télimélé, and Koundara, highlighted the remarkable variety of these territories, which are essential for biodiversity conservation, cultural identity and community resilience.

In Middle Guinea, ICCAs take many forms, each deeply rooted in local history, spirituality, and the surrounding environment. In Télimélé, the *Boudou Galé* ICCA—known as the "Island of pure water"—protects a sacred spring and a dense forest that shelters threatened plant and animal species. Safeguarded through tradition and strong community commitment, the site plays a vital role in water regulation, agriculture and the transmission of knowledge.

In the prefecture of Koundara, near the border with Senegal, the ICCAs of *Wousson*, *Koyan* and *Basséné* illustrate the close interplay between community governance, spirituality and ecological stewardship. The *Wousson* ICCA is organized around a customary committee and encompasses gallery forests, savannahs and plateaus. Meanwhile, *Koyan* and *Basséné*—home to the Badiaranké and Coniagui peoples—reflect a careful and disciplined management of sacred forests, guided by initiation rites, sustainable farming practices, and the intergenerational transmission of values.

In Dalaba, on the highlands of the Fouta Djallon, the *Didërë-Foulah* and *Goubhe de Diaguissa* ICCAs serve as true ecological refuges. These sites protect sacred ponds, endemic species and remnants of ancient forests, while maintaining local governance systems grounded in respect for customs and inclusive community participation by both men and women.

Together, these territories of life reveal the diversity of Guinea's community-based approaches to ecosystem stewardship and cultural heritage preservation. The field visits across these ICCAs underscore how deeply intertwined traditions, spirituality and sustainable resource management form the foundation of resilience and identity for rural communities in Guinea. They also highlight the remarkable work carried out on the ground by local actors to identify and bring visibility to these territories of life—work that remains essential and must continue to sustain the momentum growing across the region.

Photo: ICCA Consortium

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Young people commit to preserving traditional livelihoods

Discover how BaAka and Sangha-Sangha youth are combining traditions and sustainable agriculture to protect their land and future

The Ndima-Kali association, based in the Sangha region on the border between Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, brings together young people from the forest-dwelling BaAka community as well as Sangha-Sangha fishers.

In 2025, the association stepped up its efforts to promote traditional knowledge and defend the rights of both communities, particularly regarding access to land, natural resources, and education. Ndima-Kali promotes a balance between environmental preservation and ways of life, in a way that meets the agricultural needs of local populations.

This approach provides an alternative to gathering, hunting and fishing. The association carried out missions to identify households in need of support, particularly in seeds and agricultural tools. At the end of these operations, seeds and farming equipment were redistributed to villages in the Sangha-Mbaéré prefecture, in the southwest of the country.

Photos: José Martial Bétoulet, Ndima-Kali.

Americas

Throughout 2025, the regional teams and member organizations across Latin America focused on the practical defense of territories and the self-governance of indigenous and local communities. From the Southern Cone to Mesoamerica, these efforts addressed restrictive laws and environmental pressures through improved internal organization and legal documentation. By aligning local actions with the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan and global advocacy, the networks established a more unified presence to protect territories of life. This shared work supports community autonomy and ensures that traditional systems remain a priority in regional and international policy.

In 2025, the regional team and national networks in **Argentina**, **Chile**, and **Paraguay** focused on internal organization to counter political and environmental pressures. In Argentina, the networks maintained governance over 3.5 million hectares involving 65 communities across eight provinces. Paraguay's FAPI strengthened the legal and institutional standing of 13 indigenous organizations, while the Chilean network held its annual meeting in Mapu Lahual and advanced TICCA registries for the Puelo and Chango communities. These activities provided a practical foundation for communities to manage their territories using their own traditional systems during a period of reduced public support.

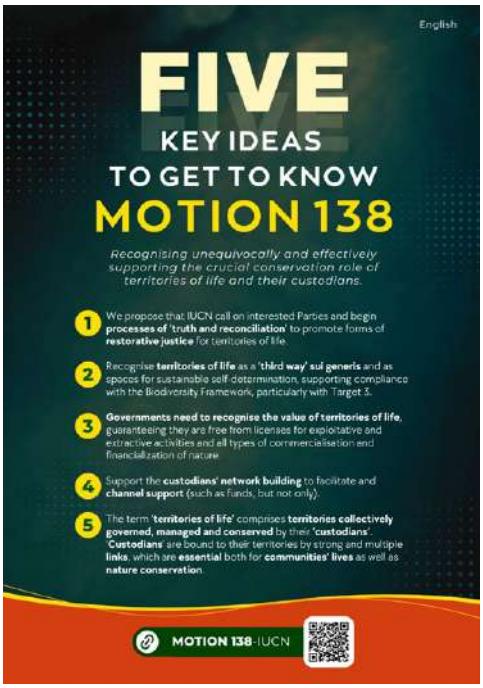
Coordination between the regional team and national networks improved through participation in the Panama meeting, which aligned work with the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan. This alignment helped the networks share strategies for territorial defense and legal advocacy, particularly concerning the SBAP Law in Chile and legislative shifts in Argentina. By standardizing coordination mechanisms and focal points, the networks transitioned toward a more cohesive presence.

Photos: Consorcio TICCA, FAPI

This collective approach supports local autonomy and the continued protection of territories of life through shared technical and legal resources.

In Mesoamerica, In 2025, the regional team and member organizations focused on direct support for specific territories facing land and water rights challenges. In Mexico, the team organized the Second National Meeting of Territories of Life and the First Forum on Target 3, which strengthened a Community of Practice involving 24 member groups. This included workshops in Sanahcat, Yucatán, to help communities maintain traditional governance against external government programs. In northern Guatemala, the team conducted field visits and exchanges for the Petén network, while in Panama, they worked with fishers from Isla Escudo de Veraguas to document how new conservation categories like OMECs threaten ancestral fishing grounds.

These local activities were tied to broader advocacy and safety for environmental defenders. The **regional team** managed a rapid response fund to provide financial and legal aid to **member organizations** in El Salvador and Panama, even as they navigated complex administrative hurdles to ensure the resources reached those on the front lines. These efforts contributed to the successful adoption of Motion 138 at the IUCN Congress, which uses these local experiences to push for the recognition of community-led conservation in global policy. By focusing on these specific sites, the team helped reduce the influence of paternalistic intermediaries and supported the autonomy of indigenous and local communities.



Photos: Consorcio TICCA, FAPI

ARGENTINA

Red TICCA Argentina: Building resilience through ancestral education and economic sovereignty

Throughout 2025, Indigenous Peoples in Argentina faced a coordinated withdrawal of state support. The national administration moved to defund key programs, including the legal and territorial surveys under Law 26160, while emphasizing private property over communal tenure. In response to this hostile political climate and rising extractivist pressure, the Red TICCA Argentina adopted a strategy of "territory inward" consolidation. Rather than waiting for a change in national policy, the network's 65 communities focused on strengthening their own autonomous governance.

