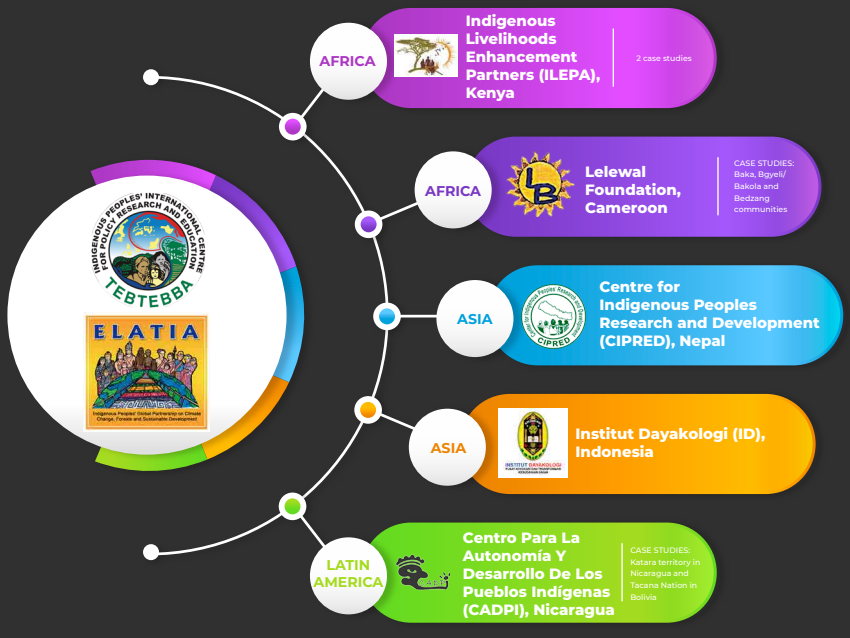
The Contributions, Perspectives and Recommendations of Indigenous Peoples on Nature-Based Solutions

The term "nature-based solutions" is being projected as a new and innovative way to put people and nature together while providing solutions to the climate change crisis. According to the proponents of the NBS terminology, NBS is an approach that seeks to protect, to sustainably manage and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal change effectively and adaptively while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. It is a terminology that is coined and defined at the 2016 World Conservation Congress by the members of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It was coined, defined and adapted by the IUCN through a resolution.[1]

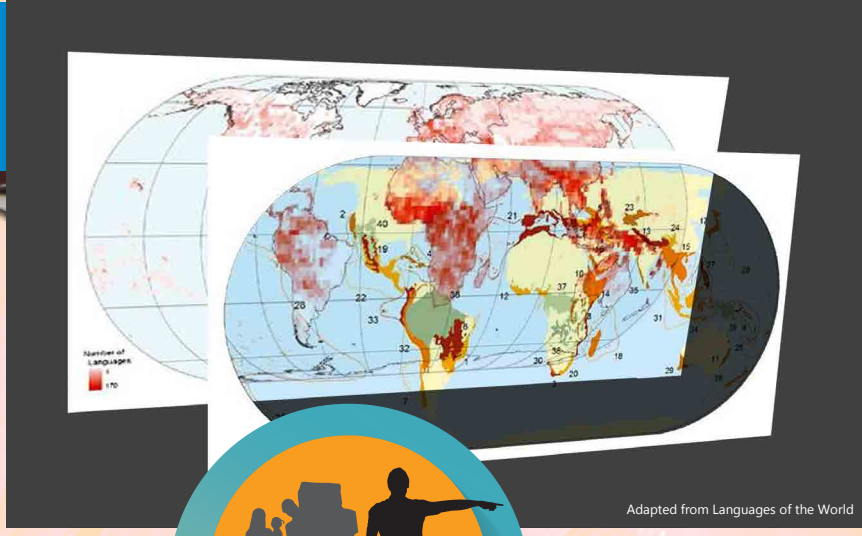
But for indigenous peoples, what does nature based solutions mean?



Tebtebba, in partnership with Elatia[2] has facilitated a scoping research in 2021 about the views and perspectives of indigenous peoples around their role in NBS and their perspectives on the principles of NBS. This was conducted with the Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA) based in Narok, Kenya, with two case studies—one focused on pastoralist perspective among the Maasai pastoralists in Northern Kenya and the Lelewal Foundation in Cameron, which conducted a case study among the Baka, Bgyeli/Bakola and Bedzang communities who are primarily hunter-gatherers; the Centre for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRED) in Nepal and Institut Dayakologi (ID) in Indonesia. For Latin America, the case studies were coordinated by Centro Para La Autonomía Y Desarrollo De Los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI) with one case conducted in the Katara territory in Nicaragua and another one in the Tacana Nation in Bolivia.

