

Ten Years of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Capacity-Building Program: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The objective of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Capacity-Building Program (CBP) is to provide forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples (IPs), other forest dwellers (OFDs), and southern civil society organizations (CSOs) with information about reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and fostering conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) in order to increase their understanding of REDD+ and enable them to engage meaningfully in implementation of REDD+ readiness activities.

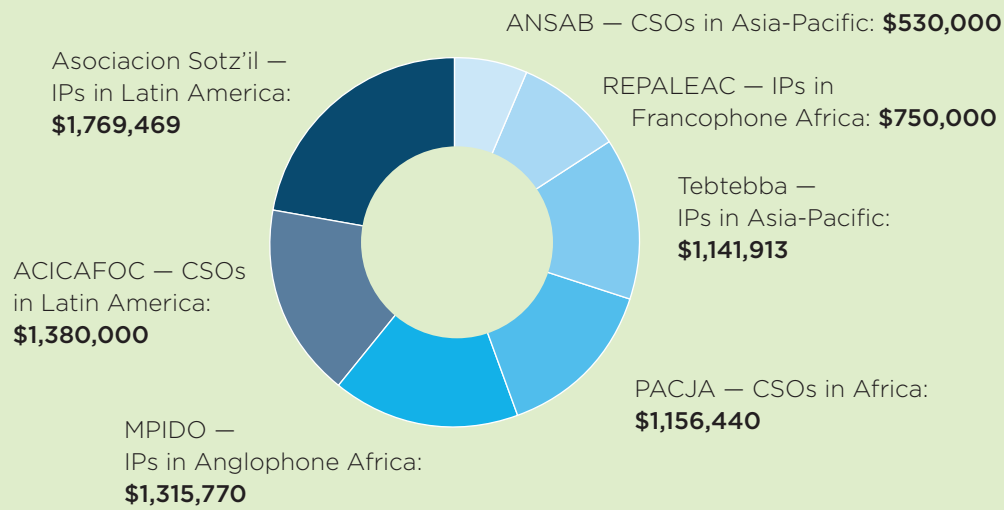
To mark the CBPs tenth anniversary, FCPF commissioned Conservation International (CI) to conduct an internal review of what has worked well and what could be strengthened

further. This is particularly timely because the CBP was recently extended for two years, until December 2022, with additional funding, bringing the total to USD15 million: USD2 million in Phase 1 (2009-16), USD8 million in Phase 2 (2016-20), and USD5 million in Phase 3 (2020-22).

The CI review found that the CBP successfully and efficiently raised awareness on REDD+, establishing dialogues between different stakeholders in countries, and enhancing inclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the REDD+ discourse. These findings will help inform the design of the next phase of the program, as well as other initiatives aimed at supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in engaging with REDD+ activities. This note presents the main findings of CI's internal review.



CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FUNDING — PHASE 2



CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the CBP for IPs and southern CSOs are to:

- equip key stakeholders with critical knowledge to participate in the REDD+ process;
- increase knowledge and understanding of key players on REDD+;
- provide an opportunity for leaders of forest-dependent indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and networks to organize and attend regional and global platforms;
- support IPLCs in increasing their visibility, voicing their concerns, and influencing REDD+ processes.

The CBP is designed to provide grassroots IPLC organizations and CSOs with access to capacity-building funding, with regional organizations providing program execution support and financial oversight. In its first 10 years (up to December 2019), the CBP funded 86 projects in 47 countries.

Overarching Program

To ensure that funding would reach the grassroots level in Phase 2, IPs and CSOs self-selected one organization to represent IPLCs and one organization to represent southern CSOs in each of the three regions in which the CBP

operates: Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. A seventh organization was chosen to complement these six intermediary organizations (IOs) to cover francophone Africa because the language barrier posed challenges to achieving desired outcomes.

The seven IOs then offered grants on a competitive basis to grassroots organizations in their regions (subgrantees) to conduct activities to raise awareness of REDD+ and support engagement in REDD+ processes at the local and national level. Funds are thus channeled to the subgrantees through the IOs, rather than through the government. This direct access is an important and unique characteristic that ensures that IPLCs and CSOs, rather than governments, determine priorities. Furthermore, IPLCs and CSOs self-select, a process in which IPLCs and CSOs themselves determine who represents them, and decide themselves what issues are most relevant and pressing to them.

