



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF ASIA SOLIDARITY FUND

Indigenous Peoples-led funding mechanism in Asia





WHY IP-LED FUND FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF ASIA

We, the Indigenous Peoples of Asia, face numerous challenges that make it crucial for us to have direct access to funds. With over 300 million Indigenous Peoples in the region, comprising two-thirds of the world's Indigenous population, we have the least access to both internal and external funding.

- Majority of Indigenous Peoples in Asia live in rural areas, facing marginalization and systemic discrimination.
- Indigenous women and persons with disabilities experience multiple layers of discrimination.
- Despite being recognized as distinct groups such as hill tribes, ethnic minorities, tribals, and Masyarakat Adat, the majority lacks legal recognition and protection of our rights as affirmed by international human rights instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- Indigenous Peoples in Asia face systemic violations of our rights and have a lack of access to justice, such as land grabbing, forced evictions, resource extraction, criminalization, violence against Indigenous women and girls, and attacks on human rights defenders.



*The Dayak Agabag Sebuq Indigenous Peoples in North Kalimantan, Indonesia, flock to the Nunukan District Court to demand the release of their comrade who was criminalized on charges of stealing.
Photo Courtesy : AMAN.*

Despite these challenges, We, the Indigenous Peoples of Asia, are striving to preserve our cultures, governance systems, and sustainable resource management practices of living in harmony with nature. We continue to protect and conserve our various ecosystems - forests, rivers, mountains, sea, land, and biodiversity and enhance our Indigenous knowledge and innovations to strengthen our resilience and contribute to combatting climate change.

Indigenous Peoples in Asia are building and strengthening our institutions, organizations, and networks at various levels to collectively address our challenges in relation to our rights and well-being.

Direct access to funds is crucial for us to strengthen our capacities, advocate for our rights and well-being, manage our resources sustainably, preserve traditional knowledge, protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute significantly to combatting climate change and a sustainable future.



*The Aru Indigenous Peoples, Maluku, Indonesia hunt in their forest.
Photo Courtesy : AMAN*



THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IPAS

A regional funding mechanism by and for Indigenous Peoples of Asia was conceived during a regional consultation workshop on 31 July to 1 August 2022 held in Siem Reap, Cambodia. This gathering had 26 Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) representing 13 countries of Asia. All the IP representatives in the regional consultation agreed to establish the funding mechanism with an aim to address the limited access of Indigenous Peoples in Asia to the \$1.7 billion forest tenure pledge committed at COP 26 in 2021 as well as other funds.

An ad-hoc Steering Committee comprised of 6 members with gender balance was formed in this workshop to further gather inputs from Indigenous Peoples Organizations and develop the concept and related policies and guidelines and organize a regional assembly for its establishment. From 30 March to 3 April 2023, the regional assembly was held in Bali, Indonesia after a self-selection process of 95 Indigenous Peoples representatives representing 13 countries in Asia including the organizations and networks of Indigenous youth, Indigenous women, and Indigenous persons with disabilities.



*Indigenous women with disabilities ready to perform in an event in Nepal.
Photo Courtesy : NIDWAN*

The regional assembly participants collectively discussed and adopted the Vision, Mission, Goal and Objectives, of IPAS, the guidelines, and modalities for access to funds by indigenous Peoples institutions, organizations, and networks; policies and guidelines such on conflict of interest, anti-corruption and fraud, gender; and guidelines for funding applications. The assembly also selected the IPAS Board composed of 11 Indigenous leaders representing the subregions in Asia (South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and Mekong) and Indigenous youth, Indigenous women, and Indigenous persons with disabilities. The IPAS Board since then held three meetings and planned the legal registration of IPAS, the establishment of its secretariat in Indonesia, and formulated the first 5-year IPAS strategic plan (2024-2028) along with a fundraising plan. The Board has also adopted policies and guidelines to ensure transparent and effective governance.

The IPAS Fund's main purpose is to provide direct access of Indigenous Peoples in Asia to external funds addressing their specific challenges, such as language barriers, restrictions from governments, and capacity issues. The IPAS fund acknowledges and seeks to build on the support of existing donors while encouraging additional donors to change their approach from project-based to core funding and building and strengthening solidarity relations based on trust and mutual accountability. It, also, aims to reach grassroots Indigenous groups, including women's organizations, youth, and persons with disabilities.



*The Indigenous Peoples from Cambodia return to gardening.
Photo Courtesy : IPAS Fund*



VISION, MISSION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES (VMGOs)

The vision, mission, goal, and objectives as per the first strategic plan (2024-2028) are as follows:



VISION

We, the Indigenous Peoples of Asia, are fully and sustainably governing our traditional lands, territories, and resources with enhanced capacities, skills, and knowledge with the realization of our individual and collective rights, well-being, and gender equality.



