



Climate Justice in Ecosystem-based Adaptation

A Policy Paper

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→ Background

In early 2022, the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) included equity and justice, for the first time, as a core concept of climate change adaptation. The report highlights the role of climate justice as an enabling factor and a precondition for successful adaptation processes and projects: 'Integrated and inclusive system-oriented solutions based on equity and social and climate justice reduce risks and enable climate resilient development'.¹ Climate Justice thus needs to be an inherent part of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) as a solution to address the impact of climate change on marginalised communities and vulnerable ecosystems.

The **objective** of this policy paper is to provide knowledge on how to support justice-based implementation of EbA projects and programmes. It describes the international context, highlights key challenges for practical implementation and proposes leverage points where development actors can foster climate justice in EbA implementation.

This policy paper resulted from a desktop review as well as stakeholder consultation and dialogue conducted by GIZ from May to July 2022. The process involved over 60 representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, local civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutions, national policymakers, implementing agencies, donors, and climate and biodiversity funds.

Climate Justice in EbA

The **FEBA (Friends of EbA) definition of justice-based EbA** builds on the recognition and implementation of human rights principles and procedures to ensure equitable, transparent and fair outcomes for all stakeholders. Following this definition, justice-based EbA accounts for the specific rights of people of all genders, cultures, classes and ages, including Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities, as part of international and national human rights principles. It is based on approaches that are non-discriminatory, transparent, accountable, meaningfully participatory and inclusive in their design and execution, and ensures equitable and fair climate change legislation, policies, action plans and projects.



Climate Justice is about recognising social differences



Recognition justice: Justice-based EbA is rooted in Indigenous, local, traditional and diverse knowledge, and recognises the different cultural values of ecosystems. It actively promotes the recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as well as particular groups, such as women, youth, people with disabilities, LGBTQS2+ and underrepresented groups, as key stakeholders in EbA projects. It accounts for their distinct rights over natural resources, based on human rights principles and the specific rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Procedural justice: Justice-based EbA includes creating an open, fair and inclusive governance structure, and integrating existing human rights procedures into planning, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation of EbA projects. It grants access to information on projects and ecosystems to all stakeholders. It enhances their ability to organise and influence rules on ecosystem use through effective and meaningful participation. It ensures that individuals and communities have effective access to complaints and grievance mechanisms or other legal procedures.

Distributive justice: Justice-based EbA ensures equitable and fair climate change policies and projects that protect individuals and communities from the loss of their land and livelihoods, and generate benefits for all affected stakeholders and rightsholders. It offers equitable compensation mechanisms for any losses or negative effects on land, resource access or livelihood opportunities in surrounding ecosystems impacted by the execution of EbA.

Definition: justice-based EbA accounts for the specific rights of people of all genders, cultures, classes and ages, including Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities, as part of international and national human rights. It is based on approaches that are non-discriminatory, transparent, accountable, meaningfully participatory and inclusive in their design and execution. Therefore, it ensures equitable and fair climate change legislation, policies, action plans and projects.

GIZ (2022). Defining Climate Justice in Ecosystem-based Adaptation.

Key elements of climate justice in EbA include integrating and recognising human rights principles and the specific rights of Indigenous Peoples. Climate Justice in EbA builds on an understanding of social dynamics and vulnerabilities on the ground, and examines the local situation through a cross-sectoral approach. The approach values Indigenous and local knowledge, and recognises different cultural values.

→ Why Climate Justice matters for EbA

Ecosystems such as grassland plains, forests, rivers, oceans and agricultural land contribute vitally to the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, providing them with food, energy and water, whilst also forming part of their cultural values (e.g., as sacred land). Yet, these ecosystems may not be viable over the medium or long term and are also impacted by climate change and risks, such as droughts, irregular rains, floods and tropical storms, which increasingly push ecosystems to their limits.