The year's progress was nearly stalled by a banking crisis that froze the network's operational funds for several months. This delay left the coordination team with a significant backlog, eventually requiring them to complete six months of planned activities during December 2025. Through this concentrated effort, the network successfully held its National Assembly in Santiago del Estero, followed by regional meetings in Misiones and the NOA region. These gatherings formalized a 16-member coordination team that ensures gender equity and representation for the North, NEA, Central, and South regions, moving the network away from the influence of partisan politics.

Photo: Red TICCA Argentina

A key part of this internal shift has been the reinforcement of the Council of Elders and traditional authorities. By involving these "wise ones" in daily decision-making, the network has built a governance model that is less vulnerable to the external political shifts that often fragment Indigenous organizations. This stability is essential for the 6,853 families who continue to sustain 3.5 million hectares of ancestral land. The Community's ability to maintain its governance over such a vast area—despite the state's refusal to recognize communal property—marks a significant achievement in territorial defense.

On the ground, the network has prioritized economic and cultural autonomy. Communities have revived the trueque (barter) system, trading goods like honey and wool between different ecological zones, from the high Puna to the riverbanks of the NEA. This ancestral practice has decreased dependence on an inflationary national economy while strengthening social ties between different Indigenous Peoples, including the Kolla, Wichi, and Qom. Additionally, local projects have focused on improving irrigation and water use to ensure that communities can remain productive on their lands.

Education has also been repositioned as a tool for long-term security. The network is currently implementing bilingual community cultural education to ensure the next generation is grounded in their ancestral languages and customary laws. By preparing youth to act as "Indigenous Guardians," the network is building a leadership base capable of defending the land through both traditional knowledge and legal awareness.

Looking forward, Red TICCA is bypassing national indifference by seeking international recognition. The network is finalizing its registration on the Global ICCA Platform to provide a layer of visibility that the domestic government currently denies. By establishing their own territorial control points and community communication centers, the members of Red TICCA Argentina have demonstrated that the security of their territories now relies on the organized strength of the communities rather than the recognition of the state.

PARAGUAY

Strengthening Legal Frameworks and Formalizing Indigenous Organizations for the Defense of Territories of Life

Internal Governance and Legal Tools for Autonomy and Advocacy

Four indigenous associations— Organización Payipie Ichadie Totobiegosode (OPIT), Organización del Pueblo Enlhet Norte (OPEN), Asociación Angaité para el Desarrollo Comunitario (ASADEC), and Asociación de Comunidades Ava Guaraní del Alto Paraná (ACIGAP)— now have updated bylaws, along with the procedures needed to obtain or regularize their legal status.

The Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas (FAPI), a member of the ICCA Network, facilitated this strategic process in collaboration with the four associations through community assemblies, participatory workshops, and technical and legal support.

Photo: FAPI

These organizations are now better prepared to exercise their autonomy, manage their own processes, and establish formal relationships with public institutions, partner organizations, and potential funding sources. This progress not only improves their administrative capacity but also strengthens their ability to defend their territories.

In Paraguay, one of the main challenges Indigenous Peoples face is not only pressure on their territories but also the need to organize themselves formally so they can engage with the state and other actors on equal footing. Although communities have legal recognition, when they organize collectively—as in the case of inter-community associations—they must comply with complex requirements under the national legal framework to access rights, funding, and advocacy spaces. With stronger legal frameworks in place, these organizations can now access restoration programs, build strategic partnerships, and participate in decision-making processes that were previously out of reach. In a context where the recognition of "territories of life" as conservation mechanisms remains limited, this progress represents a concrete step toward their legitimization.

In this regard, one of the most significant examples is OPIT. This organization, which represents communities in initial contact and aims to protect Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation, had been operating without a statute aligned with its reality. Through this process, it reorganized its structure, formed a new steering committee, and moved toward legal formalization, strengthening its capacity to act.

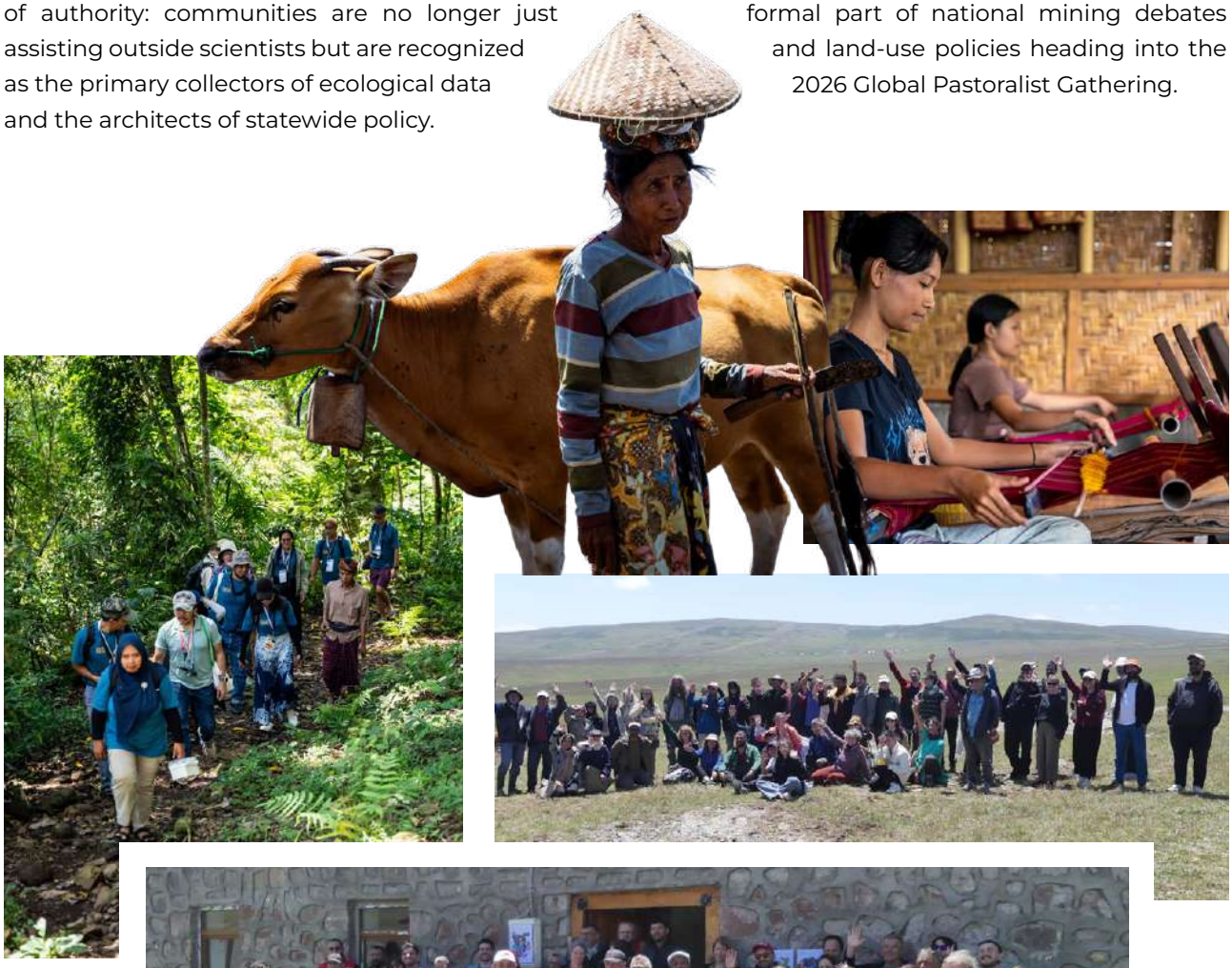
According to a leader of the Ayoreo Totobiegosode people, having legal status "allows us to seek support to guarantee the safety of our brothers and sisters living in voluntary isolation and to preserve our territories for future generations." This statement highlights the direct link between organizational strengthening and the protection of territories of life.