This infographic attempts to capture the results of the scoping study and also put forward recommendations towards the operationalization of Nature-Based Solutions respecting human rights, including indigenous rights.

THE CONTEXT



Indigenous peoples' territories overlap with biodiversity areas which result to conflict in land use policies such as conservation and protected areas in many countries.

Many indigenous peoples are being evicted, are prohibited access from their territories or are even criminalized because of these state conservation policies, implementation of development projects and non-recognition of their land rights. While indigenous peoples occupy resource rich areas, they remain marginalized, poor and most vulnerable, especially women, with the climate challenges, the challenge of the global COVID19 pandemic and other socio-cultural and political factors.



The historical exclusion of indigenous peoples from government-led development processes as planning to implementation and monitoring and evaluation continue.

Despite increasing international recognition, the contribution of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and customary governance in climate change adaptation and mitigation are not recognized in many states.

Continuing development aggression in many indigenous peoples' territories persist which, then, includes the conversion of land use, fragmentation of land areas through sale and fencing programs that limit the mobility of peoples and animals especially Africa.



There is a trend of increasing shift from communal or collective to private ownership as in the case of Kenya and the rest that potentially results in a decrease of resource base, degradation, overuse, deforestation of among the brown, blue and green natural environment.

The threat of identity loss comes with the weakening of their social institutions.

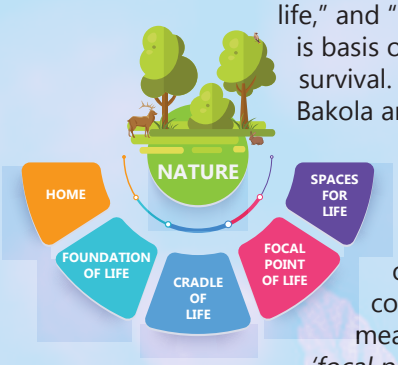
There remains minimal to no support in climate financing indigenous-led climate change solutions.



Legislative and policy frameworks on indigenous peoples, climate change and nature-based solutions, are not strong enough or are aggravating the non-recognition of indigenous peoples' rights.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' PERSPECTIVE ON NATURE AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Indigenous peoples view nature as something that provides a complex interdependence of all life-forms. It is home - it is referred as the "foundation of life", "cradle of life", "focal point of life," and "spaces for life," which is basis of identity and ensures survival. For the Baka, Bgyeli/ Bakola and Bedzang people in Cameroon, the forest, or etymologically, *bélé*, *dyii* and *mboo,* have to do with home or dwelling place, which could be translated to mean *'cradle of life'* and *'focal point of life'*. This implies that their lives revolve around the forest as all aspects of their units of social life are inextricably linked with the forest.



Nature-based solutions on the other hand is a contention between age-old versus new climate change solutions. But for indigenous peoples, NBS is a system what was practiced and a system since time immemorial, handed down from the past to the present generation, although it was not been called NBS. NBS is about looking at people and nature as co-existing, in harmony and in unity with each other that results to sustainable resource use and promotes good living (buen vivir). NBS emphasizes the interdependence of cultural and biological diversity.



Finally, despite varied and opposing views on NBS, indigenous peoples see this as an opportunity for their engagement in advancing their rights and advocacies in climate action, in particular.



Indigenous territorial management and water source conservation

The Tacana indigenous territory is directly linked to 20 different water basins, which are part of the Beni river basin. Fifteen of them are born in the Tigre, Cuñaca, Hurehuapo, Mamuque and El Bala mountains whose headwaters mark the border of Madidi National Park. Important rivers arise from these basins, such as the Emero, Tequeje, Enapurera and Tarene. The study on indigenous territorial management and the protection of water sources in the Tacana TCO identified 83 rivers and streams, 75% of which originate in the aforementioned mountains. The Tacana territory protects an extensive continuous and intact forest that collects the water that descends from the mountain ranges and on which downstream water supplies depend. The basins sourced from the Emero, Tequeje and Undumo rivers are born directly in the plains where aquifers supply them with water.