Box 1: Climate justice in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Indigenous communities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) demonstrate especially well the importance of climate justice. Small islands, despite contributing minimally to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, suffer heavily from climate change impacts, like increased tropical storms, drought and sea-level rise. Most affected are Indigenous communities living along low-lying coastal areas, who depend on natural resources through fishing and agriculture, and face social and political marginalisation (e.g., in terms of access to government support in times of crisis). Yet, these natural resources are deteriorating due to climate change as well as sectors such as tourism, which involves construction, waste and increasing recreational activities (e.g., scuba diving).² Communities in St. Vincent, for example, lost large parts of their income and livelihood assets because of drought in 2009–2010 and Hurricane Tomas in 2010.³

Ecosystems provide different services to wider society as well and also help sustain economic activities such as industrialised agriculture and tourism. At the same time, though, these sectors can deplete resources, thus destroying their own economic basis in the long run. Increasing interest in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and international funding for nature-based approaches, though intended to address this threat, also increase conflicts over access to ecosystems and their services. Under current trends, greater amounts of funding are funnelled into large-scale projects than into context-specific measures; such projects often emphasise carbon storage through single-crop tree plantations and similar approaches.

EbA can play an important role in creating more comprehensive and holistic approaches that offer an alternative to technocratic solutions. Introducing EbA measures is not without challenges, however. Since ecosystems are complex and interconnected with the social system (especially livelihoods), these measures need to contain targeted adaptation strategies that address issues in the ecological, social and economic context. Given that ecosystems span from the local to transboundary scale, EbA measures need to consider a wide range of actors from a variety of sectors. Consequently, EbA projects are influenced by stakeholder relationships and existing power structures. Addressing justice issues is therefore crucial, not only to avoid fragmented solutions that increase injustices, but also to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of EbA projects as a whole.

Systemic barriers to climate justice in national contexts

Many countries present increasingly difficult framework conditions for defending climate justice in EbA. Three overarching trends need to be considered in this regard.

The first concerns secure land tenure and land rights, which are a precondition for local communities and Indigenous Peoples to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Yet, in many contexts, these groups face restricted **access to land and other natural resources**, which affects them as a group, but women and youth particularly. National laws and policies on natural resources often do not recognise and may even actively restrict the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, particularly within protected areas.

A second trend involves external factors such as **commercialisation and commodification of natural resource management** in many countries. Examples are land grabbing in the mining sector or large-scale commercial monoculture. But initiatives under REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) and carbon credit schemes may also have that effect, if they do not sufficiently recognise and protect the rights of local communities in the affected territories. This leads to competing interests between measures aimed at the needs and benefits of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and other development measures for natural resource management.

Compounding the problem in many contexts is a third trend amongst Indigenous Peoples and local communities (particularly women and youth) of limited possibilities for **participation in policy development**. As a result, these groups lack access to and representation in key fora, for example, concerning the development of national climate policies. In many countries, the increasing tendency to criminalise human rights defenders and communities that speak out about injustices, by creating fear of retaliation, further hinders efforts to defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Increased efforts to defend climate justice in EbA implementation are thus crucial for achieving climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation in ways that are sustainable and effective.

Box 2: Violations of Indigenous Peoples rights in protected areas

Examples from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nepal, Thailand, Kenya, Tanzania and other countries show how national governments in different contexts **violate the rights of Indigenous Peoples** in the management of protected areas. These violations include land expropriation, forced displacement that result in reduced access to traditional occupations and livelihoods as well as the loss of cultural and spiritual sites. Indigenous Peoples further suffer from non-recognition of their own customary authorities as well as denied access to justice and reparation, including restitution and compensation. Communities and individuals who have spoken out against these injustices have faced threats, intimidation and arrest.⁴





→ The international context for Climate Justice in EbA

The international context can enable or hinder the implementation of justice-based EbA projects and is therefore highly relevant to the planning of such efforts. Particularly important for this purpose are the international conventions and other frameworks as well as the safeguard systems that international funding institutions have put in place.