The CBP theory of change suggests that greater access to resources increases IPLCs' and CSOs' understanding of climate change and REDD+ and enables IPLCs and CSOs to play a meaningful role in the design and implementation of REDD+ programs in their countries and take part effectively in international discussions on REDD+. Greater stakeholder engagement ensures diverse, innovative projects that improve the quality of FCPF support to national readiness processes and IPLCs' engagement in international discussions on the role of REDD+ in climate change mitigation.



LESSON LEARNED: The self-selection process allowed IPLCs and CSOs to participate meaningfully in the REDD+ process and in national REDD+ decision-making platforms.

- **Recommendation:** Maintain IPLC self-selection in REDD+ decision-making processes, document best practices and success stories, and communicate how these efforts fulfill national and international safeguard obligations.

LESSON LEARNED: The role and inclusion of gender and youth is a vital and increasing focus of all CBP-funded work, although the presence of women is an insufficient indicator of gender equity or empowerment. Gender assessments could provide complementary measures.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to focus on gender inclusivity and equity. Ensure that new performance measures promote experimentation with gender assessments for benefit-sharing plans. Add dedicated funding to the budget for gender and youth inclusivity.

LESSON LEARNED: Direct access allowed regional organizations, which have a thorough understanding of regional context and capacity gaps, to ensure that funded programs met the needs of intended beneficiaries in eligible FCPF countries. It is important to ensure that direct access through IPOs and CSOs remains available for managing and implementing activities.

- **Recommendation:** Continue the system of direct access.
- **Recommendation:** Consider opening a CBP funding window for subgrantees with sufficient capacity to apply for direct funding, rather than through IOs.

LESSON LEARNED: The funding envelope of the CBP is insufficient to have an effect in all FCPF countries.

- **Recommendation:** Focus on Carbon Fund countries, where the importance of benefit sharing and payments will increase in the short term. Within Carbon Fund countries, concentrate on Emission Reduction (ER) areas. Within these areas, promote funding of strategic workplans rather than one-off activities, with a view to leveraging ER Program resources directly and enhancing synergy with ER programming and other initiatives.

LESSON LEARNED: Available methods of measuring program results and testing the CBP theory of change are not fully consistent, indicating that some adjustments should be made to results indicators, reporting mechanisms, and rules on awarding subgrants.

- **Recommendation:** Strengthen and harmonize monitoring and evaluation frameworks to accommodate the quantitative and qualitative performance indicators needed to understand program effects.
- **Recommendation:** Coordinate performance indicators, implementation arrangements, and definition of roles and responsibilities globally to enhance the effect of CBP activities.
- **Recommendation:** Ensure uniformity of definitions of such terms as empowerment, participation, and influence.

Intermediary Organizations

The seven IOs play a special role in the CBP, acting as intermediaries between grassroots-level subgrantees and the World Bank. Typically, IOs are large, well-established nongovernmental organizations that are active at the national or regional level and have the fiduciary capacity to implement World Bank projects. Selection of the IOs took longer than expected, and only 10 organizations met the minimum requirements to take on this role (of which six were selected), highlighting existing capacity gaps.

Overall implementation risks were rated moderately satisfactory to satisfactory. The decision to implement Phase 2 of the CBP through IOs was based on several operating assumptions, including that each region should have its own indigenous and CSO intermediaries, according to IPs' and CSOs' request, and that regional IOs can address the different demands of many countries.

The model that IOs used to allocate subgrants was context and organization specific. Most IOs funded single subprojects within countries, and others used CBP funding to inform national and subnational REDD+ implementation plans.

Knowledge exchange has been a distinct objective of the CBP, most visible in the form of conferences, dialogues, and other opportunities for sharing information. IOs have been instrumental in these activities, as well as in curating knowledge products that subgrantees have produced.

LESSON LEARNED: Program delivery through intermediaries is more effective and efficient when IOs are recognized regional organizations or networks or work through such

networks to implement activities. The CBP showed that the tradeoffs (e.g., elite capture) are manageable through transparency and access to information.

