Facilitating Indigenous Involvement in REDD+

Early Engagement and Consultation in Costa Rica
Facilitating Indigenous Involvement in REDD+
Early Engagement and Consultation in Costa Rica

Case study published with the support of the Bank Information Center (BIC), the Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests, and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE)

Written by Rachel Baker | Bank Information Center
With the contribution of Elena Florian | CATIE

March 2014

This study was made possible by the assistance and collaboration of representatives from RIBCA and FONAFIFO, as well as indigenous and campesino leaders. The author is especially thankful to Levi Sucre, Alexandra Saénz, Natalia Díaz Zamora, Andrew Davis, and Deiver Obando Hidalgo for their invaluable assistance and feedback. Many thanks to BIC colleagues Joshua Lichtenstein, Christian Velasquez Donaldson, and Nina Ford for their support in each step of the preparation of this study. Finally, BIC gratefully acknowledges the support from the Climate and Land Use Alliance that made this study possible.

For more information about the content of this publication, please contact:
Rachel Baker | Bank Information Center | +1 202 624 0631 | rbaker@bicusa.org

This publication has also been translated into Spanish. The title of the Spanish-language version is “Impulsando la Participación de los Pueblos Indígenas en REDD+: La Inclusión Temprana y la Consulta en Costa Rica.”
# Facilitating Indigenous Involvement in REDD+
## Early Engagement and Consultation in Costa Rica

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDD+ in Costa Rica</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Peoples in Costa Rica</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation and Participation in the Development of a National REDD+ Strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Arrangements for Indigenous Consultation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indigenous Consultation Plan</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cultural Mediators Program</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the National Indigenous Consultation Plan through</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Consultation Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDD+ Early Engagement in Practice</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SESA Process</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Perspective on REDD+</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campesino Perspective on REDD+</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges and Recommendations</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of REDD+ Processes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Governance</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Tenure</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity and Expectations</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons Learned</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing Stakeholders to Define their Participation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Methodology</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive Involvement</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDD+ Indígena</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References &amp; Additional Resources</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Countries throughout the world are immersed in the process of preparation for REDD+. They are entering the uncharted territory of REDD+ strategy development and facilitation of stakeholder engagement, and are confronting the enormous challenges that accompany these efforts. To date, there are few documented cases of stakeholder participation in REDD+ strategy development to guide processes in other countries or offer lessons learned. Costa Rica, in particular, is one of the countries that has advanced farthest in the REDD+ preparation process, and consequently has the potential to set precedents and serve as an important example for other countries—particularly those initiating REDD+ in Mesoamerica. Costa Rica’s experience with participation and early dialogue for REDD+ has provided a window of opportunity to strengthen the processes of collaboration and integration between the National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO), indigenous peoples, and local communities in the country. This case study documents the REDD+ early engagement process in Costa Rica in order to share recommendations and lessons learned from the country’s experience thus far.

The indigenous peoples of Costa Rica have successfully created a national indigenous consultation plan, which establishes an organizational and operational framework to implement a national consultation of the future National REDD+ Strategy. This national indigenous consultation plan has been supported and backed by FONAFIFO, and the territories will receive US$1.1 million through the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) for its implementation. Indigenous leaders have developed pre-consultation and consultation plans in four territorial blocks, which describe pre-consultation and consultation methodology, institutional arrangements, and training and information components. A particularly innovative aspect of the indigenous consultation plan is the design and implementation of a national cultural mediators program, which integrates the component of indigenous culture with the technical and scientific components of climate change in order to achieve a better understanding of the implications of REDD+ in indigenous territories, and transmit this information to local communities.

Costa Rica’s experience offers numerous lessons learned, which can be adapted to the context of REDD+ preparation in other countries. Some lessons highlighted by Costa Rica’s experience are:

- **Allowing Stakeholders to Define their Participation**: Long-term collaboration and integration is best facilitated by allowing stakeholders to define their involvement and run their own processes. Indigenous people clearly defined processes and conditions with respect to how they prefer to be involved in REDD+, and FONAFIFO is providing support while still allowing autonomy to run their own process and make their own decisions.

- **Consultation Methodology**: Successful consultation requires a detailed methodology, which indigenous peoples are providing in their consultation plans. Rather than simply demanding specific outcomes, Costa Rica’s indigenous peoples are placing emphasis on the process and capacity-building outcomes. They have recognized the importance of first building capacity in order to support pre-consultation and consultation processes.

- **Proactive Involvement**: Indigenous people have succeeded in providing strong input into the REDD+ preparation process because they have been willing to engage in REDD+, are highly organized, and clearly articulate their positions. FONAFIFO has played an important role by facilitating discussion spaces that allow indigenous representatives to bring important contributions to the negotiating table, consolidate their organizational structure, and articulate the themes that constitute a common agenda among the indigenous territories.

- **Strengthening a REDD+ Indígena Strategy**: One of the primary themes of interest for Costa Rica’s indigenous peoples is a targeted Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program for indigenous peoples. This priority aligns well with similar “Indigenous REDD+” initiatives in other countries, and could serve as a model for a REDD+ program that responds to indigenous needs and cosmocision.
Despite these positive developments, the early engagement process with indigenous peoples in the national REDD+ dialogue in Costa Rica does not proceed without challenges. Some of the challenges confronting Costa Rica include:

- **Integration of REDD+ Processes**: There is a need to strengthen the alignment and monitoring of REDD+ processes in Costa Rica, which currently lack coordination and are occurring out of sequence. Clear methodological guidelines to direct the consultation process do not yet exist. This deficiency in integration raises concerns regarding how the indigenous consultation process will inform broader REDD+ preparation. It is important that indigenous peoples insist upon establishment of work plans that are clear, concise, and integrate the numerous REDD+ preparation processes.

- **Indigenous Governance**: Nineteen of the country’s 24 indigenous territories are currently participating in the consultation process described in this study, led by their Integral Development Associations (Asociaciones de Desarrollo Integral, ADIs)—indigenous governance bodies established by Costa Rican law. However, some stakeholders have voiced concern about the representativity of the ADIs. Furthermore, five indigenous territories have decided not to participate in the indigenous consultation framework constructed by the 19 territories. Both indigenous leaders and FONAFIFO must maintain open lines of communication with these five territories to ensure that they have the option to participate in the future, if they wish to. It is necessary to continue informing these territories in order to facilitate their participation in the manner they prefer.

- **Land Tenure**: Given the very high percentage of indigenous territories in possession of non-indigenous people, land tenure conflict has real potential to complicate REDD+ implementation in Costa Rica. FONAFIFO and indigenous people should advance processes that contribute to resolving the land tenure conflicts, and indigenous peoples should use REDD+ as a tool to seek dialogue with the government regarding taking action on these issues.

- **The Complexity of REDD+**: The complex nature of REDD+ provides substantial barriers to stakeholder participation. These obstacles must be overcome through long-term, consistent capacity building throughout the REDD+ process, with clearly delineated responsibilities for indigenous peoples, the government, and other rural stakeholders.
INTRODUCTION

At the global level, Costa Rica has long been considered a pioneering country in environmental policy and forest conservation. Although cattle ranching and population growth drove the country’s deforestation rates to the highest in the world during the 1980s, the federal government generated new targeted national policy interventions, which succeeded in decreasing deforestation rates after 1985. Costa Rica has achieved net annual gain in forest cover since 2000. Although this change in forest cover is also attributed to economic factors, the remarkable reversal in deforestation trends was achieved in large degree through reform of national forest law, creation of innovative environmental programs, and proactive conservation efforts. Today, Costa Rica’s 2.6 million hectares of forests cover 52.4% of the national territory.

Prominent among Costa Rica’s environmental initiatives is its innovative national Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program, which was established by the Forestry Law 7575 in 1996. One of the groundbreaking efforts of its kind, the PES program incentivizes conservation and forest management by awarding payments to small landholders for the environmental services that their land and management provides. From the period 1997–2012, the implementing agency of the PES program—the National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO)—signed 12,528 contracts with private landowners and indigenous communities for a total 934,274.6 hectares. The long history of the national PES program in Costa Rica establishes the country as a clear candidate for development of a national strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+).