Key international frameworks

Climate justice in EbA, lying at the intersection of climate change, biodiversity and human rights, is influenced by different international conventions and declarations in these three fields of work.



The **UN Human Rights System** provides the basis for enhancing the rights of people of all genders, classes and ages, including distinct peoples and traditional communities, in the context of EbA.



The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** has advanced toward integrating knowledge on natural resource management from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and has established procedures to actively involve these groups in the development of biodiversity conservation projects.



The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** has anchored a reference to the international human rights treaties in its preamble, but does not yet formulate any specific requirements or binding rules beyond this.

Key documents (conventions, declarations and protocols) and institutions (e.g., working groups) that address climate justice in the context of EbA express different levels of support in this regard.

Recognition of Indigenous and local knowledge:



The Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD, which is currently being developed, has advanced toward the inclusion and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The document refers explicitly to their roles as ‘stewards of biodiversity’, based on knowledge that should be part of conservation efforts as well as rights that must be respected through effective participation. Yet, the framework’s target of conserving at least 30% of land and sea areas by 2030 (30x30 target) could affect the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



The local communities and Indigenous Peoples’ platform, created under the UNFCCC in 2015, aims to foster knowledge exchange, capacity building and the integration of knowledge and practices for the promotion of the rights and interests of local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

Participation in decision-making:



The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) requires, at a minimum, the development of community protocols concerning access and benefit sharing from traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.



The UN-ECLAC Escazú Agreement concerns access to information about the environment, public participation in environmental decision-making, and a healthy and sustainable environment for current and future generations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Protection of land and natural resources:



Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) cover the protection of land tenure rights in climate change policies and projects as well as in disasters and conflicts.

Specific rights of Indigenous Peoples:



ILO Convention No. 169 on the Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms their right to participation in national decision-making as well as to land and resources.



The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) defines the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), which projects affecting Indigenous Peoples need to follow, ensuring their effective participation.

Safeguards in international development cooperation

Safeguard systems define the rules and procedures by which international funders and implementers aim to ensure that projects and activities do not harm marginalised communities or individuals. Over the last decade, climate and biodiversity funds and donors have strengthened their safeguard systems, which are crucial for enhancing climate justice internationally. Although each of those actors has a different system, they share some features in common:

- **Environmental and social safeguards (ESS):** All funds have introduced ESS systems. Most of them, like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF), rely on the IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group. The ESS of the GEF sets out minimum requirements concerning, for example, FPIC procedures for Indigenous Peoples and efforts to reduce land use restrictions as well as involuntary resettlement. The Adaptation Fund, whilst stating no specific requirements for Indigenous Peoples in its ESS, does focus on vulnerability and local activities. The GCF has the most ambitious and formal protection system, based on a commitment to international human rights treaties.
- **Specific policies on Indigenous Peoples and gender:** The GCF has a strong gender policy aimed at anchoring gender-responsive approaches in its projects. The fund also has a specific Indigenous Peoples Policy (IPP) and is developing specific safeguards that demand recognition of traditional knowledge and livelihood systems as well as FPIC procedures and access to GCF resources for Indigenous Peoples.
- **Exclusion lists for funding:** Smaller funds and donors, like the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) and German International Climate Initiative (IKI), work with exclusion lists to prevent funding of high-risk activities.

- **Project review process:** Some funds, like the Adaptation Fund, rely on a strong project proposal review process. Project documents are published, so that potential impacts on local communities can be detected either within the fund itself or by CSOs and NGOs.
- **Complaints mechanisms or grievance and redress mechanisms:** The GEF relies on the complaint mechanisms of its implementing entities but also has a conflict resolution officer to handle any complaints filed on GEF-funded projects. The GCF can investigate complaints through its Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM), in addition to relying on the complaints mechanisms of implementing organisations. Nevertheless, the IRM has limited enforcement capacity, as its recommendations are still being validated by the fund's political organ (the GCF Board), and this often leads to the dismissal of actions proposed by the IRM.