This experience offers a key lesson for the ICCA movement: defending territories of life depends not only on external recognition but also on the internal strengthening of the organizations that sustain them. In this regard, the process led by FAPI provides a concrete example of how Indigenous governance, combined with strategic legal tools, can serve as a strong foundation for self-determination and rights-based conservation.

Asia

In 2025, the Consortium's work across Asia led to concrete policy changes, more consolidated sub-regional organizations, and improved community-led documentation of territories. These efforts moved beyond local advocacy to achieve structural recognition. For example, East Asian conservation data is now included in the global "30x30" targets, and the Philippines' Indigenous biodiversity strategy has become a costed, implementation-ready framework. In Nagaland and the Tibetan Plateau, the impact is visible in a clear transfer of authority: communities are no longer just assisting outside scientists but are recognized as the primary collectors of ecological data and the architects of statewide policy.

These regional efforts also proved that traditional knowledge is a practical economic and political tool. The production of "panda honey" and ecotourism in China showed that conservation can sustain local livelihoods, while the Agroecology School in Istanbul helped reframe ancestral practices as essential "expertise" rather than "old-fashioned" ideas. By shifting the status of pastoralists from "stakeholders" to "rights-holders" in countries like Jordan and Kyrgyzstan, the Consortium ensured that community-led governance is now a formal part of national mining debates and land-use policies heading into the 2026 Global Pastoralist Gathering.



Photos: ICCA Consortium Southeast Asia, West Asia

In 2025, the Consortium in **North and East Asia** collaborated with communities to strengthen their own processes by promoting the documentation and recognition of traditional systems and territories. Key steps included identifying 117 potential ICCA communities in China and submitting 20 detailed case studies to the CBD and the Local Biodiversity Outlook. The regional team ensured that East Asian conservation models are now part of the data set used to measure the global "30x30" target. The development of "ecological products"—specifically "panda honey" in forest habitats and ecotourism in Guangxi fishing villages—demonstrated that conservation can be a source of income.

On the Tibetan Plateau, community-led monitoring practices proved that local communities could lead the collection of ecological data rather than just assisting outside scientists. This success was shared during the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The regional team also linked the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists with the upcoming UNCCD COP17 in Mongolia, resulting in a coordinated 2026–2030 Action Plan focused on pastoralist rights. This ensures that for the Global Pastoralist Gathering in Ulaanbaatar in 2026, there will be a database of rangeland cases ready to influence land-use policies across the region.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

In **Southeast Asia**, the Consortium helped advance Indigenous-led biodiversity strategies and action plans in the Philippines. The Philippines Indigenous Peoples' Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan has become a costed, implementation-ready framework. The sub-regional Secretariat has also been strengthened, enhancing collaboration with allies such as the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.

Photos: ICCA Consortium Southeast Asia

The **South Asia** regional hub worked with communities in India to improve the self-documentation of their territories, sharing these records with national and international bodies. These efforts provided the technical training necessary for locals to exercise legal rights regarding forest governance and benefit-sharing. The expansion of the Community Conserved Area Portal and the establishment of ethical research protocols provided a foundation for communities to document their territories and inform the development of a statewide policy in Nagaland.

The **West and Central Asia and the Caucasus** region focused on maintaining unity across 11 countries despite significant financial constraints, internet shutdowns, and regional conflicts. The primary impact was the shift from separate national activities to a coordinated regional movement. By establishing four thematic clusters and a joint Action Plan for 2025–2026, the region moved toward a governance structure that can operate even when resources are limited or communication is disrupted. Regional advocacy led to the first-ever inclusion of "territories of life" in the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). This language was also integrated into UNCCD literature, providing a formal international platform for nomadic pastoralists and customary governance systems.

The first in-person Agroecology School in Istanbul brought together three generations of farmers and pastoralists from Jordan, Iran, and Kyrgyzstan. This resulted in an exchange of practices regarding drought resilience and seed diversity, which moved ancestral knowledge from being viewed as "old-fashioned" to "expertise."

In Iran, members introduced nomadic pastoralist perspectives into national biodiversity strategy revisions and used the ICCA framework to challenge land conversion in mining debates. An Armenian member was elected as an IUCN Regional Councillor, creating a direct link between local territorial custodians and global governance.

In Jordan and Kyrgyzstan, advocacy shifted the narrative of pastoralists from "stakeholders" to "rights-holders," influencing national discussions on rangeland governance. Despite structural barriers, the coordination team used a multilingual approach in English, Persian, Russian, and Arabic, expanding participation for at least six countries previously sidelined by language gaps. They also maintained connectivity through redundant channels during internet interruptions in Iran. The region also had efforts underway for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists and the pastoralist caravan from Saudi Arabia to Mongolia.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

MONGOLIA

The Bayanbulag pastoralist community completes demarcation and improves collective management of their territory

Mountain forests meet valley grasslands: the community manages their territory collectively, using seasonal grazing patterns and shared agreements to balance use and conservation

Working closely with Consortium member JASIL in Mongolia, the Bayanbulag herder community in Töv Province's Batsumber district has completed internal demarcation within their grassland and forest territory—a crucial step in strengthening day-to-day management on the ground.