Costa Rica’s long record of conservation and management of forest resources, including the creation of FONAFIFO as a national government ministry to offer financing for small and medium producers, provides a strong enabling framework for REDD+ implementation. Additionally, Costa Rica has committed to carbon neutrality by the year 2021, providing the political will necessary to advance a REDD+ agenda. This accumulated experience, coupled with high institutional capacity, makes Costa Rica a REDD+ forerunner with the potential to generate important models and set precedents. Indeed, the assessment of Costa Rica’s Readiness Plan Proposal (R-PP) undertaken by the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) notes, “Costa Rica’s pioneering [of] a future REDD mechanism would provide a learning case of global relevance.”

REDD+ in Costa Rica

The total cost expected for REDD+ preparation activities in Costa Rica is US$7.5 million. Currently, the Costa Rican government receives multilateral and bilateral funding for REDD+ preparation from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), GIZ, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (UN-REDD), and the United States Department of State. GIZ has provided financial support for civil society, indigenous, and campesino participation and capacity building, as well as the cultural mediators program, forest inventories, and the Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system. UN-REDD targeted support is financing a consultancy to design a Safeguard Information System. Funds from the U.S. Department of State support stakeholder engagement, with Conservation International as the implementing partner. NORAD supports a project entitled “Lessons Learned and Capacity Development to Implement REDD+ Initiatives: the Experience of Costa Rica” (“Lecciones aprendidas y desarrollo de capacidades para aplicar iniciativas REDD+: las experiencias de Costa Rica”), executed by the National Biodiversity Institute (Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad) and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE, Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñan-
za), as well as another project executed by the Verified Carbon Standard. Additional funding of the national REDD+ strategy will be provided by the national government of Costa Rica and the Ecomarkets II Specific Investment Loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), which is part of the World Bank Group.

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), a trust fund administered by the World Bank, is the primary source of finance for the REDD+ preparation process in Costa Rica. Following Costa Rica’s selection as a participant country for the FCPF Readiness Fund in July 2008, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications (MI-NAET) signed the US$200,000 FCPF Formulation grant in June 2009. These funds supported development of the country’s R-PP over the following year. The R-PP was approved by the FCPF Participants Committee in June 2010 and a US$3.6 million R-PP Grant was signed in July 2012, subsequent to a World Bank due diligence mission and the implementation of a national workshop as part of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) process in May 2011. Costa Rica officially presented its Emissions Reduction Plan Idea Note (ER-PIN) in March 2013, and became the first country to present an ER-PIN to the FCPF Carbon Fund, conferring eligibility to receive performance-based payments for a future REDD+ emissions reduction program. On September 10, 2013 Costa Rica and the World Bank signed a Letter of Intent to negotiate an Emission Reductions Payment Agreement (ERPA) worth up to US$63 million or 12 million tons of CO₂. In October 2013, FONAFIFO submitted its Midterm Report, which summarizes REDD+ preparation progress to date and makes the country eligible for an additional US$5 million to support readiness activities.

Current REDD+ preparation activities in Costa Rica include early dialogue and engagement with indigenous peoples and local communities, design of an MRV system and permanent national forest inventory, development of a Safeguards Information System to respond to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) safeguards, the SESA process, and finalization of the National REDD+ Strategy (Figure 2). Although Costa Rica does not yet have an approved National REDD+ Strategy document (Estrategia Nacional REDD+, ENA-

![Figure 2. Costa Rica’s REDD+ Process Schematic](Adapted from FONAFIFO, July 5, 2013)
REDD+), the R-PP outlines eight primary strategic actions (Figure 3). Costa Rica is currently carrying out a phase of early dialogue and REDD+ preparation, and plans to initiate its pre-consultation phase during the first half of 2014.

FONAFIFO is the coordinating entity responsible for REDD+ implementation in Costa Rica. A REDD+ Secretariat directs the technical work for REDD+ preparation, and is comprised of a FONAFIFO coordinator, social experts, an MRV coordinator, and a communications specialist. An Executive Committee was created by MINAET decree in 2012, consisting of one representative from each of the stakeholder groups that may be impacted by REDD+: indigenous territories, industrial timber, small forest producers, the National Bank System, the Ministry of Agriculture and Ranching (MAG), the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), the academic sector, and civil society. A final institutional arrangement to support REDD+ implementation is the inter-institutional commission, which incorporates institutions in charge of protected areas (SINAC), electricity and telecommunications (ICE), planning and development (MIDEPLAN), municipal promotion advising (IFAM), aqueducts and sewers (AyA), public credit, treasury, housing (MIVAH), education (INA), rural development (INDER), and meteorology (IMN).

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN COSTA RICA**

Eight distinct indigenous groups are present in Costa Rica: Bribri, Cabécar, Terraba, Brunca, Gnâbe, Chorotega, Huetar, and Malecu. These indigenous peoples comprise 2.4% of the country’s population, according to the 2011 census. Despite the low percentage of the country’s population identified as indigenous relative to other countries in the region, indigenous peoples possess 7% of Costa Rica’s national territory. There are 282,866.93 hectares of forests located within indigenous territories—a quantity that represents 11.9% of the national forest cover. Due to the substantial forest resources held by indigenous territories, 21 of the country’s 24 indige-

---

**Figure 3. What are the primary strategies identified by Costa Rica’s R-PP?**

1. Strengthen the National System of Conservation Areas to control illegal timber harvesting and forest fires
2. Integrate carbon capture of national parks and biological reserves
3. Registry and Regularization of “Special Territories,” including indigenous territories
4. Maintain long-term coverage of the PES Program
5. Expand the coverage of the PES Program
6. Production and consumption of sustainable wood under certification schemes
7. Strengthen development of the College of Agricultural Engineers
8. Create sources of finance to support the implementation of the Strategy

---

**Figure 4. Institutional Structure for REDD+ implementation in Costa Rica**

Adapted from the SESA Work Plan: REDD+ Costa Rica by the REDD+ Secretariat
nous territories have participated in the national PES program, which provides an important source of resources, and often constitutes the primary source of government support to a given territory.

Costa Rica’s first indigenous territories were officially created by the Indigenous Law of 1977, which establishes indigenous reserves as “inalienable and imprescriptible, non-transferable, and exclusive for the indigenous communities that inhabit them.” The law prohibits non-indigenous people from owning property in indigenous territories, and provides legal means to expropriate and compensate non-indigenous landowners with property or possession within indigenous territories. However, such legal means have not been broadly implemented, and the presence of non-indigenous people in indigenous territories is still a widespread, serious problem.

The Indigenous Law also established the creation of Integral Development Associations (Asociaciones de Desarrollo Integral, ADIs) as the officially recognized internal governance system for each territory. The ADI administers the collective land title, and has an executive committee composed of local leaders elected by ADI members. Membership in ADIs is voluntary; generally, 15–50% of community members are ADI members. ADIs are often criticized as a non-traditional organizational system imposed upon indigenous peoples, and it is suggested that the ADIs are not always representative of the entire population of the territories or their traditional governance structure. However, many indigenous peoples identify with the ADIs due to the loss of traditional indigenous decision-making structures that occurred through acculturation processes. Some territories have effectively created a complementarity between the legal structure and the traditional governance structure.

Proposed legislation entitled “Project of the Law of Development and Autonomy of Indigenous Peoples” (“Proyecto de Ley de Desarrollo Autónomo de los Pueblos Indígenas”) seeks to abolish the ADIs and replace them with a new governing system and body called Indigenous Territorial Council (Consejo Indígena Territorial). However, not all indigenous territories are in agreement with the Project, and some consider it to be out of date. Although the proposed legislation has been brought to the national legislature several times over the past 20 years, it has not been approved due to differences attributed to the distinct indigenous peoples. A national-level dialogue with indigenous peoples (“Mesa de Diálogo”) has been convened to consider possible new forms of indigenous governance, among other issues of relevance to indigenous peoples: territorial security, public policies and development, and consultations around the Diquís Hydroelectric Project.

**Consultation and Participation in the Development of a National REDD+ Strategy**

FCPF procedures require Costa Rica to comply with the safeguard policies of the World Bank, its delivery partner, to implement REDD+ activities financed by the FCPF. For example, activities that impact indigenous peoples are governed by the World Bank’s Operational Policy 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples, which seeks to ensure that the “development process fully respects the dignity, human rights, economies, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples,” and requires free, prior, and informed consultation resulting in broad community support.