Many of the larger **implementing entities** have similarly developed and strengthened their safeguards systems. In general, these revisions have led to a better recognition and integration of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities but with varying degrees of specificity in their requirements. Many of these standards:

- form part of a **guiding framework** to ensure justice-based project implementation (as at GIZ),
- offer **concrete guidance** on how ESS should be implemented, based on criteria for stakeholder engagement (as at GIZ and UNEP),
- contain **detailed instructions** on how to address selected topics together with templates and checklists to implement the safeguarding processes (as at GIZ and IUCN),
- establish organisation-wide **grievance mechanisms** (as at IUCN and WWF),
- or rely on an **ombudsperson** to strengthen independent monitoring and project review (as at WWF).

→ The gap between theory and practice

Despite the political frameworks and safeguards in place, defending justice and rights in the implementation of EbA projects still presents many challenges. The consultation conducted by GIZ thus focused on the practical challenges that EbA projects face in enhancing climate justice on the ground. These challenges often stem from two shortcomings:

- a. Climate justice is treated as an add-on or additional burden and not as an essential requirement for the success and sustainability of a project.
- b. The established rules and funding conditions fail to provide sufficient space to enhance climate justice in practice.

Problems often start in the **project planning** phase.

- Project objectives and measures are often not defined with local actors, particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Instead, these reflect more the expectations of government partners and the criteria of funds and donors, particularly the larger ones.
- Project concepts need to be elaborated in detail for the application, leaving little room for meaningful efforts to develop concepts with communities.
- Safeguards procedures, like consultations or FPIC, are not always followed because of limited awareness of the need and procedures as well as the lack of time and funding during the planning phase.

How a project is planned strongly influences how well it captures context-related structural challenges and can deal with these so as not to reinforce existing injustices.

Box 3: Negative effects from EbA projects

According to a review of GCF projects in Peru, only one of the four approved projects that involve Indigenous Peoples' territories takes Indigenous safeguards into consideration. Of the concept notes and project proposals submitted, four out of six involve Indigenous Peoples' territories, but only two consider safeguards. This analysis also highlights underlying problems with the GCF approach, such as its focus on national governments and the implementing organisations rather than on those affected by the projects.⁵

The **GEF review of complaints** related to safeguard issues from 2021 covered 14 projects, of which at least 8 can be considered EbA projects. The main points of concern are insufficient information and stakeholder involvement, fear of negative impacts, restricted access to land or sacred lands used by the projects, and violence against Indigenous Peoples and local community members.⁶

Funding conditions are a further source of challenges in addressing climate justice:

- Short project duration (often 1–3 years) does not leave enough time to properly accompany local processes and address justice issues.
- Projects tend to get bigger in terms of their financial volume. This can reduce their ability to adapt during project implementation, because they are more complex to manage and project managers are not always involved in practical field implementation.
- Funding conditions disfavour small organisations, particularly with the large international funds. Adherence to policies and funding requirements involves a high level of formality and complexity. Partnering with large international organisations can create power imbalances.

During **project implementation**, justice issues are often not consciously addressed:

- Project staff and stakeholders often lack knowledge and skills related to justice-based approaches.
- Many projects do not include Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the institutional setup for implementation and monitoring.
- A lack of safeguards enforcement can lead to human rights violations and other negative impacts.

It is not easy to **monitor ongoing projects** and detect when measures create or reinforce existing injustices or even violate the rights of local communities:

- Many EbA projects do not actively track justice issues, as these are not reflected in project indicators.
- Indigenous Peoples, local communities and civil society cannot adequately track justice issues, particularly in large-scale EbA projects implemented by international agencies, for lack of information on project implementation.