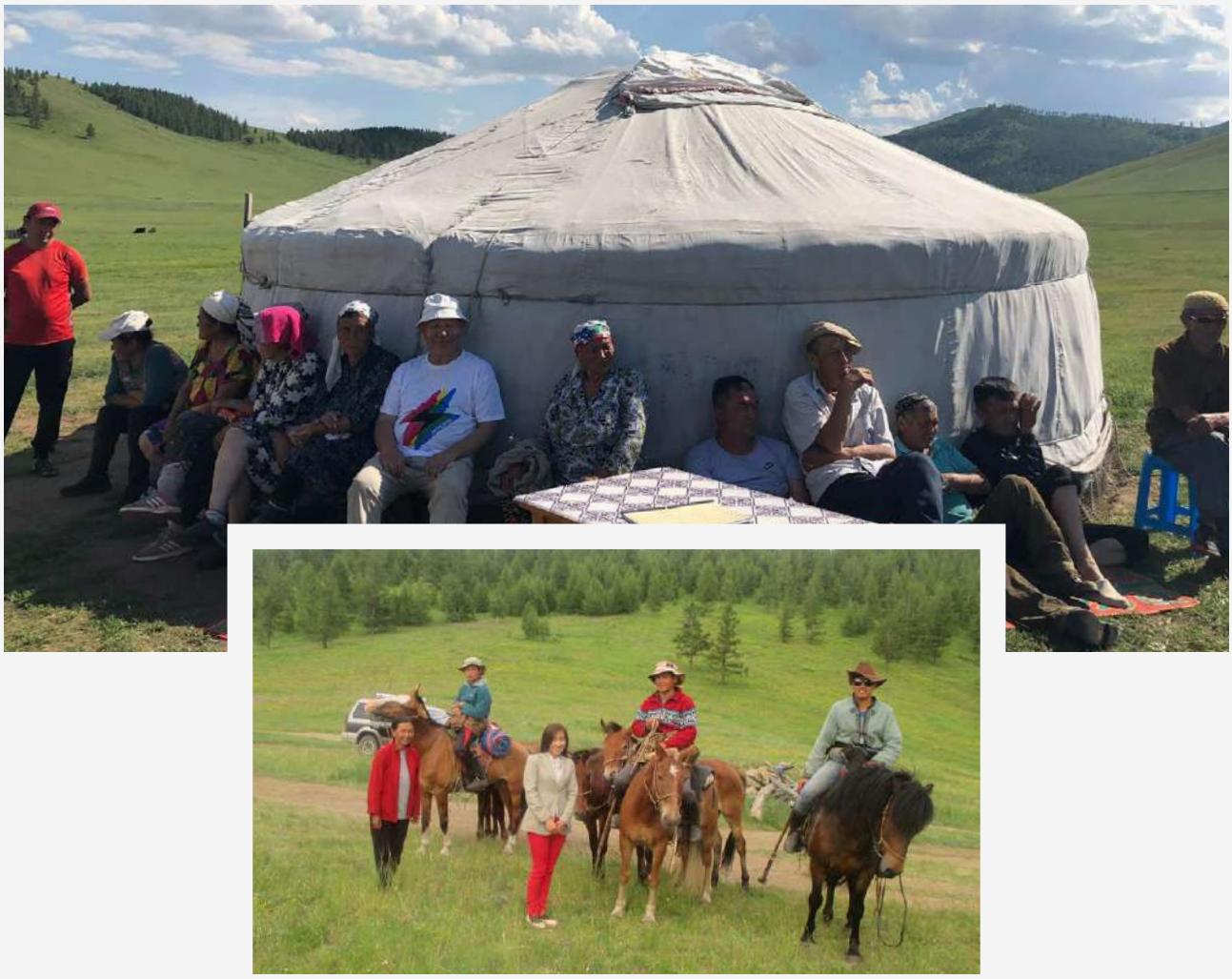
In Bayanbulag, the herder community of 12 households is the custodian of their surrounding grasslands, forests, and water sources for their livelihoods. Their income comes mainly from raising livestock for milk and meat. Through shared decision-making and sustainable practices, they actively manage and protect forests, pastures, water sources, and other natural assets to ensure their long-term sustainability.

This way of life is part of a long pastoral tradition in Mongolia, where mobility, seasonal grazing, and shared use of rangelands have sustained both people and ecosystems for generations. Rangelands remain central to rural livelihoods and national identity, supporting both household economies and broader ecological stability.

However, this system is under increasing pressure. Mongolia is undergoing a rapid transition from a state-led to a market-based economy, which has changed how land, resources, and responsibilities are organized. At the same time, herder communities are facing overlapping challenges: increasing livestock numbers; water scarcity; climate change; pastureland degradation; and the expansion of mining, illegal logging, and poaching.

Policy and legal frameworks are also evolving. While they create new opportunities, they can be difficult for local communities to navigate in practice. Many herders lack clear, locally recognized mechanisms to manage and defend their territories and resources collectively. However, traditional governance of pastoral territories of life is increasingly being recognized within formal legal frameworks.

Photos: ICCA Consortium



For example, the 2024 Law on the "Legal Status of the Association of Herder Households," particularly Article 5.1, provides a foundation for this. It recognizes herder groups as non-profit legal entities and supports the preservation of pastoral culture, collective management of resources, and the sustainable use of pastures according to their ecological carrying capacity. It also aims to strengthen livelihoods by improving livestock productivity and resource management. For communities like Bayanbulag, this creates new opportunities—but also requires practical ways to apply these principles on the ground.

The Bayanbulag territory of life covers about 2,300 hectares, where mountain forests connect with valley grasslands. The community manages these areas collectively, using seasonal grazing patterns and shared agreements to balance use and conservation. They also take responsibility for protecting forests, water sources, and wildlife habitats that are essential to both their livelihoods and the wider ecosystem.

Yet one practical challenge remained: without clearly marked boundaries, it was difficult to prevent unauthorized grazing, resolve disputes with neighboring herders, or respond to illegal activities. In such a large and open landscape, full mapping or fencing is neither feasible nor desirable.

Marking the boundaries of the territory of life provided a simple but effective solution. With clear, locally agreed markers, the community can now better communicate where their collective management applies.

This has led to several immediate changes, such as: neighboring herders are less likely to enter the area without prior agreement; illegal activities such as logging or poaching are easier to identify and address; community members feel more confident in monitoring and protecting their land; and the group has a stronger basis for engaging with local authorities and applying relevant legal frameworks.

Europe

In 2025, the ICCA Europe Regional Network focused on strengthening regional coordination, collective identity, and shared action for the recognition of commons and territories of life across Europe. A key step was the creation of the European Coordination Team, which began regular work in March 2025 and has helped improve communication and coordination among Members, Honorary Members, and allies.

This process led to the development and approval of the European Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2028 at the European Regional Assembly in Slovenia in November 2025. The strategy focuses on four priorities: consolidating European governance and representation, mobilizing members and allies for self-sustainability, reinforcing recognition and rights for commons, and influencing European environmental policies through advocacy and partnerships.

The network has also advanced work on visibility, documentation, and recognition. This includes developing European guidelines for the ICCA Registry peer review and support process, collecting stories from the ground for the ICCA website, and supporting national web pages, beginning with Italy. These efforts aim to make European commons and Territories of life more visible within the global movement.