Beyond World Bank requirements, the FCPF delineates procedures and principles that are more demanding than the World Bank’s policies. The FCPF and UN-REDD Programme’s “Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness” provide an important resource for
carrying out effective consultations (Figure 6). The guiding principles emphasize consideration of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, and describe a highly participatory process. The guidance underscores the importance of consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, transparency and timely access to information, facilitation of dialogue and information exchange, consultation with indigenous peoples through their own processes and institutions, an emphasis on land tenure and resource rights, and creation of grievance redress mechanisms. Finally, the document specifies that consultations must begin prior to project design, a Consultation and Participation Plan should be developed, all relevant stakeholder groups should be represented in the consultation process, and records of consultations should be disseminated.

The FCPF also requires implementation of a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) for any country receiving FCPF support for REDD+ readiness. The goal of SESA is to identify risks and integrate key environmental and social considerations into REDD+ readiness through analytical and participatory processes with stakeholders. SESA provides an opportunity to promote stakeholder participation through identification and prioritization of key REDD+ strategies, policy analysis, and identification of institutional and capacity gaps. The result of the SESA process is an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)—a tool to manage environmental and social risks and mitigate potential adverse impacts during REDD+ implementation.

Finally, World Bank and FCPF policies emphasize that countries must adhere to standards outlined in national law, as well as international instruments to which they are signatories. In the case of Costa Rica, compliance with international treaties includes the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 (ILO 169) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which guarantees the right of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) to indigenous peoples. Costa Rica does not currently incorporate FPIC and ILO principles in its national legal framework, although the Office of the President is reportedly taking steps to do so. According to FONAFIFO, free, prior, and informed consent will only apply to indigenous peoples and campesinos in the case of REDD+; an “open public consultation” will be held for other stakeholders.26

Institutional Arrangements for Indigenous Consultation

The Indigenous Consultation Plan

A unique aspect of the REDD+ readiness process in Costa Rica is the consultation plan for the ENA-REDD+ proposed by the country’s indigenous territories. The “Indigenous Consultation Plan in the Process of the Elaboration of the National REDD+ Strategy of Costa Rica” (hereinafter “the plan”) was proposed in late 2011 by the Red Indígena Bribri y Cabecar (RIBCA)—an indigenous organization which coordinates the eight Bribri and Cabecar territories of the Atlantic region of Costa Rica.27 Following several months of preparation, a draft of the plan was presented to national indigenous leaders in January 2012. During 2012, the construction of the plan continued during four workshops, of which FONAFIFO participated in the final two. After revisions by territorial leaders in September

Figure 6. Schematic of Consultation Steps
Adapted from Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness by the FCPF and UN-REDD Programme25
2012, the plan was approved in December 2012 by 19 indigenous territories and the Association of Indigenous Women of Talamanca (ACOMUITA)—the only non-territorial organization to sign the plan and be officially integrated into the national indigenous consultation process. The document was subsequently presented to FONAFIFO, which agreed to provide financial and technical assistance to execute the plan.

The consultation plan outlines the framework for an inclusive and participatory process to incorporate the indigenous cosmovision and indigenous rights into the construction of the ENA-REDD+—a cosmovision which is comprised of the cultural pillars of territoriality, a traditional governance system, a system of cultural production, cultural norms of spiritual and social arrangements, and cultural norms of coexistence and relationship with natural resources. To carry out such a participatory process, the plan created by the 19 territories underscores the principles of national consensus, equitable and just benefits for the owners of the forest, reliable technical and scientific information, good evaluation and monitoring of goals, creation of inclusive working groups, and provision of appropriate information. The document identifies three principal objectives that it seeks to achieve through the consultation plan:

1. Design a process of consultation which permits the accumulation of more social capital.
2. Design a process of consultation that improves governance in favor of the representation of stakeholders in the REDD+ decision making process.
3. Design a process of consultation that allows for the construction of a REDD+ preparation phase with a shared vision of all stakeholders.

Procedurally, the consultation plan establishes a five-tiered organizational structure (Figure 7, next page) and four chronological phases (Table 1, next page). The first organizational level consists of the territorial indigenous organizations (ADIs), which are grouped into four Regional Territorial Blocks (BTRs) according to their sociocultural characteristics and geographic location. The BTRs form the second level of organization. ACOMUITA is incorporated into BTR Atlántico, led by RIBCA, toward the goal of strengthening the gender component of the consultation process. The third level of organization is a national assembly comprised of approximately 48 leaders from the four BTRs. The fourth level is a National Indigenous Technical Secretariat, with one technical specialist selected from each BTR. Finally, the fifth level is an elected indigenous delegate who serves on the national REDD+ Executive Committee coordinated by FONAFIFO. In May 2013, Carlos Cascante was elected to this position, with Yuliana Andrade Montezuma of the Gnäbes elected as the alternate.

According to the National Indigenous Agreement that accompanies the consultation plan, the indigenous pre-consultation and consultation process will be carried out through the following phases:

1. Dissemination of information to the indigenous population.
2. Consultation of the National REDD+ Strategy proposal.
3. Systematization of the distinct perspectives in each BTR resulting from consultation.
4. Integration of all four BTR perspectives at the national level.

Furthermore, the implementation of a national training program for cultural mediators, described subsequently, serves as an initial phase to facilitate the subsequent process. Although the document outlines a national plan for consultation, it requires that each BTR establish its own context-specific plan for consultation in the territories it encompasses. The ADIs will be responsible for facilitating the consultation process in accordance with the context of each territory, although the national government will carry out the consultation itself. The resulting information and territorial planning will be synthesized in order to facilitate consolidation at higher levels of the organizational structure—first at the regional level of each BTR, and then at the national level. The final document will reflect the position and proposals of indigenous peoples from the 19 territories involved in REDD+ consultation. The plan also urges indigenous peoples living outside their territories to return for REDD+ consultations.

The consultation plan includes an investment plan for the process of consultation, including an itemized budget for a total of US$1.1 million. The investment plan specifies a budget for each of the four BTRs, including resources for technical and legal support to carry out the consultations, travel funds, integration of the consultation results across all BTRs, development of an Indigenous PES proposal, and co-execution of specific studies. Allocation of funds for each BTR is based on its size and organizational capacity.

Finally, the document describes objectives for a participatory monitoring and evaluation plan including both “political monitoring” and “physical monitoring.”
Figure 7. Organizational Structure of the Indigenous Consultation
Adapted from figure courtesy of RIBCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Proposed time (months)</th>
<th>Expected Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Information at the level of leaders and the general population   | 6                      | • Indigenous leaders and councils of elders or territorial authorities define a consultation plan for their respective territory  
• Information is disseminated to the population regarding climate change, REDD+ strategy, and life plans (if any) |
| 2. Consultation of the National REDD+ Strategy proposal              | 3                      | • The National REDD+ Strategy approach is consulted                                
• Indigenous proposals and approaches are created and systematized    |
| 3. Systematization of the Territorial Regional Blocks (BTR)          | 2                      | • One document of territorial approaches is systematized for each BTR              |
| 4. Integration of the BTR results at the national level              | 3                      | • Indigenous proposals are integrated at the national level for the process of harmonization with other sectors |
| **Months in Total**                                                  | **14**                 |                                                                                  |

Table 1. Phases of the Indigenous Consultation Plan
Adapted from the Indigenous Consultation Plan in the Process of the Elaboration of the National REDD+ Strategy of Costa Rica\(^7\)
monitoring—to be undertaken at the territorial level—should include evaluation criteria and indicators, creation of protocols, and formation of a monitoring team with the necessary tools to carry out evaluation. Political monitoring—to be undertaken at the level of regional organizations, such as RIBCA—is intended to ensure proper application of indigenous rights, including respect for national legislation regarding indigenous territories and protected areas. Although this participatory monitoring and evaluation component is in the initial stages of development, indigenous peoples are moving forward with plans to create a grievance redress mechanism in collaboration with FONAFIFO. FONAFIFO is supporting monitoring efforts through a capacity-building program carried out by its Executive Secretariat, which will include MRV. Furthermore, the Executive Secretariat member responsible for MRV is coordinating with indigenous peoples to develop participatory monitoring.

### The Cultural Mediators Program

An innovative component of the indigenous consultation plan is the implementation of a national “cultural mediators” program, which seeks to strengthen indigenous knowledge of climate change and REDD+ while facilitating the dissemination of information necessary for REDD+ pre-consultation and consultation processes. The cultural mediators program was developed jointly by RIBCA and CATIE, and began with a pilot project carried out in the Talamanca region in 2012 with the support of the ClimateWorks Foundation. The project was subsequently scaled-up to the national level for implementation with six of Costa Rica’s eight indigenous groups, and was adapted to the contexts of the distinct indigenous territories. The program seeks to provide technical assistance to the indigenous communities in the themes of climate change and REDD+ by integrating scientific elements with cultural and cosmological elements in order to reflect the indigenous cultural reality and territorial context. The desired outcome of the program is for cultural mediators to be able understand and communicate highly complex concepts, such as REDD+, in a manner that is comprehensible and approachable for local communities. Such a mechanism will promote participation and discussion during the REDD+ consultation process and in the national indigenous agenda, ensuring that proposals from the indigenous sector to reflect respect for rights and equitable distribution of benefits.