The indigenous territory protects the springs of a large number of bodies of water that each contributes, on average, 0.83m³ of water per second to the Beni River. This river discharges in turn up to 2,050m³ of water per second at the height of the del Bala narrow to its eponymous basin. The Beni River deposits the greatest amount of water and sediment with nutrients in the Madera River, the largest basin in the Amazon.

Different natural pressures and human activities threaten the preservation of these basins. The vulnerability analysis within the basins to climate change shows the level of exposure, sensitivity and adaptation capacity of the different ecosystems. The results reveal an average vulnerability in 63% of the basins' areas, especially the Emero, Undumo and Enapurera, which are within the Tacana COL and on the border with the Madidi National Park. Basins with high vulnerability (18%) and extreme vulnerability (19%), such as the Turiapo River, occupy smaller areas, are crossed by the San Buenaventura-Ixiamas highway, and are close to the town of San Buenaventura, which put the community and original lands at risk.

Source: CADPI, 2022. Bolivia: San Miguel del Bala in Madidi National Park

Shyagya is the customary institution of the Tsum Nubri Indigenous peoples in the Gorkha district. Shyagya is a culture of non-violence rooted in the Buddhist religion. This tradition in Tsum valley is coded into a seven-point rule: no hunting, no killing of animals (both domestic and wild), no trapping of any wild animals, no honey hunting, no forest fire, no trade (selling) of domestic animals for slaughtering, and no entry for meat trade. The seven points were written in the Sambota script in 1939 (1996 BS [Bikram Sambat, official Nepali calender]) at the initiative of the chief Lamas from Mu Gumba (Gumba: Buddhist monastery), Labrang from Niley, Ngakyu, Khangsar, Ghanjen of the respective settlements and Venerable Drukpa RimpochhevSerap Dhorje.

The Shyagya has further played a crucial role for the conservation of endangered wildlife, particularly of the snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, and musk deer in that region. The Shagya committee imposes a strict ban on forest fires, which has remarkably contributed to sustaining wildlife habitat and wildlife itself. This resulted in increasing wildlife sighting in the lower Tsum valley—a rare phenomenon until 2012 around the region from Lokpa to Chumling.

Source: Pasang Dolma Sherpa, 2022. Nepal: The Ngisyanwas and Tsum Nubri in Manang and Gorkha Districts

INDIGENOUS, TRADITIONAL AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES AND NBS

In Asia, these are demonstrated through indigenous leadership and customary institutions for forest and biodiversity conservation, through local wisdoms such as the seven fortunes[3] of the Dayaks in Indonesia. Youth and children are heavily engaged in the management of natural resources in accordance with local wisdom, including the processing of natural products and the making of business centers for clan-managed forests like the Dahas, Tembawang and Pelaman in Indonesia. This engagement of the younger generation is a very effective means of natural and cultural education.





In Africa, their practices of mobile herd grazing, land use zoning, and use of a biocultural seasonal calendar prove to sustain the land and biodiversity. Their community-based monitoring systems are adaptable, demonstrating a practical knowledge sharing approach. It also includes traditional occupations, maintained health and well-being, and basic survival. More so, their culture and religion play an important role in conservation practices, reforestation and domestication, and agroforestry practices. For example, Maasai clans are reflected in nature through totems and nature is reflected in all rites of passage through the symbolic use of plants such as emisigiyioi, ilatimi, olartat, among others.