In Italy, the Conference on Collective Lands, Biodiversity and Territories of life in Geraci Siculo, Sicily, supported national dialogue, presented the ICCA Registry, and contributed to the creation of the Italian Association of Territories of life. In Spain, IComunales has continued documenting common lands through LandEx and LandMark and hosted a learning event on the ICCA Registry in Valladolid. In Montenegro, the inclusion of Sinjajevina in the ICCA Registry in April 2025 marked an important milestone for the recognition of pastoral commons and community-led territorial governance in Europe.

Overall, the European network is moving toward stronger coordination, clearer regional governance, improved visibility, and more strategic advocacy for the recognition of commons and territories of life across Europe.

Photos: ICCA Europe

SINJAJEVINA, MONTENEGRO

Sinjajevina's inclusion in the ICCA Registry in April 2025 marks a major achievement for the recognition of territories of life in Europe. As a pastoral commons with strong cultural, ecological, and governance significance, Sinjajevina has become an emblematic case for the European network and th5e wider ICCA Consortium.

The case shows how community-led governance, traditional land use, and regional solidarity can support the defense of commons in the face of external threats. It also provides an important reference point for other European communities seeking recognition for their territories and governance systems.

Sinjajevina in a nutshell

Country: Montenegro

Type: Pastoral commons and territory of life

Key functions: Pastoral livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage, and community governance

Recognition: Included in the ICCA Registry in April 2025

Importance: A leading European example of community-led territorial defense and recognition

Photos: ICCA Registry Sinjajevina

Section 3

Advancing the Strategic Plan in Practice: Actions, Achievements, and Challenges in 2025

The 2024–2028 Strategic Plan provides the ICCA Consortium with a shared direction for supporting self-determination, advancing recognition and rights, influencing external actors, and strengthening the organization itself. In 2025, these goals were translated into concrete work across territories, regions, global policy spaces, communications, partnerships, and internal systems.

The story of 2025 is one of meaningful progress under pressure. Across regions, communities and networks strengthened governance, documentation, legal and political recognition, territorial defense, and solidarity. At the global level, the Consortium helped bring the realities of territories of life into major international policy spaces and strengthened rights-based narratives in conservation. Internally, the organization continued to build the systems, coordination practices, and collective care needed to sustain a regionalized global movement.

At the same time, 2025 also showed the limits of the Consortium's current capacity. Growing

Strategic Goal

GOAL 1 Self-strengthening	GOAL 2 Recognition and rights	GOAL 3 Influence	GOAL 4 Our organization
Diverse forms of solidarity and support uphold the self-determined priorities and self-strengthening processes of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for the wellbeing of territories of life.	Appropriate recognition of territories of life and respect, protection and fulfilment of their custodians' rights.	External actors and their practices are influenced to provide appropriate support for the self-determined priorities of territories of life and their custodians.	The Consortium strengthens its internal health, solidarity, systems, governance, and sustainability so it can serve territories of life with integrity.

expectations, financial uncertainty, uneven documentation systems, language justice needs, administrative pressure, and risks of burnout affected the pace and depth of the work. These challenges do not diminish the achievements of the year. Rather, they show where the Consortium must invest more deliberately to sustain its role as a global association and solidarity network for territories of life.

Overall assessment

Strategic goal	Main actions in 2025	Main achievements	Main challenges
GOAL 1 Self-strengthening	Regional assemblies, documentation, petitions, territorial demarcation, women's and youth organizing, pastoralist and marine initiatives, solidarity actions, and national network-building.	Stronger movement infrastructure, more regionally adapted support, and clearer understanding of documentation as part of self-strengthening.	Uneven capacity across regions, limited resources for sustained accompaniment, and the need for better internal tracking of self-strengthening processes.
GOAL 2 Recognition and rights	Community-controlled documentation, legal and policy advocacy, registry-related coordination, rights of defenders, and public narratives around territories of life.	Stronger rights-based framing of recognition and clearer links between governance, evidence, legal pathways, and advocacy.	Formal recognition processes remain politically complex, slow, and context-specific; legal progress requires sustained follow-up and careful public communication.
GOAL 3 Influence	Engagement in UNOC, CBD processes, IUCN WCC, UNFCCC COP30, Core Human Rights Principles, IUCN Motion138, and strategic partnerships.	Greater visibility of territories of life in global policy spaces and stronger positioning of rights-based, community-led conservation.	Influence work remains demanding and requires clearer objectives, better follow-up, stronger outcome tracking, and more balanced workload distribution.
GOAL 4 Our organization	Governance clarification, coordination routines, operational support, language justice, communications, financial sustainability efforts, and team reflection.	Important backbone-building, stronger coordination, and growing recognition that systems, care, language justice, and communications are core infrastructure.	The Consortium needs stronger PMEL, financial transparency, role clarity, documentation routines, and collective care measures.

Goal 1

Self-Strengthening

Goal 1 aims to uphold the self-determined priorities and self-strengthening processes of Indigenous Peoples and local communities for the well-being of territories of life. In 2025, this remained the strongest and most visible area of the Consortium's work, especially where regional coordination supported communities to organize, document, deliberate, and act on their own priorities.

Actions in 2025

Self-determination was expressed through a wide range of actions across regions. These included regional assemblies, documentation of territories of life, community petitions, territorial demarcation, self-identification, community planning, customary governance, women's and youth organizing, pastoralist and marine initiatives, and solidarity responses to urgent threats.

The year confirmed that self-strengthening is not a single activity or project output. It is a continuum that includes memory, governance, legal tools, local economies, cultural transmission, territorial defense, and network-building. In this sense, the Consortium's most important role was not to impose a uniform model, but to accompany different pathways defined by communities and regional networks themselves.

Examples included the Sugar Loaf Community Forest in Sierra Leone, the Le Rocher du Loup petition in Cameroon, self-identification and documentation processes in Madagascar, the Bayanbulag pastoralist community's internal demarcation in Mongolia, Red TICCA Argentina's work on ancestral education and economic sovereignty, FAPI--supported legal strengthening in Paraguay, and the continued development of the Italian Network for Territories of Life in Europe.

Le Rocher du Loup petition in Cameroon. Photo: ACDD

Sugar Loaf Community Forest in Sierra Leone. Photo: ICCA Consortium West Africa Team

Achievements

The Consortium made strong progress in strengthening movement infrastructure and regionally adapted support. Regional assemblies increasingly functioned as spaces for planning, learning, solidarity, and political articulation rather than isolated events. They helped members clarify priorities, reconnect across territories, build shared agendas, and prepare for national, regional, and global advocacy opportunities.