MISSION

Generate and mobilize financial and other resources in strengthening and amplifying the solidarity and leadership of Indigenous Peoples of Asia to govern our resources in the exercise of our rights and enhancement of our contributions towards a sustainable future.



GOAL

Strengthened the governance and conservation efforts of our lands, territories, and resources, in line with our individual and collective rights, and enhanced our leadership, vital roles, and contributions to combating climate change, protecting the environment and biodiversity, knowledge, and advancing sustainable development for all.



The Mabri Indigenous Peoples from Thailand bring firewood. Photo Courtesy : IPAS Fund



OBJECTIVES

1. Build and strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of Indigenous Peoples' institutions, organizations, and networks in Asia to enhance resource mobilization, and finance management and ensure sustainability, accountability, transparency, and collective decision-making to empower Indigenous Peoples.
2. Provide direct access to funding for Indigenous Peoples' institutions, organizations, and networks of Asia to support our self-determined needs and priorities concerning lands, territories and resources and forest guardianship, and broader issues of biodiversity conservation, climate change, and sustainable development in line with our rights and wellbeing.
3. Strengthen the cooperation and solidarity of Indigenous Peoples of Asia through networking, collaboration, inter-learning exchanges, mutual support, and inclusive representation and participation in the relevant processes, mechanisms and events at all levels in advancing vision and missions of the IPAS



*Indigenous woman from Tano Batak, North Sumatra, Indonesia drying the rice harvest.
Photo Courtesy : AMAN*



PRINCIPLES

1. Transparency & Accountability
2. Social Inclusion & Equity
3. Solidarity and Cooperation
4. Cultural and Gender Sensitive



*Indigenous youth from Thailand
wearing their traditional attire.
Photo Courtesy : IPAS Fund*



IPAS TARGETS

1. Protection of a total of 29.55 million hectares out of 93 million hectare of tropical rainforests in Asia by the end of 2028
2. Sensitization of 50-60 million Indigenous Peoples on their collective and individual rights to lands, territories, and resources
3. At least 6 million Indigenous Peoples and their intersectional groups directly benefited from IPAS fund
4. The Country Steering Committees (CSCs) will be active and facilitating the IPAS fund management and monitoring in all countries
5. Mapping of Indigenous Territories for 40 million hectares



*Deeply rooted friendship of Mro Indigenous children in Bandarban Hill District, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh.
Photo Courtesy : Santua Tripura*



STRATEGIES

1. Reaching the grassroots and furthest among Indigenous Peoples.
2. Easy access with simple procedures and requirements for grant applications.
3. Capacity building on needed skills for project management and reporting, documentation, etc.
4. Long-term support to local and national organizations with critical roles and capacities in advancing the Indigenous movement at different levels.
5. Revitalizing Indigenous knowledge, sustainable economies, biodiversity protection, building resilience, and actions to combat climate change.



Sumi Naga Indigenous Peoples in Northeast India dancing in a traditional festival.
Photo Courtesy : IPAS Fund

6. Dedicated support for the needs and priorities of Indigenous women, youth and persons with disabilities and Indigenous institutions
7. Funds for emergency use including in response to disasters, serious risks, and attacks on communities and defenders.
8. Promotion of Indigenous arts, cultures, media, and sustainable ways of living
9. Inter-learning exchanges- within and beyond the country, regional and global levels.
10. Building relations and networking with donors (private and public) based on solidarity, trust, and mutual accountability.



*Seasonal adversity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh.
Photo Courtesy: Santua Tripura*



**THEMATIC AREAS
FOR SUPPORT
AS IDENTIFIED
IN THE REGIONAL
ASSEMBLY**

1. Core funding support to Indigenous institutions, organizations, and networks including youth, women, and persons with disabilities.
2. Forest & tenure rights and biodiversity protection.
3. Inventory and mapping of land and resources.
4. Sustainable livelihoods and resource management practices of different ecosystems including intergenerational transfer of knowledge and innovations.
5. Indigenous subsistence economies and food security.



*Indigenous Peoples mapping the boundaries of the Rendu Customary Forest, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.
Photo Courtesy : AMAN*

6. Economic empowerment of communities and Indigenous women including appropriate renewable energy, and technology; self-determined development.
7. Traditional institutions, customary practices and self-governance.
8. Indigenous media, arts, and culture.
9. Advocacy on Indigenous Peoples' rights and related issues including protection of human rights and environment defenders (individuals and communities).
10. Research, documentation including oral history, medical and herbal practices.



Indigenous woman weaving woven cloth, Rendu, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Indonesia. Photo Courtesy : AMAN



FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS OF IPAS FUND



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*The Sumi Naga Indigenous women in Northeast India gather to celebrate a traditional festival.
Photo Courtesy : IPAS Fund*