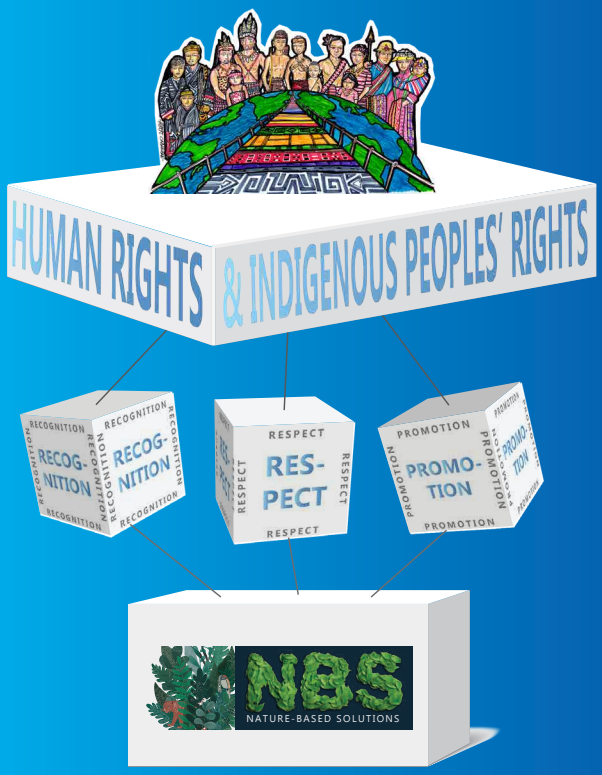


In Latin America, NBS is demonstrated in their sustainable ecotourism management regulations based on customs, traditions and governance systems as in the case of Bolivia, and conservation, knowledge preservation, territorial and community governance such as in Nicaragua. It is also demonstrated in the ability to grow their own food including vegetables, fruit trees, and even large and small livestock in their own backyards and in their production areas as demonstrated by the Karata women.

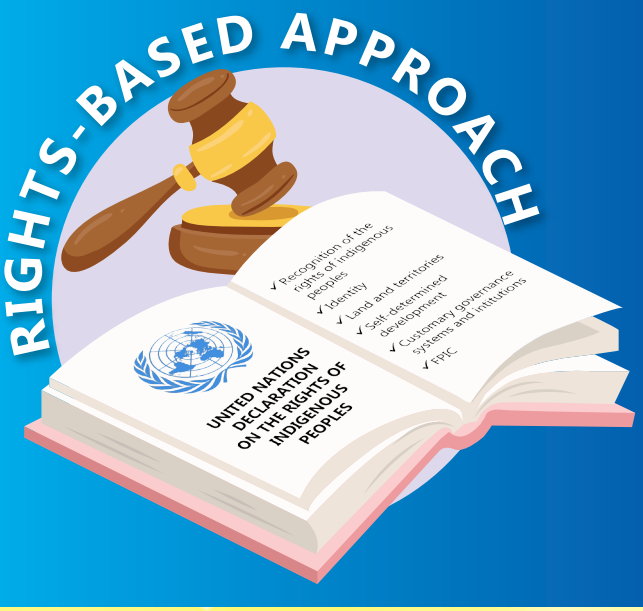
NBS is about the peaceful coexistence with nature and the knowledge about the benefits and properties of nature including the ability to provide medicine for healing and curing diseases, ailments and any other problems that affect people in the community.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS THAT WILL MAKE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS WORK? PERSPECTIVES FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1 NBS should be anchored on the recognition, respect and promotion of human rights and indigenous peoples' rights, having indigenous peoples as active partners (and not mere beneficiaries).



2 A rights-based approach that puts emphasis on the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, their identity, lands and territories, self-determined development, and customary governance systems and institutions and as well as protection of these said rights through Free Prior and Informed Consent. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) should be the standard of such approach.



3 An NBS framework that recognizes the inseparable relationship of people, nature and culture.



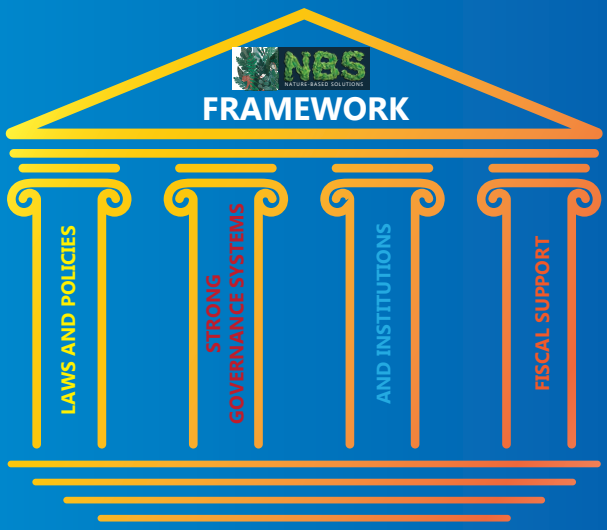
4 An NBS that recognizes the indigenous knowledge, culture, traditions, spirituality, belief systems and value systems of indigenous peoples.





5 An NBS that promotes social justice thru equitable resource and benefit sharing, and access to social services and one that offers accessible and culturally appropriate grievance mechanism.

6 An effective NBS framework that is supported by enabling laws and policies, relevant institutional arrangements for strong governance systems and institutions, and fiscal support.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

Key recommendations and ways forward were drawn as a result of integrating the findings from the six country case studies.