Guaranteeing free, prior, and informed consent requires innovative and culturally adapted tools. The cultural mediators program seeks to contribute to the creation of such tools by strengthening and integrating indigenous knowledge, developing participatory methods to assist in the teaching-learning processes, offering training in techniques and dynamics for implementing local workshops and facilitating discussion spaces with community members, and creating tools to support REDD+ consultation at the territorial level. Beyond providing a base for implementation of the indigenous consultation, the cultural mediators program seeks to strengthen indigenous cultural identity and empower indigenous communities. Cultural mediation has also served as an important conflict resolution mechanism, given the frequency of territorial conflicts in Costa Rica caused by insufficient information or the inability of community members to understand information in the manner it is communicated.

Cultural mediators are indigenous people characterized by their ability to integrate traditional indigenous cultural knowledge and non-indigenous concepts, and subsequently transmit this knowledge to indigenous community members. The mediators must identify with their own culture, speak the indigenous language of their territory, and should represent the diverse sectors of the community, including elders, youth, and women. The mediators will receive the support of the ADIs and the regional consultation coordinators to implement the indigenous consultation plan, and are responsible for systemizing the information provided by their territories.

The cultural mediators program consists of three phases. Phase one focuses on the process of socializing the program and constructing training manuals. During this phase, workshops were carried out in each BTR to share the experiences of the pilot cultural mediators project, to understand the local indigenous context, and to formalize collaboration with local authorities. The first phase also initiated the coordination and implementation of cultural conceptualization and reflection workshops in each territorial level. The workshops have generated information to guide the creation of training manuals for the cultural mediators, adapted to the context of each territory. These training manuals incorporate cultural and cosmological elements from the Huetares, Chorotegas, Malecuses, Gnäbes, and BriBri-Cabécar peoples. To date, two of the manuals have been completed, and the remaining manuals are expected to be finalized in March or April 2014. Additionally, didactic materials for training and workshops will be created during this first phase. The second phase is the implementation of the training program for the cultural mediators, which will include a
four to five day training course. The course will integrate technical, scientific, and traditional information in order to strengthen the REDD+ consultation process in the territories. Finally, the third phase, focused on information provision, will coincide with REDD+ pre-consultation and consultation, during which the cultural mediators will support the ADIs in their territories. The pre-consultation is scheduled to begin in the territories in March or April 2014, and the formal consultation process will follow during January–March 2015. The results of the pre-consultation and consultation processes will be synthesized by RIBCA to create a single national document.

The cultural mediators program is funded entirely by a US$170,000 grant from GIZ, which was invested in the production of the training manuals and the implementation of training courses for the cultural mediators. In addition to the process-oriented support provided by CATIE, RIBCA plays a fundamental role in coordinating the program. Given that RIBCA does not have the legal standing to receive funds, the program’s finances are managed by ADITICA—the ADI with the most financial management experience. FONAFIFO supports the process by providing accompaniment and assistance during training workshops to reinforce topics related to REDD+.

Implementation of the National Indigenous Consultation Plan through Regional Consultation Plans

In order to implement the pre-consultation and consultation processes at the national level, each BTR has developed its own regional consultation plan. The BTR consultation plans expand upon the framework established in the national consultation plan, to include a methodology for the consultation, locations and numbers of workshops to be held in each territory, required technical support, a board of directors within each BTR to guide the process, a schedule of activities, and an itemized budget. The document delineates two phases corresponding to pre-consultation and consultation. The objective of the first phase is to facilitate broad participation throughout the territories, comprehension of information, and discussion of this information. This phase will be supported by the cultural mediators, who will convey information about climate change and REDD+ in a comprehensible manner. However, the responsibility for carrying out the consultations remains with FONAFIFO. The pre-consultation serves to promote discussion among community members, and will be an important first opportunity for indigenous peoples to consider the risks of REDD+ and decide whether to give their consent to the ENA-REDD+. 
If they believe that participation in REDD+ will have positive impacts for indigenous peoples, they will propose themes for integration into the ENA-REDD+. Although the planning and implementation process is led by the ADIs, the pre-consultation and consultation seek to incorporate the entire indigenous society in order to achieve an inclusive process.

During the consultation phase, the ENA-REDD+ will be discussed and consulted to ensure that the results and output from the pre-consultation phase have been integrated into the draft ENA-REDD+. Each territory will hold assemblies to familiarize community members with the ENA-REDD+ proposal, discuss the principles it contains, and define the safeguards perceived as necessary for implementation of the ENA-REDD+ in indigenous territories. Assemblies and meetings will be carried out in designated communities in each territory, following the sequence of initial “informative meetings” followed by “pre-consultation workshops” at a later date (Table 2).

Each BTR has created a board of directors which will meet at least monthly throughout the pre-consultation and consultation processes (Figure 9, next page). The board of directors consists of one representative from each ADI, a representative from FONAFIFO and, in the case of BTR Atlántico, a representative from ACOMUITA. The BTRs will each contract a regional coordinator, as well as an indigenous technical specialist to create a proposal for incorporation of the five “special themes” for REDD+ identified by indigenous peoples:

1. Indigenous Payment for Environmental Services (PES) Program
2. Strategy to clarify and regularize land titling in indigenous territories
3. Strategy to integrate management of primary forest, secondary forests, and regeneration from the indigenous cosmovision
4. Relationship between protected areas and indigenous territories
5. Model of participatory monitoring and evaluation

The budget for each BTR varies from US$60,000 for the BTR Pacifico Central, which consists of two territories, to US$196,000 in the case of the large BTR Atlántico, which consists of eight territories. In the case of BTR Atlántico, an additional technical specialist will be contracted to create a plan for the integration of women in REDD+. Two of the four BTRs have finalized and approved their consultation plans.

The regional consultation plans have wider implications beyond REDD+ consultation. Not only are they fundamental to operationalize the national indigenous consultation plan for REDD+, but they will also be useful and valid from a perspective broader than REDD+. The structure and form of the plans establish a methodology for consultation and indigenous engagement that could be implemented for diverse projects with possible impacts on Costa Rica’s indigenous territories, and could be modified to obtain indigenous peoples’ free, prior, and informed consent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territories</th>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Informational Assembly: Introduction of the Consultation Plan</th>
<th>Workshops and Assemblies: Information</th>
<th>Workshops and Assemblies: Analysis and Proposal</th>
<th>Technical Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADITICA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADITIBRI</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kekúldi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayni</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajo Chirripó</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto Chirripo</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayal Awari</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tellre</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Assemblies and workshops planned in BTR Atlántico during the pre-consultation and consultation phases
Adapted from the Technical Plan for BTR Atlántico
The REDD+ process in Costa Rica is currently in the six-month phase of information and early dialogue. During this phase, FONAFIFO has coordinated periodic meetings with indigenous leaders to inform, coordinate, and build capacity on REDD+; share information, seek feedback from indigenous peoples on aspects of the national REDD+ process; and provide a space for indigenous leaders to solidify their organizational structure and plan territorial consultation processes.

As an example of such a meeting, FONAFIFO organized a two-day event in San Jose in May 2013, entitled “The First Indigenous Workshop in the framework of REDD+,” which was attended by ADI leaders and some cultural mediators. The workshop included presentations from the Minister of the Environment and the Director of FONAFIFO; the presentation of the Indigenous Consultation Plan by an indigenous leader; a presentation by CATIE on the mediators program; presentations by FONAFIFO on the REDD+ Strategy, the Safeguard Information System (SIS), and MRV; group work organized by BTR; presentations from each BTR on their progress towards establishing an institutional structure for REDD+ and a regional consultation plan; nomination of two indigenous representatives to the REDD+ Executive Committee; and election of the technical coordinator for the indigenous consultation process. More recently, FONAFIFO held several regional meetings with indigenous peoples to inform and receive feedback on the proposed Safeguard Information System. CATIE has also held initial training sessions with cultural mediators from all territories, during which they learned about the cultural mediators program and REDD+ concepts.

