



**INVEST WITH US**

# Partnering with Local and Indigenous Communities



**FOREST  
TRENDS**

# WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN PARTNER WITH COMMUNITIES TO BUILD AN ECONOMY THAT KEEPS FORESTS INTACT.

**Research shows that the best way to curb forest destruction is to strengthen community land rights.** In the Brazilian Amazon, deforestation rates in forests guarded by indigenous and traditional communities are 11 times lower than surrounding areas. Since indigenous and traditional communities manage an estimated quarter of the world's forest-based carbon, they are our first line of defense in saving forests from destruction and fighting climate change.

**Yet these stewards of the forest face unrelenting challenges to their control over their own territories.** They also face growing pressures to clear forests for agriculture, logging, and mining. One of the best ways we can support indigenous and traditional communities in this battle is by creating alternate economic opportunities that form a counter-balance to destructive economic forces. Over the last twenty years, Forest Trends has worked closely with communities to provide key information, connections, capacity building, and technical assistance. With our support, these forest guardians can secure their rights, manage their forests, and pioneer new development trajectories that keep tropical forests standing — forever.

## Our Impact

**We launched the Surui Forest Carbon Project, the world's first indigenous carbon offset project.** Funds from the sale of carbon credits helped to strengthen alternative livelihoods, social services, and territorial protection.

**We championed indigenous and community leaders to bring them to the table for high-level climate policy discussions.** Our work created a formal platform for indigenous participation in the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force and shaped California's Tropical Forest Standard, which sets the stage to integrate tropical forests into the state's cap-and-trade program.

**We launched the Cumari Rainforest-to-Table network** to build new value chains for rainforest foods. Capitalizing on the world-class culinary movement that's emerging in Latin America, Cumari brings together celebrity chefs, community groups, conservation practitioners, entrepreneurs, and creatives. Cumari has raised the profile of rainforest ingredients — such as the Paiche fish and *aji*

*negro* sauce — in major restaurants and built new value chains for forest products.

**We've guided government programs in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico to include the rights of indigenous peoples in climate change and rural development policies.** Our capacity-building work on territorial governance and forest-based economies not only supports indigenous communities in securing and managing their lands; it also strengthens their position for engaging in and benefiting from climate finance.

**We built the Forest-Based Livelihoods Consortium with ten partners to invest in business development and marketing strategies for agroforestry-based products in Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and Colombia.** With our partner EcoDecisión, we've supported new trade partnerships and sustainability certifications for specialty cocoa and coffee that create new income for farmers who protect forests. We helped build the online platform Canopy Bridge which





matches buyers and sellers, supports sourcing missions, and provides due diligence and advisory services. In Peru, we backed a commercially viable fisheries management initiative for the giant Amazon freshwater fish Paiche, demonstrating how equitable and durable market linkages can reinforce low-emissions rural development. Our latest partnership with the company GoSol.solar connects indigenous communities with solar technologies that provide a significant value-add for dehydrating, roasting, and other processing of forest-based products.

**Forest Trends worked closely with the State of Acre in Brazil to create the first jurisdictional REDD+ system in the world,** the System for Incentives for Environmental Services (SISA), launched in 2010. We were instrumental in the creation of the SISA Indigenous sub-program for benefit-sharing in the State's 35 indigenous territories, which has generated more than \$3 million in funding for the conservation of 2.4 million hectares of forests on indigenous peoples' lands. This effort is part of the reason why 88% of the forest cover in Acre remains intact.

**We designed and launched innovative programs for indigenous territorial governance.** Our Cultural Mediators program works with indigenous teachers to bring climate change and territorial governance curricula to local schools. Our Training Program on Indigenous Territorial Governance trains local community leaders in economic, political, and cultural governance. Our Territories with Minimal or No Deforestation program highlights the importance of supporting communities' forests even if deforestation threats are not immediate.

**We created and spun off the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)** together with IUCN, CIFOR, and the Ford Foundation. RRI supports a global network advocating for land and forest rights of indigenous people and local communities. As founding members of RRI, we continue to develop global initiatives to support the rights and resources of indigenous peoples and local communities.

## Key Regions

Central and South America

# FOREST TRENDS' VISION

We are deeply encouraged by growing recognition of forests as crucial natural climate solutions and of indigenous and traditional communities as the best stewards of these forests. Bilateral, multilateral, and private donors are steadily ramping up commitments to invest in tropical forest conservation. We also see signs that carbon markets and REDD+ will play an increasingly important role as a source of finance for forests.

**It is critical that these investments benefit and reflect the values of indigenous and traditional communities.** In the next ten years, Forest Trends plans to continue investing in business and marketing strategies for forest-based value chains that sustain community enterprises and climate resilience, while respecting indigenous peoples' "buen vivir" principles. With this strategy, we can shift entire forest regions from deforestation-based economies to forest-based economies.

**Capacity building in support of strong political, economic, and cultural self-governance will remain the foundation of Forest Trends' work with indigenous and traditional communities.** To be truly sustainable, economic development must provide communities with the tools they require to secure their rights, defend their identities, and conserve the tropical forests they inhabit.



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