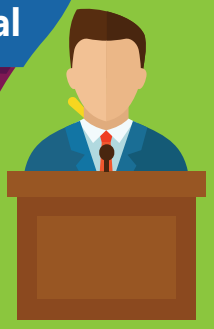
RECOMMENDATIONS

01 To recognize, respect and promote indigenous peoples' rights to their identity, culture, land and territories, self-governance, self-determined development, social justice and benefit-sharing. Respect and promotion of indigenous rights should be consistent with the UNDRIP, integrating robust and effective safeguards to address challenges. They should support land tenure transitions towards securing customary land tenure for indigenous peoples. There is a need to integrate indigenous knowledge systems and practices within their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national climate action plans and national climate response strategies.

02 To strengthen representation, full and effective engagement of indigenous peoples in decision making, ensuring free prior and informed consent processes from planning to implementation to monitoring and evaluation of all NBS initiatives.

03 To provide support and mechanisms that empower indigenous peoples through capacity-building programs that will enrich their knowledge and skills.

For States/ governments, non-state actors and multilateral bodies



04 To recognize and promote human rights-based development and policy approaches that support indigenous ways of life.

05 To improve and promote disaggregated data on national and global statistics relevant to indigenous peoples, such as national product accounts and measurement of valuation of resource metrics, among others.

06 To support documentation of indigenous and traditional practices, and sustain and enhance reporting and knowledge sharing efforts on various documentation and reports on indigenous initiatives and actions at various platforms including the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples (LCIP) platform.

07 To develop and expand partnerships in generating knowledge, especially identifying relevant indicators of traditional knowledge the well-being of indigenous peoples.

08 To recognize and promote a human rights-based approach in NBS, with emphasis on people, culture and nature as one.

09 To develop policy frameworks for sustainable production and consumption enabling immediate upscaling of sustainable economies and, revitalizing indigenous food systems.

10 To strengthen and provide relevant institutional spaces for indigenous peoples' effective engagement at the local and national levels.



WAYS FORWARD

For Indigenous Peoples, including indigenous women

01 To strategize and sustain their lobby and advocacy efforts in shaping and operationalization of the NBS.

02 To sustain engagements on NBS and climate change initiatives, and expand partnerships and collaboration with allies and support networks, including with the CSOs, the private sector and friendly states.

03 To continue strengthening institutional and community capacities, knowledge and skills on documentation, monitoring, organizational development, leadership and financial management, among others.



For Civil Society Organizations

01 To conduct sensitization, education, and FPIC in designing related projects and programs in indigenous peoples' communities or in areas close to their communities.



Endnotes

[1] CC-2016-Res-069_EN: https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2016_RES_069_EN.pdf.

[2] Elatia Partnership is the Indigenous Peoples' Global Partnership on Climate Change, Forests and Sustainable Development ELATIA, formed in 2009 through the leadership of Tebtebba, is currently composed of 19 indigenous peoples' organizations, networks and NGOs in 13 countries: Tebtebba; Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) and Institut Dayakologi (ID) - Indonesia; Maleya Foundation - Bangladesh; Silingang Dapit sa Sidlakang Mindanao (SILDAP) and Ugnayang Pambansa para sa Katutubong Kaalaman at Talino (UPAKAT) - Philippines; Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (CIPRED) - Nepal; Centre for Research and Development in Upland Areas (CERDA) - Viet Nam; Lelewal - Cameroon; Mainyoito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organisation (MPIDO) and Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA) - Kenya; Pastoralists Indigenous Non Governmental Organizations (PINGO's Forum) - Tanzania; Servicios del Pueblo Mixe-Asamblea Mixe Para el Desarrollo Sostenible - Mexico; Centro de Culturas Indígenas el Perú (CHIRAPAQ) - Peru; Centro para la Autonomía y Desarollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI) - Nicaragua; Conselho Indigena de Roraima (CIR) - Brazil; Dignite Pygmee (DIPY) and UEFA - Democratic Republic of Congo; Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas - Paraguay. ELATIA is an indigenous Maasai term meaning "neighborhood."

[3] The Seven fortunes according to the Dayaks are: 1) diversity and sustainability, 2) cooperation and togetherness, 3) organic and naturalness, 4) rituals and spirituality, 5) process and effectiveness, 6) domestic and subsistence, 7) customary law and locality.

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