West and Central Asia and the Caucasus

Africa

Africa

East Africa and Horn of Africa

Latin America

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Documentation also became more clearly understood as part of self-strengthening. Communities used documentation not only to seek external recognition, but also to describe their own territories, governance systems, values, sacred sites, ecological functions, threats, and priorities. This helped strengthen internal cohesion and safer visibility, while also creating a foundation for advocacy and recognition where communities chose to pursue it.

Another important achievement was the continued strengthening of national, subregional, and regional networks. These networks allowed communities and members to move beyond isolated cases and build collective capacity. They also helped sustain action across difficult political and financial conditions, especially in contexts affected by conflict, mobility restrictions, shrinking civic space, and limited resources.

Solidarity actions responding to urgent threats, including public statements condemning escalating state violence against **Indigenous Adivasi communities** in Bastar, India, and a call for peace by **Red TICCA Latam** amid rising regional tensions.

A strengthened collegial working group in Africa, reinforced through the Fourth Regional Assembly.

- The formation of the **Italian Association of Territories of Life** and a new European regional coordination team, consolidated during the Third European Assembly.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Enhanced sub-regional mechanisms in Asia, including through the Sixth Southeast Asia Regional Assembly.

- Improvements in regional council and secretariat functioning in Latin America.

Challenges

Despite strong progress, support for self-strengthening remained uneven. Some regions had more established coordination structures, stronger facilitation capacity, or better access to resources, while others had to work with limited budgets, political restrictions, linguistic barriers, or fragile institutional arrangements.

Another challenge was the difficulty of capturing the full depth of self-strengthening work. Many important processes are long-term, relational, and locally specific. They do not always appear as simple outputs, yet they are central to the Consortium's impact. Without a better internal tracking system, there is a risk of under-recognizing the most important forms of support provided through regional accompaniment, solidarity, peer learning, and community-led planning.

Priorities for future

The Consortium should continue deepening regional support while developing a lightweight system to better understand and accompany self-strengthening processes. This should not become a heavy reporting burden for regions. Rather, it should help the Consortium identify which communities, territories, members, and networks are being supported; what type of support is being provided; what stage each process has reached; what risks or sensitivities exist; and what follow-up is needed.

The priority is to make self-strengthening more visible without reducing it to numbers alone.

Goal 2

Recognition and Rights

Goal 2 aims to advance appropriate recognition of territories of life and the respect, protection, and fulfilment of their custodians' rights. In 2025, we advanced on this goal most clearly where communities controlled the evidence, narratives, and governance processes that supported their claims.

Actions in 2025

The Consortium's work on this was not limited to formal legal status. It included community-controlled documentation, petitions, registry-related coordination, legal and policy advocacy, FPIC, the rights of environmental human rights defenders, and clearer public narratives around territories of life.

At the global level, recognition and rights were central to the Consortium's engagement in CBD-related spaces, Target 3 debates, OECMs, Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs), protected and conserved areas, and human-rights-based conservation. The Consortium consistently emphasized that territories of life should not be treated only as tools for achieving conservation targets. They are living systems of governance, culture, responsibility, and care, and any formalization process must respect the authority and self-determined priorities of their custodians.

At the regional level, pathways related to this goal appeared in different forms. In Cameroon, communities advanced a petition related to Le Rocher du Loup. In Madagascar, documentation and legal claims supported community-led validation processes. In Paraguay, legal strengthening of Indigenous associations helped improve their ability to defend territories and engage public institutions. In West Africa, community governance examples showed how customary rules and local institutions contribute to this goal. In North Africa, the Observatory of Territories of Life and regional reference work began building a stronger knowledge infrastructure for these efforts. In Sierra Leone, work around Sugar Loaf Community Forest opened a pathway for national engagement and stronger visibility of territories of life.

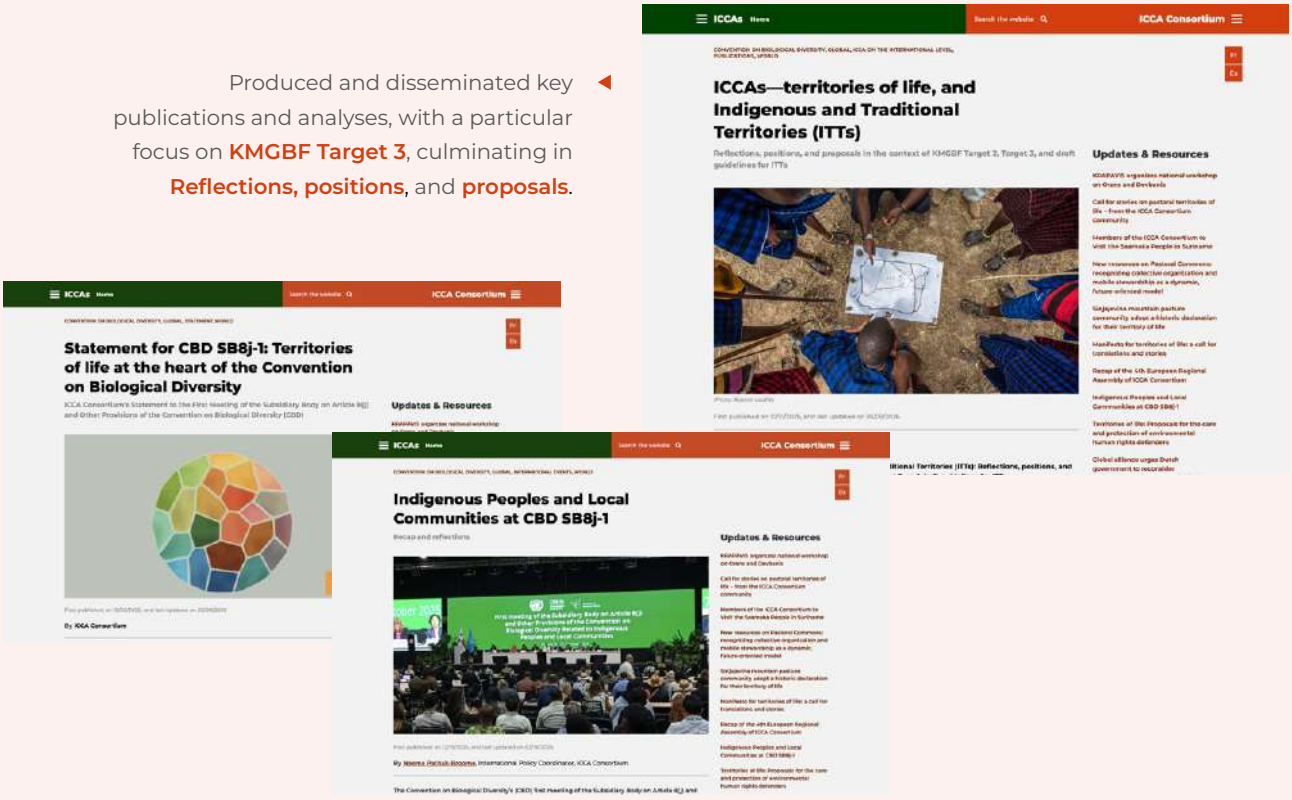
- **Supported the advancement of IUCN Motion 138 on territories of life (ICCAs)** by engaging with IUCN members, commissions, and partners to promote rights-based conservation approaches and strengthen recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' governance systems within conservation policy and practice.