- **Recommendation:** Maintain and build on the current IO structure, but give preference to existing regional (network) organizations.
- **Recommendation:** Consider training new IOs that have experience in financial management and have national and international credibility.

LESSON LEARNED: Effectively administering subgrants in 10 to 18 countries may be an unrealistic expectation of IOs, especially because it involves tracking in-country climate politics, constantly changing contexts, and a presence on the ground to assess and monitor implementation.

- **Recommendation:** Focus on carbon fund countries, as mentioned above, to allow for better oversight and support of implementing subgrantees.
- **Recommendation:** Consider having a separate IO for the Pacific region to address the unique challenges that Pacific island states face and engage other IOs at the country level where feasible.

LESSON LEARNED: Knowledge exchanges can become orchestrated and path dependent, diminishing their effectiveness. It is unclear whether knowledge that participants gain is broadly shared with IPLCs.

- **Recommendation:** Experiment with alternative facilitation methods and targeted, results-based or competitive bilateral exchanges. To increase the effect of participation in regional exchanges, have eligibility and travel agreements clearly specify transmission actions to ensure that knowledge is shared and accountability is increased.
- **Recommendation:** Introduce a knowledge management system for CBP-generated products so that they are all available in a single repository, undergo quality control, and are more widely disseminated.

LESSON LEARNED: While IOs frequently mentioned grievance redress as a way to enhance stakeholder engagement and mitigate conflict, no grievances were lodged so far.

- **Recommendation:** Reinforce preexisting customary problem-solving processes to enhance the legitimacy of the IPLC rights and contribute to lasting governance after the project has ended.



Subgrantees

The CBP had supported 86 subprojects, 40 regional knowledge products, and 660 national knowledge products as of December 2019; 240 meetings with REDD+ focal points and other decision-makers were reported; and more than 70,000 people were reached. The CBP created an important space for dialogue with IPOs and CSOs that was lacking, bridging the gap between IPs and governments and decreasing mistrust. IPLC organizations felt supported and empowered by the CBP to become more visible and recognized as key representatives in settings such as conferences, in political arenas, and international fora.

The average subproject grant size was USD70,000 in Phase 1 and USD46,000 in Phase 2, and lasted an average of 10 months. Reported challenges include subproject terms, amount of funding, and prescriptive focus of the activity. Evidence of influence is uneven and not always well documented or reported, but there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that the CBP has generated success stories highly relevant to Bank-supported ER program design and REDD+ stakeholders globally.

SUBGRANT EXAMPLES

In Vietnam, the Centre for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas blends elders' traditional knowledge of the forest with young people's creative, innovative approaches to develop economic opportunities to reduce urban flight.

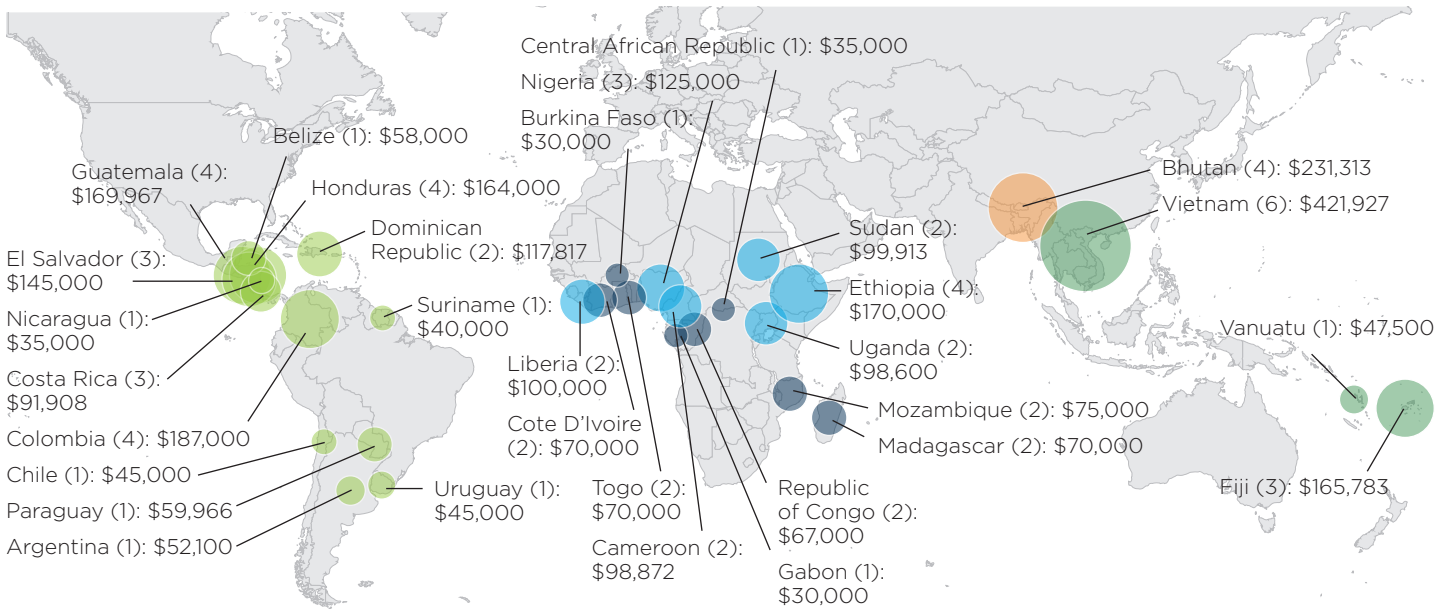
In Latin America, the *Asociación Coordinadora Indígena y Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria Centroamericana* funded activities of five subgrantees promoting accountability and responsivity to local needs.