By agreeing to assist in implementation of the Indigenous Consultation Plan, FONAFIFO has transferred both financial and logistical responsibility for the consultation pro-
cess to the BTRs. The full US$1.1 million budget outlined by the Indigenous Consultation Plan will be provided by the US$3.6 million Readiness Preparation grant from the FCPF. These funds were transferred by the World Bank to FONAFIFO, which in turn will directly contract the designated ADI in each BTR—generally the ADI with the most prior experience administering funds. Despite promises that the transfer would occur months ago, not all BTRs have yet received funds. The process of transferring the agreed-upon funds to the BTRs has been far lengthier than anticipated, first delayed by the World Bank's strict requirements, and later due to interpretation of Costa Rican law. According to FONAFIFO, the logistical and legal problems have been resolved, and the disbursement of funds now depends on approval of the economic and technical proposals included in the regional consultation plans of each BTR. The remaining BTRs will receive funds once necessary adjustments are made to their technical plans. Initiating the pre-consultation process is dependent on the disbursement of these FCPF funds.

FONAFIFO views the early engagement and consultation processes as a collaborative process with indigenous peoples, in which responsibility for information dissemination and coordination of territorial-level consultations is shared. For example, territorial consultations will be carried out by social experts from FONAFIFO, along with ADI leaders and cultural mediators, who serve as educators and facilitators. The indigenous peoples are involved in the decisions of how, when, and who to consult, although FONAFIFO is ultimately responsible for carrying out the plans agreed upon with the country's indigenous peoples.

FONAFIFO describes its role as a coordinator and source of finance, and the institution's REDD+ Secretariat seems enthusiastic about the consultation and participation of indigenous peoples. ADI leaders involved in the consultation perceive a similar role for FONAFIFO, identifying the agency as a primary actor and acknowledging the importance of a government institution to facilitate the process. However, the ADIs perceive themselves as driving and defining the consultation process, with FONAFIFO serving as a liaison or intermediary. Most ADI leaders feel that FONAFIFO has been respectful of indigenous culture and has carried out the process well thus far, although some believe that pressure from indigenous people has provided the impetus for FONAFIFO to act. The only perceived shortcomings of FONAFIFO's engagement, according to indigenous representatives, were the previously described delay in the transfer of funds for territorial-level consultations, as well as issues with travel funds for meet-

ings. Delays in receiving funds from GIZ to support participant travel to a workshop in San Jose forced some indigenous representatives to return home without travel funds, although the travels allowances were deposited in individuals’ accounts later that night.

Five of Costa Rica's indigenous territories, led by the Asociación Regional Aborigen de la Dikes (ARADIKES), have elected not to participate in the early engagement process described above. Although all 24 territories were invited to attend workshops and incorporate themselves into the organizational structure established by the Indigenous Consultation Plan, only 19 of the territories did so; five territories in the southwest of the country have declined to participate thus far. These five territories have indicated that they would prefer a separate dialogue and a different organizational structure, due to the distinct realities and issues they face. FONAFIFO is engaged in a separate dialogue with these territories to define their involvement and participation in the National REDD+ Strategy.
The SESA Process

As previously described, Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) is the risk assessment tool required for REDD+ readiness grant recipients under the FCPF. Intended to incorporate social and environmental concerns into the REDD+ Strategy, the SESA process is closely linked to REDD+ consultation. The SESA process requires targeted outreach, preparation of a SESA work plan, evaluation of REDD+ strategy options in relation to the identified risks and priorities, creation of an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) consistent with safeguard policies, and application of the ESMF. Costa Rica initiated the SESA process with a national workshop on May 4-5, 2011. A total of 130 stakeholders attended the workshop, divided into working groups from the indigenous, campesino, academic, private, and government sectors, along with international bodies and nongovernmental organizations. Each sector identified causes of deforestation and degradation from its perspective, and the risks and opportunities for possible REDD+ strategies.

The SESA Work Plan, published in October 2013, proposes a critical route of activities, dialogue, and feedback based on analytic studies and ESMF preparation. The document lays out two principle objectives for the SESA process, which are: the creation of technical information to back up a proposal for public policies in the framework of ENA-REDD+, and the involvement of campesinos and indigenous peoples in order to obtain their feedback. The calendar identifies milestones for the process, including the creation of sociopolitical arrangements of the different stakeholders participating in REDD+, such as the coordination of the cultural mediators program. Other milestones include participant mapping, diagnostics of the indigenous and campesino sectors, technical diagnostic studies, definition of safeguards, and policy proposals. Publication of the SESA report is planned for December 2014, followed by the ESMF in July 2015—although the draft Terms of Reference for the ESMF has already been submitted to the World Bank. The budget for SESA is US$495,000, the majority of which is dedicated to studies related to the aforementioned five “special themes” identified by indigenous peoples, plus the additional themes of sustainable forest management on private properties overlapping with protected wildlife areas, and REDD+ benefits associated with forest management. Finally, the SESA Work Plan delineates the links to the other ENA-REDD+ formulation processes, including a communications strategy and the early engagement process.

Indigenous Perspective on REDD+

The indigenous peoples participating in Costa Rica’s REDD+ dialogue clearly perceive REDD+ as an opportunity to advance an indigenous agenda with the government based on the indigenous cosmovision: territorial governance, rights to land, and rights to natural resources. In particular, the development of a differentiated indigenous mode of PES has taken priority among Costa Rica’s indigenous peoples. This differentiated PES would be designed specifically to respond to indigenous concerns and priorities, and would incorporate indigenous cultural values. Indigenous representatives explain that effectively incorporating this indigenous cosmovision would require recognition of the multiple values, goods, and services of forests rather than focusing exclusively on carbon. Respect for indigenous culture is a frequently mentioned theme; indigenous peoples hope that “Indigenous PES” will include and measure “relevant cultural aspects” on which indigenous communities have historically depended, including the animals, forests, water, and medicinal plants used in daily life and cultural acts.

Many indigenous leaders criticize the “no touch” ap-
proach of the current PES program, which does not permit the harvest of products from the parcels of forest enrolled in the program. Although these absolute restrictions apply only to the Forest Conservation modality of PES, the majority of indigenous territories receive payments under this modality. In general, the “no touch” approach is indicative of broader restrictions imposed by the government on the use of indigenous territories beyond PES regulations. Indigenous leaders emphasize that certain types of forest use and production must be allowed under an Indigenous PES program, including harvest of medicinal plants, palms for house roofs, wood for house construction, and hunting animals. Recognition of sacred areas was also mentioned, including areas located inside national parks. Representatives further emphasize that Indigenous PES must expand the number of hectares of indigenous territories enrolled and increase per hectare payments. Many territorial leaders explain that PES is a substantial—or even the primary—source of income for their territories, and describe the various social and economic projects that have been undertaken with PES funds, including health trainings, road construction, projects to improve cacao production, and legal costs to recuperate indigenous lands. From the perspective of FONAFIFO, the basis of Indigenous PES would be strengthening the existing PES program and expanding its coverage, thereby adjusting the program to the needs of the indigenous territories. Furthermore, the participation of indigenous territories in REDD+ would consist of registration and regularization of land titling—a theme that coincides with the clarification and regularization of land titling agenda driven by the indigenous peoples.

Indigenous representatives identify a variety of potential benefits from participation in a REDD+ strategy. Nearly all ADI leaders mentioned the economic benefits that REDD+ and Indigenous PES would offer their territories, emphasizing the substantial economic necessities in most indigenous territories. According to the 2000 census, the percent of Costa Rica’s population with all of four basic needs met—housing, education, economic activity, and social security—was only 22.9% among the indigenous population, compared to 60.4% among the non-indigenous population. Among the indigenous population, those who live in indigenous territories have an even higher percentage of individuals whose basic needs are not met. Indigenous representatives believe that income from REDD+ could contribute to poverty alleviation by repairing roads and houses, and supporting sustainable development, education, and tourism development. Furthermore, most representatives identified the environmental benefits of participation in REDD+, such as reforestation, restoration, “ecosystem equilibrium,” and long-term maintenance of natural resources, water, and animals. The benefits of preservation of culture and language were also mentioned. As one representative explained, benefits of REDD+ are not only economic, but “transcendental.” Finally, leaders noted the REDD+ will enable community members to learn about climate change and environmental issues.