Access to grievance and redress or legal actions are a particular challenge:

- Indigenous Peoples and local communities lack knowledge of their rights and legal options.
- Filing complaints is costly and time-consuming, and many local organisations lack the necessary capacity and knowledge.
- Local communities and Indigenous Peoples face the threat of retaliation and negative impacts if they file a complaint. Similarly, whistle blowers within the implementing organisation are often not sufficiently protected.



→ Fostering Climate Justice in EbA implementation

Apart from challenges, the consultation carried out by GIZ identified key strategies and leverage points in support of EbA projects addressing climate justice. The implementation of justice-based EbA involves integrating and recognising human rights principles and procedures as well as the specific collective and individual rights of Indigenous Peoples. This also requires an understanding of social dynamics and vulnerabilities/deprivations on the ground as well as the examination of local situations through a cross-sectoral approach. Justice-based EbA is further based on indigenous and local knowledge as well as the recognition of different cultural values.

Box 4: Climate justice in the Global Standard for NbS

The criteria formulated for NbS in the Global Standard by IUCN focus on a rights-based approach aimed at empowering local communities rather than ‘only’ avoiding or compensating for adverse social and environmental effects:

Procedural justice – NbS should be based on inclusive, transparent and empowering governance processes, including grievance resolution mechanisms, participation, and involvement of affected stakeholders (criterion 5).

Distribution justice – NbS should produce societal benefits in a fair and equitable manner that promotes transparency and broad participation (criterion 6).

Recognition justice – NbS should be based on evidence drawn from scientific as well as indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, and should use this evidence in its M&E (criterion 7).

Ways of integrating justice aspects into EbA projects are also reflected in the **principles for locally led adaptation** from the Global Commission on Adaptation capturing the learnings from practice driven by grassroots organizations as well as research on effective adaptation finance at the local level.⁷

Key leverage points in project planning and implementation

Justice-based approaches should be central to the planning of EbA measures and should continue throughout implementation and beyond the particular project.

Defining territories and community priorities: EbA projects should identify vulnerable contexts (e.g., by mapping affected regions, ecosystems and population groups) and should aim to fill gaps instead of avoiding such areas due to the greater complexity of the context. One essential part of a rights-based approach consists of supporting communities in mapping their territories and defining their own priorities. This strengthens the communities’ position and is particularly important where people have sacred lands or informal land tenure systems. For Indigenous Peoples, these steps are enshrined in the FPIC principles of the UNDRIP, whereas for other local communities, they are only formalised in Biocultural Community Protocols under the Nagoya Protocol.

Box 5: Rights-based procedures for community participation

Biocultural Community Protocols formulate the communities’ own priorities, developed through a dialogue with and within the community. These protocols reflect the values, procedures and community in their territory, thus providing a basis for dialogue with external actors, such as governments, companies, academics and NGOs.⁸

Indigenous Peoples have started to codify their own laws and governance rules by developing their own autonomous, rights-based consultation and consent protocols and policies (**FPIC protocols**). These protocols define how such groups are to be consulted and their FPIC sought. Documentation from 20 countries shows that the protocols vary in terms of their focus, format and processes as well as in the way the consultation process can address context-specific actions needed to guarantee respect for Indigenous Peoples’ rights.⁹

Formulating objectives: Project planning needs to start by bringing all concerned actors together. Indigenous Peoples and local communities must play an active role as early as possible in defining project objectives and elaborating project measures to ensure that they correspond to and prioritise these groups' needs, build on their perspectives and expertise, and do not undermine their rights and livelihood strategies. Such participation also helps to identify and address structural challenges. A collaborative approach demands more resources for planning, particularly for participatory analysis and a co-definition of the project objective and planned measures. Yet, this also makes the project more sustainable and effective in the long term.

Investing in capacity development: A justice-based approach often needs capacity development for all involved actors:

- Indigenous Peoples and local communities need to gain more knowledge of their rights and of the challenges that climate change poses for their livelihood strategies.
- Project staff need to understand justice issues and have the capacities to conduct participatory analysis and planning.
- National and local government staff may need capacity development to enhance their understanding of rights-based approaches and of the specific challenges and opportunities that EbA entails.