Achievements

The Consortium made meaningful progress in creating interfaces to governance and rights with this goal, rather than treating it as a narrow administrative category. This was one of the most important strategic achievements of the year. This objective was framed not simply as inclusion within state or conservation systems, but as a process that must be grounded in self-determination, customary governance, FPIC, accountability, and respect for rights holders.

The Consortium also contributed to stronger conceptual clarity around territories of life in policy spaces. This was particularly important in debates around Target 3, OECMs, protected and conserved areas, and conservation finance, where community-led governance can be simplified, depoliticized, or absorbed into top-down approaches. By emphasizing rights and governance, the Consortium helped defend the political meaning of territories of life.

Produced and disseminated key publications and analyses, with a particular focus on **KMGBF Target 3**, culminating in **Reflections, positions**, and **proposals**.



Supported a **thematic special issue**, adding conceptual depth and practical insight into territories of life, governance, and rights.

Challenges

Advancing this goal remains one of the most complex areas of work. Legal and political pathways vary significantly across countries, and securing formal legal status can take years. In some contexts, acknowledgment by state and outside actors may create opportunities for protection and support; in others, it may expose communities to new risks, bureaucratic control, or co-optation.

Another challenge is the need to communicate carefully on this goal. Different stages of the process must be distinguished: self-identification, documentation, peer validation, registry submission, legal advocacy, formal acknowledgment, and protection from threats. These are related but not identical. Presenting them too broadly can unintentionally overstate progress or create confusion.

The Consortium also needs to support work on this goal in a way that does not reduce territories of life to technical conservation categories. These efforts must remain rooted in community authority, territorial relationships, cultural systems, and rights.

Priorities for future

The Consortium should strengthen its pathways related to this goal by supporting communities and regional teams to clarify the status, opportunities, and risks of each process. A practical pathway matrix could help track whether a territory or process is self-identified, documented, peer validated, registry-submitted, under legal advocacy, formally acknowledged, or under threat.

This would help the Consortium support this work more strategically, avoid overclaiming, and ensure that communities remain in control of how their territories are represented and defended.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Goal 3

Influence

Goal 3 aims to influence external actors and their practices so they provide appropriate support for the self-determined priorities of territories of life and their custodians. In 2025, the Consortium's influence work was visible in major policy arenas and alliance-based advocacy across biodiversity, oceans, climate, land, human rights, conservation finance, and protected-area debates.

Actions in 2025

The Consortium engaged in major international arenas, including the United Nations Ocean Conference, CBD COP16.2, SBSTTA-27, SB8j-1, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and UNFCCC COP30. Across these spaces, the Consortium worked with members, partners, allies, and territorial representatives to bring community realities into global discussions and defend rights-based approaches to conservation and environmental governance.

The Consortium's central message was consistent: conservation cannot be ethical or effective if it weakens community governance, ignores historical harms, treats territories as implementation tools, or fails to protect rights holders and environmental human rights defenders.

Key influence pathways included dissemination and application of the Core Human Rights Principles for Private Conservation Organizations and Funders; support for IUCN Motion/Resolution 138; collaboration with IIFB, ILC, FPP, RRI, IUCN, UNDP, UNEP and others; and continued engagement around Target 3, OECMs, Indigenous and Traditional Territories, FPIC, safeguards, and monitoring.

The Consortium also supported participation through logistical coordination, interpretation, convening support, communications, policy preparation, and alliance-building. This support helped members and allies participate more meaningfully in spaces that are often difficult to access and largely shaped by states and institutional actors.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Achievements

The Consortium achieved strong visibility and policy positioning in 2025. It maintained a coordinated presence across multiple international arenas while holding a consistent rights-based narrative. This helped strengthen the legitimacy of territories of life as governance systems and not only as biodiversity areas.

The Consortium also contributed to broader shifts in conservation debates by challenging approaches that focus only on targets, metrics, or technical implementation. It helped keep attention on governance, rights, FPIC, accountability, tenure, and the protection of environmental human rights defenders.

Another achievement was the strengthening of alliance-based advocacy. The Consortium worked with partners who brought complementary capacities, including legal expertise, policy analysis, technical knowledge, communications, and convening power. These alliances increased the reach of the Consortium's messages while helping keep community priorities visible in global spaces.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Challenges

Influence work is demanding. It requires preparation, coordination, delegation support, policy analysis, communications, interpretation, travel logistics, follow-up, and relationship management. In 2025, the volume and intensity of global engagement created pressure on people, systems, and budgets.

A key challenge is that the influence is difficult to measure. Participation in a policy space does not automatically mean influence. The Consortium needs to better distinguish where it led, co-led, supported, accompanied, or contributed. It also needs to better capture what changed as a result of engagement: policy language, alliances, commitments, visibility, follow-up opportunities, or strengthened capacity of members and communities.

Without clearer outcome tracking, the Consortium risks underestimating some contributions and overstating others. Both risks should be avoided.

Priorities for future

The Consortium should approach global policy engagement with sharper prioritization. Before each major event, it should define advocacy objectives, delegation roles, partner strategy, communications plans, language needs, expected outputs, and follow-up responsibilities. After each event, a short outcome note should capture what changed, what was learned, and what follow-up is required.

This would help convert visibility into more sustained influence and ensure that global engagement remains connected to regional and territorial priorities.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Goal 4

Our organisation

Goal 4 aims to strengthen the Consortium's internal health, solidarity, systems, governance, and sustainability so it can serve territories of life with integrity. In 2025, this goal became increasingly central because growing external visibility created greater internal pressure.

Actions in 2025

Organizational strengthening in 2025 included governance clarification, internal coordination, role definition, operational support for convenings and travel, language justice, communications, reporting, learning systems, financial sustainability efforts, and collaboration with Maliasili. The year also involved team reflection and efforts to improve alignment across the Secretariat, Council, regional coordination structures, and governance bodies.

Regionalization continued to shape organizational thinking. The Consortium worked to move from a centralized model toward a more distributed approach, where regional coordination teams, councils, members, honorary members, and global support functions could work together with clearer roles and stronger follow-up.

Communications and language justice also became more visible as organizational priorities. They were increasingly understood not as technical services, but as core infrastructure for participation, transparency, accountability, and solidarity.

Achievements

The Consortium made important progress in backbone-building. Coordination routines improved, organizational learning became more explicit, and regionalization moved from a principle toward a more operational model. The organization also became more aware of the systems needed to sustain its growing role: planning, documentation, communications, finance, language support, governance follow-up, and collective care.