When asked about the risks of participating in a REDD+ strategy, the majority of ADI representatives did not perceive threats or express concerns—they view their participation as entirely voluntary. As summarized by one individual, “I don’t feel that there is a big danger. If we see risk, we will simply decide not to participate.” Another individual explained that although they do not view participation in a REDD+ strategy to be risky, they recognize the need for sufficient information before committing their involvement. In the same vein, ADI leaders asserted that there are no pre-conditions or issues that must be resolved before initiating REDD+ activities. When asked about unresolved land tenure issues—including the substantial percentage of indigenous territories in hands of non-indigenous peoples—leaders usually stated that land titling is a long-term process that they cannot reasonably expect to be resolved before initiating a REDD+ strategy. Rather, they feel that land titling should be resolved “along the path,” and that a well-planned ENA-REDD+ that is negotiated by indigenous peoples and the government is a very important step to towards secure land tenure and land regularization.

In contrast, some non-ADI representatives did perceive risks associated with REDD+ participation, stemming in part from concerns about the representativity of the ADIs. The Mesa Indígena, an NGO, and the women’s organization ACOMUITA have voiced the concern that ADIs are only one of the myriad distinct organizations in any given indigenous territory, along with groups of women, young people, elders, producers, students, legal tribunals, art, and traditional medicine—and thus should not be the only voice heard in REDD+ negotiation and decision-making. However, the regional consultation plans consider and provide opportunities for the involvement of the diverse groups in each indigenous territory. The Mesa Indígena asserts that issues of indigenous governance and land titling must be addressed before embarking on REDD+, as well as carrying out a robust consultation which adheres to new consultation procedures that the national government is currently developing.

ACOMUITA, an association of women that process cacao
to make chocolate, is the only indigenous organization aside from the ADIs that is incorporated into the structure of the indigenous consultation plan. The women of ACOMUITA are concerned that REDD+ is a potential political and organizational threat, and they stress the importance of distributing funds equitably and ensuring that these funds reach producers. According to representatives of ACOMUITA, families in the indigenous territories do not always receive the benefits of PES, and they perceive the same risk for REDD+. To address these concerns and include women’s voices in the construction of the ENA-REDD+, ACOMUITA submitted a US$10,000 proposal to the World Bank in March 2013. The budget included funds for organizational capacity building, advocacy in public policies, training, and creation of a development strategy. In the field of public policy, one of the proposed goals is to incorporate women into the REDD+ process. Although ACOMUITA made a verbal request to FONAFIFO for such support and received a positive response, it has not yet presented a formal proposal. FONAFIFO planned to carry out a workshop with ACOMUITA in November 2013 to the organization establish its role during the preparation of ENA-REDD+ and create its proposal. The project would be financed with the additional FCPF funds that FONAFIFO hopes to receive from successful completion of its mid-term report.

**Campesino Perspective on REDD+**

Although the focus of this case study is the early engagement process with indigenous peoples, it is notable that FONAFIFO is carrying out a separate process for the campesino population. The campesino sector in Costa Rica is a loosely coordinated group composed of small and medium rural producers engaged in a combination of agriculture, forest production, and cattle ranching to sustain their livelihoods. These individuals, who primarily identify themselves as agroforestry producers, feel underrepresented and unfairly grouped with small property owners, and have clearly stated their intent to participate in REDD+ as a separate entity. Their motivation for participating in REDD+ is to promote “integral development of the farm,” and create a targeted PES campesino program. The vision of a campesino-specific PES program would recognize the value of campesino management and stewardship of forests and natural resources and would help small producers participate in PES by lowering high transaction costs and helping to expedite the PES enrollment processes. They hope that a PES campesino program and participation in REDD+ will help establish strategic alliances to promote forest projects, build capacity, and emphasize community participation in supervision and monitoring.

Financial support from GIZ has enabled two campesino organizations—la Red Forestal Campesina (Refocan), and la Asociación Coordinadora Indígena y Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria Centroamericana (ACICAFOC)—to organize five regional workshops and one national workshop on REDD+, which concluded with the establishment of the Union Nacional Agroforestal (UNAFOR). Although the campesino population is more fragmented than the country’s indigenous population, UNAFOR groups together 230 campesino organizations, and will serve as the primary unit representing campesinos in REDD+ consultation. Campesino involvement will be led by an executive committee of 10 representatives—two from each of the five regions defined by UNAFOR. The campesino consultation process will be carried out by FONAFIFO and facilitated by ACICAFOC.
CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Integration of REDD+ Processes

Although FONAFIFO is coordinating a robust process of early participation and dialogue, the initial stages of REDD+ engagement have revealed challenges that are likely to persist throughout REDD+ readiness in Costa Rica. Principal among these challenges is integration of the numerous REDD+ readiness processes, including pre-consultation with indigenous peoples, consultation with the campesino sector and small agroforestry producers, the SESA process, the Safeguard Information System (SIS), the ENA-REDD+, and the ER-PIN. Despite the strong vertical institutional structure established to implement REDD+ in Costa Rica, these processes—often led by different actors, supported by distinct sources of funding, and on different timetables—appear to be somewhat decoupled and out of sequence. This decoupling compromises the ability of the various process and tools to effectively inform the REDD+ readiness process, as they are designed to do. Strong institutional mechanisms to ensure consistency, communication, and horizontal coordination among distinct REDD+ components are vital to the integration of these processes.

This decoupling of processes is illustrated by Costa Rica’s submission of a revised ER-PIN to the Carbon Fund in February 2013, despite ongoing engagement in readiness processes under the FCPF Readiness Fund. Its Midterm Report on progress in the Readiness Fund was only submitted in October 2013, and the ENA-REDD+ is still under construction—a consulted and finalized version of the ENA-REDD+ has not yet been published. Despite the absence of a finalized ENA-REDD+, FONAFIFO has clearly identified eight primary REDD+ strategies. The selection of these strategies should be informed by the SESA process, which is intended to pinpoint strategic policy options and associated risks. Although one national SESA workshop was undertaken in May 2011, the subsequent regional SESA workshops necessary for a robust SESA process have not been carried out. The SESA Work Plan published by FONAFIFO in October 2013 addresses various key issues identified by indigenous peoples, although it was published 29 months after the national workshop—a period of time during which other REDD+ processes advanced without input from the SESA process. However, it is important to acknowledge that Costa Rica’s rapid advancement toward REDD+ strategies and an ER-PIN is no doubt enabled by the country’s substantial experience in PES and forest conservation, and FONAFIFO’s high institutional capacity.

Furthermore, it is unclear how the indigenous consultation process will inform the SESA process, the SIS, and the ENA-REDD+. According to communications with FONAFIFO, consultation will provide an opportunity to resolve the risks identified during the SESA process, and the ESMF will feed into the SIS. However, these relationships between components are not well articulated, at least publicly. When the Terms of Reference for the SIS were presented at a FONAFIFO-coordinated event in July 2013, indigenous leaders were not previously aware of the initiative and felt that it had been designed without their knowledge or input. Their primary concern was the narrow focus of the safeguard information system, which, according to an indigenous leader, “did not leave space for other safeguards we would like to negotiate with the government.” The SIS was perceived to be in conflict with the indigenous vision of safeguards as a permanent process throughout the life of ENA-REDD+ implementation, rather than a one-time completion of requirements. FONAFIFO responded to these concerns by holding information sessions with indigenous peoples on the SIS and other topics, and misunderstandings regarding the purpose and role of the SIS seem to have since been resolved.

REDD+ processes can be integrated more effectively through a public work plan and calendar describing the timeline and coordination of all REDD+ processes. Such a work plan should clearly indicate how the processes interact and inform each other, the inputs and outputs for each component, and opportunities for civil society to provide feedback. A broad work plan would facilitate programming of processes in a logical sequence such that earlier steps, such as SESA and a consultation plan, feed into and are synergistic with documents such as the ENA-REDD+ and the ER-PIN. A clear outline of events and components would allow civil society to hold their government accountable to appropriate integration and information sharing, and would avoid surprises on processes that are not adequately disseminated to civil society, such as the SIS. Furthermore, the components and tools developed for REDD+ should each consider how to strengthen stakeholder capacity and governance, as the consultation process endeavors to do.
Indigenous Governance

The dialogue regarding the representativeness of the ADIs has implications for the REDD+ consultation process. Various individuals and organizations have voiced concern as to whether a consultation carried out primarily through ADIs would be representative of the full range of indigenous society. In response to this concern, the 19 indigenous territories explain that FONAFIFO does not plan to consult the ADIs themselves, but rather will consult the indigenous peoples in their entirety. As the territorial governments established under Costa Rican law, ADIs will merely serve as coordinators of the consultation process. FONAFIFO emphasizes that in order to achieve the goal of broad consultation, indigenous communities will map the actors involved with an inclusive focus, and the government will convene the consultation. However, it is extremely important that ADI leaders share the knowledge of REDD+ that they have acquired during the process of early engagement and training, so that members of their territories truly understand REDD+ and are able to make their own informed decisions with respect to participation.