Strengthening the role of women and youth: It is crucial to address the systemic challenges and discrimination faced by groups that do not have a say within their communities, particularly women and youth as actors for change. It is important to involve them actively in participatory analysis, and to create space for them to take leadership roles and build equitable governance systems. Women and young people can play a role in organising communities and in promoting progressive, inclusive and transparent government institutions, thus fostering an enabling environment to address structural and systemic justice issues.

Building trust: This takes time and requires dependable engagement from the project. Regional staff can better understand the realities of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, whilst communicating with them more effectively, in their native languages. Working in the field in and with communities also helps build trust.

Long-term thinking: Addressing justice issues takes time, going beyond an individual project. The implementers of specific EbA projects should seek ways to enhance climate justice over the long term by extending the duration of these projects or by thinking beyond the individual project phase.

Inclusive project setup: In cooperating with local groups, it is important to adapt administrative procedures, such as due diligence requirements and reporting formats. This better enables such groups to meet requirements and facilitates their access to funding. Another measure that helps integrate the views of Indigenous Peoples and local communities is to ensure they are represented in the project's institutional steering and M&E system.



Key leverage points in funding requirements

Justice-based EbA projects require the changes described below in the funding requirements of climate and biodiversity funds and donors.

Provide resources for planning: Organisations need resources to implement a participatory approach to justice-based planning. Options for funds and donors to accomplish this include funding a pre-phase or providing separate funding.

Invest in processes: Addressing justice issues urgently requires a shift towards longer project durations, making it possible to accompany local processes. This also requires more flexible project approaches, including adaptive project management, which allow for adapting plans and priorities during implementation.

Anchor justice in strategic indicators: Indicators at the project and/or fund level provide project implementers with guidance as to what projects should achieve. Indicators also help track progress at the project and fund levels. In addition, they bring justice issues into reporting and thus ensure accountability for both the implementing agency and the fund or donor itself.

Adapt funding conditions: Enabling smaller organisations to access international funds requires simplified procedures. This can involve small-grants programmes at the national or international level or specific funding windows for small and community-based organisations and initiatives.

Box 6: Creating needs-based funding channels

The **Critical Ecosystems Partnership Funds (CEPF)** in the Caribbean channels funding from international donors to local CSOs. It provides funds for projects in regions that do not benefit from other funding. For these, it developed standards that are simplified, yet still comply with the standards of the back donors. It also provides capacity building for CSOs on these standards so that they can apply them. The current programme was developed in extensive consultations with Caribbean CSOs, national governments, private sector actors and donors.¹⁰

Box 7: Enhancing access to local actors

The **GEF Small Grants Fund** provides local partners with financing opportunities for community-based programmes or projects, which must thus be proposed by local CSOs or community-based organisations (CBOs). Application forms are simplified, and the proposal need not be written but can also be submitted orally (e.g., through videos). National coordinators engage in dialogue with the applicants and support them in developing their project ideas and proposals. Nevertheless, because these projects address very specific, local concerns, it often proves challenging to scale up their approaches.¹¹

Strengthen safeguards systems: Many actors need capacity development on safeguards and participatory planning, for example through training and exchanges with other organisations or through readiness support provided by funds like the GCF and Adaptation Fund. It is also necessary to strengthen the role of justice aspects in project proposals and/or in dialogue with applicants. Recognising and strengthening the role of CSOs as external ‘watchdogs’ can help identify potential threats to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Strengthen safeguards during project implementation: If annual or mid-term reviews identify justice issues, funds should actively address these. Some options for this purpose are to include safeguards in reporting, ensure timely follow-up on the topics identified, and establish mitigation measures or the possibility of suspended payments in case justice issues are discovered.