In Ethiopia, the International Livestock Centre for Africa developed an 8-week radio program in local languages to inform listeners about REDD+. The show was complemented with theme songs and a live performance at a local market.

SUB-GRANT AMOUNTS AND NUMBER OF PROJECTS BY COUNTRY

As of March 2020

■ Latin America & Caribbean
 ■ Anglophone Africa
 ■ Francophone Africa
 ■ South Asia
 ■ East Asia & Pacific



- The size of a circle shows the sub-grant amount per country
- The number in parentheses shows the number of sub-projects per country

At the same time, there is significant unmet need. Demand easily exceeded available funding. The limited funding sparked a debate on whether raising awareness of REDD+ across a wide geographic area with many partners has a higher return on investment than building deeper capacity in fewer actors to equip them with the tools they need to engage with governments more deeply on national ER programs. This “deep versus wide” debate will need to be resolved in the next phase of the CBP.

Although much capacity building has taken place, gaps remain. These can be divided into gaps in skills (negotiations, proposal development, understanding of REDD+ economics) and topics (e.g., livelihoods, business development, tenure rights, food security). Both warrant exploration and support.

LESSON LEARNED: The gap between demand and available funding underscores the need to focus because the CBP is unable to support general awareness raising and concrete ER program engagement.

- **Recommendation:** Go “deep” rather than “wide” to ensure alignment with ER programs and lasting effects for IPLCs.

LESSON LEARNED: Capacity gaps remain in areas in advanced stages of the readiness process (benefit sharing, ecosystem service valuation).

- **Recommendation:** Place greater focus on capacity building in areas that capture well the social, environmental, and economic co-benefits of REDD+ (e.g., food security, access to sustainable energy, land tenure and collective land rights, negotiation capacity, sustainable forest management) and areas beyond readiness (e.g., implementation of local pilot solutions to climate change, community-led monitoring, reporting, and verification and inclusion in ER programs).

LESSON LEARNED: One-off funding to stand-alone subgrantees is not as effective as strengthening existing networks that foster collaboration.

- **Recommendation:** Consider focusing subgrant support on national IPLC networks.

LESSON LEARNED: The CBP is not alone in supporting CSOs and IPLCs working on REDD+. Alignment with other programs is critical for CBP and subgrantees to leverage partnerships and funding.

- **Recommendation:** Seek alignment with climate finance programs such as the Dedicated Grant Mechanism, REDD Early Movers Program, and United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation.

LESSON LEARNED: The average subgrant project cycle of 10 months was too short and too rigidly defined to enable the greatest effect.

- **Recommendation:** Consider subgrant criteria that allow for longer grant cycles. Have new criteria include requirements on leveraging co-financing and coordination with recognized platforms or bodies, while encouraging realism about the potential influence on ER program design, structural barriers, and strengths of a rights-based approach.