A related concern is the division in priorities of the various indigenous territories already evident in the early stages of REDD+ engagement. As previously described, high-level negotiations with the national government through the “Mesa de Diálogo” have divided Costa Rica’s indigenous territories into factions with different viewpoints on indigenous governance, among other issues. More pertinent to REDD+, the territories that will be impacted by the Diquís Hydroelectric Dam and other territories in the region do not view REDD+ as a priority at this stage, and have declined to participate in the REDD+ early engagement process with the other 19 territories. Their decision not to actively participate, as well as differences in priorities, creates the potential for conflict between indigenous groups, dissatisfaction with a future REDD+ strategy, or even exclusion from such a strategy. This risk of exacerbating divisions among non-indigenous groups through REDD+ has already been borne out by Panama’s experience with the UN-REDD Program.23

All stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, have the right to decide whether they would like to participate in a REDD+ strategy. Regardless, it is important to maintain open dialogue with all actors, keep them informed, and provide the opportunity to define their participation. Not only is open dialogue important between stakeholders and the REDD+ implementing institution, but the dialogue among stakeholders themselves is also critically important. In this case, the 19 indigenous territories actively involved in the indigenous consultation plan must maintain open lines of communication with the territories that have chosen not to participate, and ensure that they are provided with the option to join the process, if they wish. On the other hand, FONAFIFO should engage with the five remaining indigenous territories in the manner they request, and should be transparent about the potential ramifications of choosing not to participate in the process of early dialogue and participation. Additionally, in order to obtain meaningful input from the broad range of indigenous society, consultation processes must be robust, and take great care to incorporate the views of the diverse groups within each territory.

Land Tenure

An additional challenge facing the REDD+ process in Costa Rica is land tenure and land titling. According to a study undertaken by Forest Peoples Programme, the percent of land occupied by non-indigenous peoples within legally designated indigenous territories in Costa Rica is substantial, but varies widely.34 Although indigenous peoples possess 100% of the land in two of the indigenous territories, this figure is substantially lower for the majority of territories. In total, 43% of the land in indigenous territories is occupied by non-indigenous peoples, with non-indigenous occupation as high as 98% in the case of the Altos de San Antonio territory. Although many ADI leaders do not perceive resolution of land tenure issues as a pre-requisite for participation in REDD+, they are clear that the presence of non-indigenous peoples on their lands is a serious, long-term problem. They generally voiced the sentiment that the government is not offering assistance to resolve land tenure problems. Proceeding with REDD+ in territories with large expanses of land in the possession of non-indigenous peoples is a major risk, and could exacerbate existing conflicts over land or encourage additional non-indigenous claims on indigenous territory. Resolving land tenure problems, including avoiding incentivizing the occupation of additional indigenous lands, will be a major challenge of REDD+ in Costa Rica, as in other countries.

Although Costa Rica’s indigenous peoples are right to assert that resolution of land tenure conflicts is a long-term process, secure land rights are critical for effective REDD+ implementation. Many consider land rights to be a pre-condition or enabling condition for REDD+, and civil
society and indigenous peoples in some countries are using their national REDD+ processes as a bargaining chip to address land tenure conflicts. As major owners of forested land, REDD+ provides indigenous peoples a unique opportunity to put land tenure on the table for negotiation. A government that has dedicated significant funds and time to REDD+ preparation, and perceives REDD+ success to be partially dependent on resolution of land tenure conflicts, will likely be willing to open dialogue on the topic. In this vein, it will be strategic for Costa Rica’s indigenous peoples to be firm that progress on land tenure is a necessity for REDD+, and that the ENA-REDD+ must include a specific plan and measures for the clarification and regularization of land titling in indigenous territories.

Strategically, the issue of clarification and consolidation of land titling is one of the five special themes for REDD+ advocated for by the 19 indigenous territories of Costa Rica. According to FONAFIFO, finance for REDD+ will provide indigenous peoples with a topographer and an attorney to produce action plans on land rights and to establish priorities for acquisition of land in the hands of non-indigenous peoples. With these tools, indigenous peoples will have an instrument to negotiate with the government on the land tenure situation. Even with a REDD+ strategy focused on registering and regularizing indigenous territories, it will be essential that indigenous peoples continue to advocate and emphasize its importance.

Complexity and Expectations

A final challenge of stakeholder engagement in REDD+ processes relates to managing expectations. Misperceptions are common regarding who is driving the REDD+ processes and the potential benefits landowners stand to gain from REDD+. Such misperceptions and lack of information could lead to disappointment or conflict. This risk underscores the importance of developing and strengthening a stakeholder communication strategy. Costa Rica’s ER-PIN identifies the enrollment of an additional 18,742 hectares of indigenous territories in the PES Program; although significant, this quantity represents only 6% of the 329,802 hectares of indigenous territories in the country. The ER-PIN does not emphasize indigenous territories as the primary focus of REDD+, stating that REDD+ activities will be implemented “at the national level on privately owned land… and to a lesser extent communal property (indigenous territories).” Furthermore, the three priority regions identified for REDD+ activities do not include the Talamanca region, which is home to the largest expanse of indigenous lands in the country. To avoid future conflict, indigenous leaders should be clearly informed of the role their territories may play in REDD+, and the level of involvement and benefits they should anticipate.

Additionally, there should be clarification that the responsibilities for consultation and carrying out REDD+
activities are shared. Many indigenous representatives seem to be under the impression that cultural mediators will independently run territorial-level consultations, although FONAFIFO has stated that consultations will be led by the government and supported by the cultural mediators and the ADIs.

Overcoming barriers to participation and setting appropriate expectations can only be achieved through in-depth, long-term capacity building with stakeholders. FONAFIFO must engage in extensive capacity building and information sharing, which should be outlined in a long-term plan of events and trainings. Consistent stakeholder attendance at capacity building events is important to ensure that concepts presented in trainings build on previous trainings, and representatives develop fluency in the topic. Information sharing should also include an honest explanation of indigenous peoples’ likely involvement and benefit from future REDD+ activities. Towards this end, it is important that FONAFIFO be transparent in their plans for an Indigenous PES initiative and the scale at which they anticipate implementing such a program. Finally, responsibilities of both FONAFIFO and the indigenous territories in the consultation process should be clarified, ideally in a written document agreed upon by all parties.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

As a global forerunner in PES and REDD+, Costa Rica’s progress to date in early engagement offers lessons for other countries embarking on REDD+ preparation—particularly the numerous countries in Mesoamerica initiating the REDD+ readiness process. The principle lessons offered by Costa Rica are the value of providing indigenous people the autonomy to define their own participation, the importance of creating a methodology for consultation, the need for proactive stakeholder engagement, and the viability of REDD+ Indígena.

**Allowing Stakeholders to Define their Participation**

The most important lesson offered by Costa Rica’s experience is the value of allowing indigenous peoples and other stakeholders to define their involvement and run their own processes. The best way to establish meaningful, long-term collaboration is to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to propose their own plans and indicate how they prefer to be consulted and involved. The experience of Costa Rica also demonstrates, however, the necessity for accompanying capacity building and technical and political support from other actors. Capacity building provided by FONAFIFO and CATIE has been instrumental to the early engagement process.

Unique conditions in Costa Rica have facilitated the effective participation of indigenous peoples and their close collaboration with FONAFIFO as the REDD+ implementing agency. First, the presence of a strong, politically savvy indigenous organization to coordinate indigenous territories at the national level is indispensable. RIBCA has played this role by constructing an initial consultation proposal, building a coalition of indigenous territories, providing indigenous leaders with basic capacity building on REDD+, creating an organizational structure for the consultation process, and articulating a joint indigenous position on REDD+. In contrast to the indigenous peoples, lack of a cohesive organizational structure has hindered the unified participation of campesinos.

Second, the existing arrangement between indigenous peoples and FONAFIFO was made possible by the political will and interest of FONAFIFO. FONAFIFO has already developed positive relationships and trust with the indigenous territories over the course of many years of collaboration in implementation of the PES program. FONAFIFO’s willingness to support the indigenous peoples, both financially and technically, has made the early engagement process possible.