Another achievement was the growing recognition that internal strengthening is not separate from programmatic impact. The Consortium can only support territories of life effectively if its own systems are clear, sustainable, accountable, and caring. In this sense, Goal 4 is not an internal administrative goal only. It is the enabling condition for the other three goals.

Challenges

Systems are still catching up with ambition. The Consortium's work has grown in scale, complexity, and visibility, but some internal systems remain fragile or uneven. Documentation routines are not yet consistent. PMEL remains underdeveloped. Financial information and budget alignment need to be communicated more clearly. Roles and responsibilities still require clarification in some areas. The relationship between global and regional responsibilities continues to evolve.

The risk of burnout also became a major organizational concern. High workload, frequent international engagements, multilingual coordination, donor reporting, internal transitions, and limited staff capacity created pressure across the organization. This should be understood as an organizational sustainability issue, not an individual problem.

Financial sustainability also remained a central challenge. The Consortium continued to rely on a combination of core and project-based support, while recognizing the need for more diversified, long-term, flexible funding that can sustain regional support, language justice, communications, and organizational strengthening.

Priorities for future

The Consortium should consolidate a practical organizational strengthening plan with clear milestones. Priorities should include role clarity, PMEL, communications planning, language justice budgeting, resource mobilization, regional support tracking, fiscal sponsorship assessment, financial transparency, and collective care measures.

The organization should also strengthen the connection between strategy, budget, and implementation. If regionalization is central to the Consortium's future, this should be reflected not only in narrative commitments, but also in resource allocation, decision-making processes, communications, and operational support.

Photos: ICCA Consortium

Final conclusion

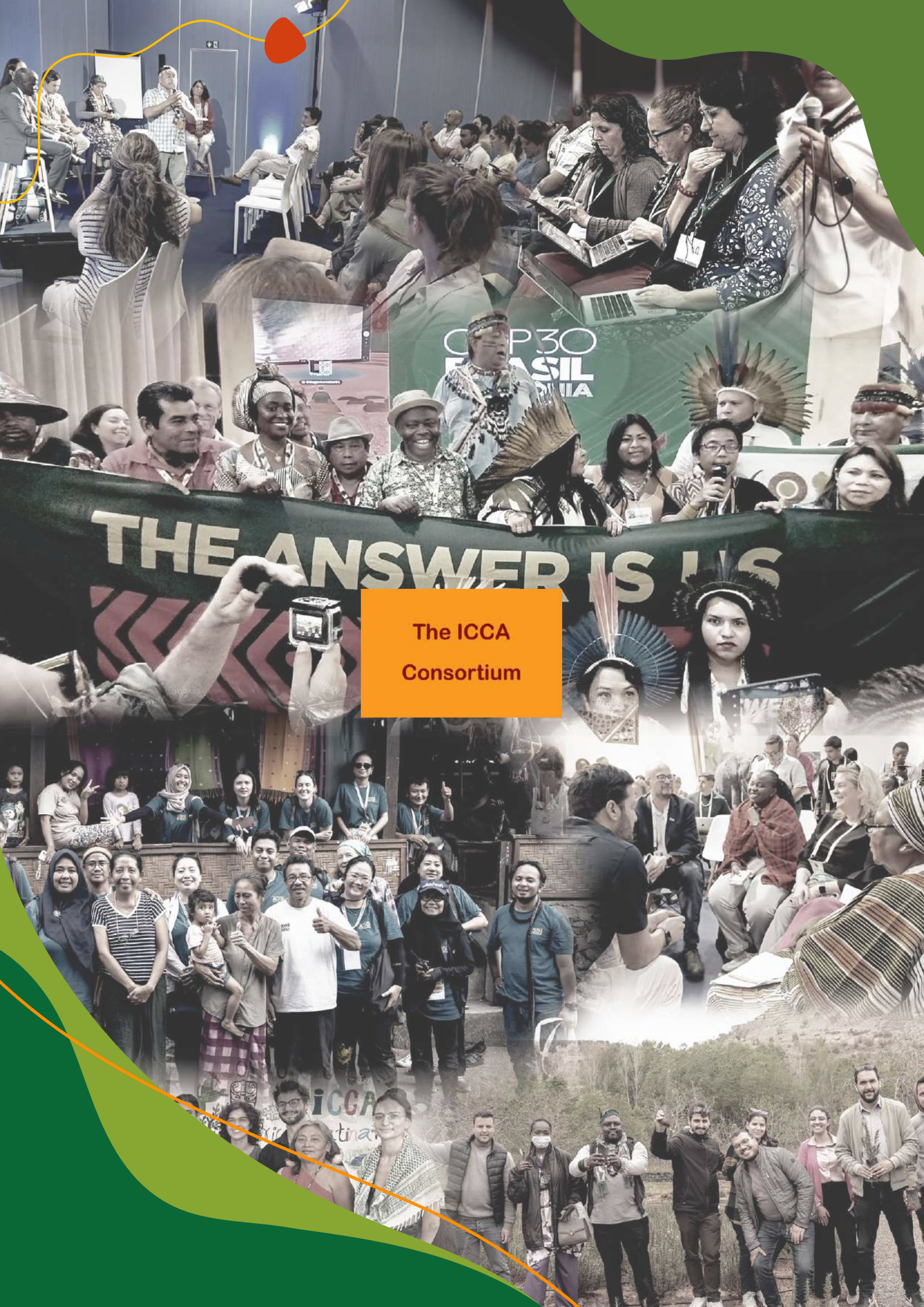
The main lesson from 2025 is that the Consortium's impact lies not only in individual events, reports, policy interventions, or regional stories. It lies in the relationships between them. Assemblies created movement infrastructure. Documentation generated community-controlled evidence. Evidence supported recognition. Global advocacy opened political space. Communications and language justice enabled participation. Organizational systems sustained follow-up.

For this reason, 2025 should be understood not mainly as a year of expansion, but as a year of implementation, consolidation, and strategic learning. The Consortium advanced significantly in regionalization, policy influence, rights-based conservation narratives, and organizational backbone-building. At the same time, it faced real challenges: financial uncertainty, operational intensity, uneven documentation systems, limited PMEL capacity, and the need for more realistic prioritization.

The direction for 2026 is therefore clear: deepen regional support, strengthen recognition pathways, convert global positioning into national and regional leverage, improve documentation and learning systems, resource language justice and communications properly, strengthen financial transparency, and align ambition with organizational care and sustainability.

The Consortium's strength remains its ability to connect territories, regions, and global spaces through solidarity and shared purpose. Sustaining that strength will require not only more action, but better systems, clearer priorities, and deeper care for the people and communities carrying this work forward.

Photos: Fundación ALDEA, Pablo Lasansky / IWGIA, Amos Kent



The ICCA Consortium