Strengthen grievance or redress mechanisms: These need to be readily accessible and have sufficient capacity to operate well and independently, responding swiftly to complaints. They also need to have a means of enforcing the decisions or recommendations of the redress mechanism without depending on decisions of political organs, as is currently the case for most funds.

Improve access to grievance or redress mechanisms: Donors and funds need to share information about grievance mechanisms widely, giving them high visibility. It is also crucial for these mechanisms to provide individuals or groups raising concerns with protection from retaliation, as this is an imminent threat in many contexts.

Key leverage points in policy frameworks

At the national and international levels, it is important to improve and increase the coherence of different policy frameworks.

Justice-based national policies: National climate and biodiversity plans – such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) – need to specifically address justice issues. CSOs, NGOs and the affected communities themselves need to take part, bringing their expertise and knowledge of local priorities into these processes. NGOs can also use their expertise on international climate funds or safeguards to support policy-makers and local actors. It is important as well to document progress on international frameworks at the national level and to integrate the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities into these processes.

Box 8: Including Indigenous knowledge in international assessments

The **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)** systematically engaged with Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the first global assessment of ecosystems. The knowledge of these groups was integrated and found particularly important for creating a better understanding of nature and its contributions to people, for assessing and monitoring ecosystem change, and for contributing to international targets and scenario development aimed at achieving global goals, like the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.¹²

Protecting access to land: This requires recognition of different types of land tenure systems and land rights (legal, traditional and factual) as well as the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which creates space for including land rights outside the legal system:

- At the international level, the UNFCCC needs to recognise the role of land for EbA as well as the need to actively protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- National and local governments need to actively protect land rights, which are under increasing pressure.
- Project implementers, funds and donors need to take particular care to not violate or infringe upon existing land tenure systems and formal or informal land rights.
- CSOs and NGOs play a key role in watching out for possible problems and violations, and in supporting affected individuals and communities in their struggle for land.

Box 9: Advocating for land rights

Strengthening **civil society advocacy on land rights** requires a combination of strategies for enhancing and/or ensuring land tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Successful strategies include raising awareness, empowering communities, capacity building and participatory research to organise local actors and build up an evidence base. Building a strong social movement and facilitating dialogue between different actors can help direct lobbying and advocacy to influence policy development. Enforcement of current laws and legal defence of land rights activists are equally important cornerstones for protecting the rights of affected communities.¹³

→ Moving forward on justice-based EbA

Climate justice touches on many structural factors that need a fundamental change in the functioning of the project funding landscape. Going beyond current efforts, such change requires the active involvement and cooperation of **all actors involved in EbA projects** at different levels. Each of the actor groups mentioned below has an important and distinct role to play in implementing EbA, with different responsibilities for key leverage points in fostering climate justice:

- **Indigenous Peoples and local communities** should be at the centre of just EbA projects. They live in the ecosystems affected both by climate change impacts and by the projects implemented. They are also stewards of nature and hold important knowledge on ecosystem management in their lands. In addition, they have intrinsic rights that they need to know about in order to actively defend themselves.
- Local and national **CSOs and NGOs**, by participating in and monitoring EbA projects, play an important role in supporting the efforts of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to realise their rights.
- National or international **project implementers** need to fully adopt a justice-based approach to planning and implementing EbA projects. Through their access to national and international funding sources, they can also channel finances to local actors.
- Local and national **governments** set framework conditions through their active support and participation in the implementation of EbA projects. They also define the rules and regulations that projects need to follow and thus are key actors in strengthening and enforcing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the national level.
- International **funds and donors** set the rules and conditions that projects need to comply with in order to get funding; they also receive monitoring and reporting from the projects they fund. These actors need to revise their funding conditions to foster justice-based implementation within the climate and biodiversity funding landscape.
- The **international community** needs to further strengthen the frameworks for protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and to close the implementation gap in current commitments. The Global Biodiversity Framework under the CBD and the Global Goal on Adaptation under the UNFCCC are important entry points for this effort.



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