**Consultation Methodology**

The experience of indigenous peoples in Costa Rica’s REDD+ process also demonstrates the value of creating a methodology for consultation. Consultation cannot be successfully and meaningfully carried out without a methodology, and the indigenous consultation plan proposed by the 19 territories endeavors to establish such a methodology. Rather than exclusively making demands on REDD+ activities or the role of indigenous peoples in a REDD+ strategy, the consultation plan focuses on establishing the indigenous worldview and describing how the input of indigenous territories should be obtained; it is more process-oriented than outcome-oriented. Notably, one of the desired outcomes articulated in the plan is strengthening indigenous capacities, social capital, and governance. Particularly interesting is the plan’s hierar-
chical structure, which facilitates input from indigenous peoples from the territorial level to the national level. Although the national consultation plan lacks specific details on the mechanisms of undertaking consultations, regional plans describe the process with more specificity. However, more clarity from FONAFIFO regarding the relationship between the indigenous consultation process and other REDD+ readiness processes, as well as clarity on FONAFIFO’s consultation methodology, will be necessary. Several of the components described in the FCPF Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness (Figure 6, Page 7) have not been clearly articulated by FONAFIFO, including defining the desired outcomes of the consultation and defining the terms of the consultation. Although indigenous peoples have described these aspects for the consultations in their territories, FONAFIFO does have a comprehensive consultation plan, which clearly articulates this information. According to FONAFIFO, such a consultation plan is under construction and will be available in the beginning of 2014.

Proactive Involvement

When indigenous representatives were asked how they attribute the strong indigenous involvement in the REDD+ early engagement process and their success thus far, three aspects were mentioned: RIBCA’s leadership, the high organizational capacity of Costa Rica’s indigenous territories, and indigenous peoples’ willingness to engage in REDD+. Indigenous representatives feel strongly that as key actors of the management of Costa Rica’s forests, it is necessary that indigenous peoples be actively involved in REDD+. They reportedly saw “many open windows,” and created their own consultation plan as a counterproposal. One representative observed that “many things can be achieved when one speaks frankly.” It is important to note that although speaking frankly is integral to achieving robust participation, it is only half the battle; a government willing to listen is equally important.

REDD+ Indígena

The Indigenous PES scheme under discussion in Costa Rica is an example of the “REDD Indígena” movements emerging elsewhere in Latin America. Both the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA) and the Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (AIDESEP) have developed proposals and models for REDD+ Indígena which focus on the same holistic ecosystem management proposed in Costa Rica—namely the valuation of goods and services provided by the forest beyond carbon sequestration. With the assistance of WWF and NORAD, COICA is seeking funds to initiate REDD+ Indígena pilot projects. Particularly encouraging progress has been achieved in Peru, where AIDESEP is promoting inclusion of REDD+ Indígena components in its Forest Investment Program (FIP) Investment Plan. In October 2013, AIDESEP achieved the inclusion of content in the FIP Investment Plan which emphasizes the participation of indigenous technician in project formulation, and direct involvement of the community in project implementation.

The positive response and good will of the Costa Rican government in establishing an Indigenous PES program provides more evidence for the feasibility of including such initiatives in a national REDD+ strategy. Generally speaking, REDD+ Indígena would provide a viable non-market mechanism to support forest conservation and maintenance of forest carbon stocks, while simultaneously addressing concerns of indigenous peoples and providing payments for non-carbon benefits. Key themes that could be incorporated into REDD+ Indígena include territorial management, community forestry, land titling, and sustainable forest management. Collaboration of the national governments, civil society organizations, and indigenous peoples proposing REDD Indígena mechanisms would help advance this agenda.

Conclusion

Costa Rica’s initial experiences in REDD+ preparation and early engagement offer many transferrable lessons—both for processes carried out by REDD+ implementing agencies and for the advocacy strategies of indigenous peoples and civil society. Although imperfections exist in the coordination and sequencing of REDD+ preparation processes, FONAFIFO and the country’s indigenous peoples are collaborating in a productive early engagement process that signals an encouraging point of departure for a process of free, prior, and informed consent. The engagement to date between FONAFIFO and indigenous peoples serves as a model for other countries undertaking REDD+ preparation.

It is important to acknowledge the conditions that have facilitated this positive interaction and early success in Costa Rica—most notably the high organizational capac-
ity of the country’s indigenous peoples, FONAFIFO’s experience with PES, and the long history of collaboration between the two groups. Although Costa Rica’s circumstances and REDD+ process cannot be replicated in other countries, certain aspects of the experience can easily be adopted and adjusted to the country context. Most importantly, the Costa Rican case demonstrates the success that indigenous peoples can achieve by forming a strong coalition and clearly articulating their position and aspirations for engagement in REDD+. By engaging in well-planned advocacy, indigenous peoples are transforming REDD+ into an opportunity to build institutional capacity and advance the indigenous agenda.

Methodology

Research for this case study included a desk review of relevant documents authored by FONAFIFO, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, Costa Rica’s indigenous peoples, and both international and Costa Rican civil society. In May 2013, information was gathered by the author in Costa Rica by attending a two-day REDD+ workshop coordinated by FONAFIFO and by interviewing individuals from FONAFIFO, civil society, and indigenous people’s organizations. Some of these interviews were carried out during site visits to several indigenous territories of the Talamanca region: Tayni, Kekoldi, and Talamanca Cabécar. Both FONAFIFO and RIBCA collaborated by providing invaluable updates and documentation of the REDD+ preparation process.


**Additional Resources**

**Bank Information Center.** Indigenous Involvement in REDD+ in Costa Rica:  
Overview, Challenges, Lessons Learned, Resources, Contacts

**CATIE.** Climate Change Projects:  
http://catie.ac.cr/en/climate-change/projects

**Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA).** Indigenous REDD+ Alternative. Indigenous Territories of Harmonious Life to cool the Planet:  

**Cultural Mediators Training Program:**  
http://www.reddccadgiz.org/mediadores/  
(Link in Spanish)

**Forest Carbon Partnership Facility.** Costa Rica:  
http://forestcarbonpartnership.org/costa-rica  
Costa Rica’s R-PIN, R-PP, Field Trip Reports, Readiness Preparation Grant, ER-PIN, Letter of Intent, Country Progress Sheets

**FONAFIFO (National Forest Financing Fund):**  
http://www.fonafifo.go.cr/  
Payment for Environmental Services Program and more  
(Link in Spanish)

**FONAFIFO, CONAFOR and Ecuador Ministry of the Environment.** 2012. Lessons Learned for REDD+ from PES and Conservation Incentive Programs. Examples from Costa Rica, Mexico, and Ecuador:  

**Global Canopy Programme.** REDD+ in Costa Rica:  
http://theredddesk.org/countries/costa-rica/  

**INBio (National Biodiversity Institute) and Government of Norway.** Lessons Learned and Capacity Development to Implement REDD+ Initiatives: the Experience of Costa Rica:  
http://www.redd-mas.cr/en/

**Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests:**  
http://alianzamesoamericana.org/

**Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE):**  
http://www.minae.go.cr/  
(Link in Spanish)

**REDD+ Costa Rica Facebook:**  
https://www.facebook.com/EstrategiaReddCostaRica  
(Link in Spanish)

**REDD+ Costa Rica Webpage:**  
http://reddcostarica.wix.com/reddcostarica  
(Link in Spanish)

**World Bank.** Costa Rica Data:  
http://data.worldbank.org/country/costa-rica
The Bank Information Center (BIC) partners with civil society in developing and transition countries to influence the World Bank and other international financial institutions (IFIs) to promote social and economic justice and ecological sustainability. BIC is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization that advocates for the protection of rights, participation, transparency, and public accountability in the governance and operations of the World Bank Group and regional development banks.

http://www.bicusa.org/

CATIE combines science, education, and innovation for development in order to enhance human wellbeing and reduce rural poverty. We are leaders in the integrated management of agriculture and natural resources for addressing global challenges.

http://catie.ac.cr/

The Alliance is a space for coordination and exchange for territorial authorities that manage or influence the major forested areas of Mesoamerica. Through the Alliance, indigenous governments and community forest organizations look to strengthen their own dialogue and focus on community management of natural resources. They look for a way to influence governments and international cooperation strategies for biodiversity conservation and climate balance, appropriately integrating the rights and benefits of traditional and local communities.

http://alianzamesoamericana.org/

Publication Design: Nina Ford
Photography: Rachel Baker